



Fiction

Group 3

A Story Without Words

Maryknoll Convent School (Secondary Section), Kwok, Ching Yee Ariel – 14

Entry I: Mom

January 1, 770 B.C.

Sunrise, humming

Another year without you, Mom.

The morning of the New Year doesn't seem as pleasant anymore without you here; without the familiar glint in your eyes that warms the empty household; without your ecstatic cackle in the backyard as you gambolled around with the adopted dinosaur you refused to desert no matter how much dad protested; without your placid humming as you combed its feathers near the windowsill, tinting the morning cool air with a warm amber hue.

With you, it only took a few words to change his mind and a kiss on his cheek to soften his gaze and make his dimples tremble, before he relaxed into your soft embrace — a soft side he never dared show to outsiders.

Mornings were a bliss in heaven: you'd encourage me and your adopted dinosaur to bond, and I'd bury my head in your robe at the sight of the frighteningly grotesque creature, whereas Dad would be sitting cross-legged on the mat, peering at us amusingly, and letting out muted chuckles at us at times.

But his sweet grins are empty now, and his chuckles are hollow. Half of his soul must have departed with you, mom; and the other half, perchance, is still clinging onto the hope that it was all a dream. Maybe he's right, maybe this nightmare would end when the sun rises next morning. But if all this was imaginary, why hasn't dad been coming back home regularly? Why does home feel...unhomely?

With our house twice as large, it also looks twice as empty, and sometimes, when I sit near the windowsill, I can almost hear the silent humming mixed with the morning cool air. I can't let go, Mom. For three years, sunrises still have your distant chortles, the windowsill still has your traces, and mornings still feel like you.

Entry II: Friend

January 3, 770 B.C.

A maze of fury and fear. A flame ignites inside me with every minute that passes, but is constantly extinguished by the utter disbelief of what he did the moment he returned. My dad, the man who had been clinging onto the last bit of his sanity for years, has finally let go. Murky eyebags, reddened cheeks from all the wine, and the crazed glint flashing in his eyes from time to time... I could no longer recognise him. Our household is the centre of attention, with seas of eyes constantly glued onto our every move, and all his friends who already deemed it futile to save him.

The rumours are suffocating, Mom. They'd slither onto my limbs at midnight, and wrangle me, and strangle me, and choke me, and...

I can't take it any more.

I crawled out through the window into the backyard that held all our jolly memories, (there's been a prohibition of entry ever since you left) and wandered till the glaring Sun hung up high in the sky. My white robe dragged behind

me on the dirt, soil tainting the ends of it; my bare feet grazed the soft, crisp grass underneath (shoes attract too much attention); and then, my obsidian eyes met those with a familiar canary yellow hue.

Yet, for some reason, those beady eyes hardly intimidated me, for theirs hold no malice, nor impeachment, nor a tiny slither of abhorrence. I pushed away the leaves obscuring my view: your tiny, frail dinosaur that is hardly recognisable after years of neglect.

The energetic Sinosauropteryx you kept, with vivid, flashy feathers and a vigorous and robust physique, has departed with you, leaving behind its flesh and bones all barely wrapped together with a thin layer of skin, its loose feathers scattered lifelessly on the ground.

I slowly inched towards it, one step at a time, until the tips of my fingers gently grazed its pale bald forehead. No longer unnerved despite its queerer appearance, I boldly stroked its back just as you encouraged me to all those times.

I see you in it, mom.

SiZhui... SiZhui... Yes, that'll be its name — *longing to reunite...*

We'll be together again one day, mom. It's not over, I promise.

Entry III: Scarred

January 14, 770 B.C.

Lightning slashed the night sky into halves, leaving a single silver white trace behind on the dark canvas, rain scattered on the ground in an attempt to shelter itself from the wrath of the lightning. The door slid open with a boom, jolting me awake, as I crept closer to the abrupt disturbance cautiously. The door was still wide open, with the sudden burst of lightning illuminating Dad's silhouette. He swayed and wobbled on his two shaky feet, his rough hands clutched onto the neck of the wine bottle.

Drunk. Again.

His devoid raven eyes bore into mine as I attempted to help him up. His harsh glare sent a chill down my spine as my hands quivered violently. Yet, I swallowed my fear, and moved his arm over my shoulder, occasionally catching a few phrases of his slurred words, "horrid... dinosaur..."

More slurs were spat out from his parted lips, the wine bottle was swung ever more vigorously, and drops of remaining wine were splattered on the wooden planks.

But then, within a split second, a flash of translucent green flashed before my eyes, followed by the shattering of glass.

Silence.

Everything went pitch-black and pin-drop silent for a moment before a resounding ringing bombarded my ear. My eyebrows were mashed together as I strained my eyes to see just anything.

"Lan YanLi..."

A faint mutter of your name, barely legible over the deafening roar in my ears as I fell

down,

down,

down,

into the abyss.

The golden streaks of sunrise flowed in like tranquil water streams through the window, as though nothing had happened last night, as though everything was just a dream. The cool morning air rushed in just as usual, but it wasn't refreshing at all. No. They were like razor-sharp blades, darting across my pale, unblemished cheeks.

Horrid... Dinosaur...

My eyes widened in horror. He knows. But how? From who? The swish of the chilly air stifles a pompous snicker — a humiliation from the Skies above.

No... he wouldn't. He's still my Dad... he wouldn't dare.

Entry IV: Veracity

January 16, 770 B.C.

Perplexed,

Baffled,

Lost,

Everything's changed since your parting, mom. In an attempt to sort out my feelings, I tried to trace everything back to where it started — to the reason you left. How could I forget? The slight tremor in your pupils as both your hands are reddened from the tight, rough rope; the quivering smile as a small consolation for the both of us standing amongst the crowd; the sunlight reflecting off of the executioner's sharp blade... all haunting my dreams every night.

No man shall directly or indirectly shelter any kinds of dinosaur, else he may face execution.

It was a rule that no villager dared to violate. Yet you still housed it without hesitation in the wintry night you found it abandoned in the woods, despite the consequences.

You sacrificed your life for it; and now it's time for me to protect it.

Don't worry, Mom. Your death won't be in vain, I promise.

Entry V: Escape

January 20, 770 B.C.

No, no, no, this can't be right. He couldn't have, right? No, he couldn't have told them about SiZhui! SiZhui was the one thing mom adored. How could he, the man who vowed to love her with everything he had, desire to

disintegrate all the precious memories we had together? Does he not bat an eye on mom's sacrifice for SiZhui? Does he still holds that foolish grudge on it for causing her death? He knows the punishment for keeping a dinosaur! How dare he do this to me — to her...

Forget it. Father died the day Mom did; the flesh and bones left is merely a stranger of the same bloodline. It's okay, you'll be okay. You've been by yourself all these years. SiZhui is hidden in your bag, and everything was packed up last night. We're leaving the village and everything will be alright. Sunrise, humming, her treasured feathered dinosaur— Mom is here; she's here, she's with you.

SiZhui is with you.

Entry VI: SiZhui
January 1, 764 B.C.

Sorry mom.

They've found us.

We'll be joining you soon.

August 1996 (2,760 years later)

The first rays of sunlight slipped past the clouds, dappling the richly green grass with golden light, with soft humming of the wind resounding on a vast rice field situated in Liaoning Province.

Crack!

The splitting sound of an old, decrepit stone shattered the silence in the morning cool air. There lies an impeccably preserved tiny dinosaur fossil oddly being held protectively by a human fossil

“What a strange combination.” The perplexed farmer commented, peering inquisitively at the slab lying before him.

Poor girl's diary may have been lost in time, but their fossils remain, to connect the present with the past.

Feathers of Gold, Wings of Change

Maryknoll Convent School (Secondary Section), Leung, Sin Ying Alicia – 14

The Gobi Desert was quiet as the team of paleontologists worked under the scorching sun. Dr. Mei Zhang, a rising star in the field, was at the center of the dig, meticulously brushing sand off what appeared to be a new species of dinosaur fossil. Her assistant, Kai, crouched nearby, cataloging fragments they had unearthed over the past week.

“This one’s unusual,” Mei murmured, running her fingers along the fossil’s intricate ridges. The fossil seemed to shimmer faintly under the light. Feathers—long, delicate, and iridescent—protruded from its skeletal remains.

“Another feathered dinosaur?” Kai asked, glancing over her shoulder.

“No,” Mei said, shaking her head. “It’s different. Look at the structure of these wings. These aren’t just for gliding. This one might have flown like no other dinosaur we’ve seen before.” As she spoke, the ground trembled.

“What’s happening?” Kai shouted, grabbing onto a nearby rock to steady himself.

Before Mei could answer, the fossil began to glow. A brilliant beam of light shot into the sky, illuminating the desert in hues of gold and green. Mei and Kai stumbled backward, shielding their eyes. When the light faded, standing where the fossil had been was a creature that defied explanation.

It was a dinosaur, but unlike anything in the fossil record. Its plumage shimmered like molten gold, its wings outstretched, and its eyes—sharp, intelligent, and impossibly old—seemed to pierce through Mei’s very soul.

Kai gasped. “Is this... real?”

The dinosaur emitted a series of trills and clicks, its movements graceful and deliberate. It tilted its head, studying Mei with curiosity.

“I don’t know,” Mei whispered, her voice trembling. “But it’s alive.”

The creature took a step forward, and nudged Mei gently with its beak before letting out a piercing cry that reverberated through the air. Suddenly, the ground beneath them gave way, revealing a vast subterranean cavern.

Kai grabbed Mei’s arm. “Are we going down there?”

Mei’s heart pounded. Every instinct told her this was a once-in-a-lifetime discovery. “We have to.”

The creature leapt into the cavern, Mei and Kai scrambled down after it, their flashlights barely penetrating the cavern’s depth. As they descended, they were met with a sight that left them speechless. The cavern was a hidden world, glowing with bioluminescent plants and filled with creatures long thought extinct. Dinosaurs of all sizes roamed freely—some small and agile, darting between glowing trees, others towering giants with scales that shimmered like the stars.

“An entire ecosystem,” Mei breathed. “Untouched by time.”

The golden dinosaur—whom Mei silently named Shenglong, or Sacred Dragon—led them to a central pool surrounded by carvings etched into the stone. The carvings told a story: a catastrophic event that had driven some dinosaurs to retreat into the Earth’s depths, where they had adapted to survive, evolving alongside the mysterious energy that sustained this hidden world.

“This is why they survived,” Mei said, running her fingers over the carvings. “They found a way to adapt.”

Kai pointed to a newer carving, one that depicted humans. “But why now? Why reveal themselves after millions of years?”

As if answering, Shenglong approached Mei and pressed its forehead against hers. A flood of images filled her mind—lush forests reduced to barren wastelands, oceans choked with plastic, skies clouded with smog. The dinosaurs had sensed the Earth's imbalance and emerged, not as invaders, but as guardians seeking to restore harmony.

Mei staggered back, overwhelmed. "They've been watching. They know what we've done to the planet."

Kai looked around at the thriving ecosystem. "They're showing us what balance looks like. They want us to learn."

The days that followed were a whirlwind. Mei and Kai documented everything, but they kept the discovery secret for now. Shenglong continued to guide them, revealing the intricate relationships that sustained the cavern's delicate balance.

One evening, as Mei sat by the glowing pool, Shenglong approached her again. It trilled softly, its eyes filled with an emotion Mei could only describe as hope.

"They're not here to blame us," she said aloud, as Kai joined her. "They're here to help us. But only if we're willing to change."

Kai nodded. "The question is, will humanity listen?"

Months later, after careful preparation, Mei unveiled her discovery to the world. The revelation of Shenglong and the hidden dinosaur sanctuary sparked global debate. At first, there was skepticism, then awe, and finally, a collective call to action.

Years passed, and the world began to change. Forests were replanted, oceans cleaned, and sustainable technologies flourished. Governments passed sweeping environmental protections, industries reengineered their practices to align with nature, and communities worldwide rallied to restore ecosystems that had been teetering on the brink of collapse. The dinosaurs were no longer just relics of the past but partners in shaping a sustainable future.

Mei had become a global figure, her work inspiring generations. Yet, she often felt the weight of the responsibility. On one of her visits to the sanctuary, she found Shenglong perched on a high ledge, watching the glowing river below. It looked at her as she approached, its golden feathers gleaming in the cavern's light.

"You seem troubled," Kai said, catching up to her.

Mei sighed. "We've made progress, but there's still resistance. Some people see the dinosaurs as threats, others as tools for profit. Not everyone understands the balance they represent."

Kai nodded. "Change takes time. But we're moving in the right direction."

Shenglong let out a low trill, its eyes fixed on Mei. It leaned forward, nudging her gently as if reassuring her. Mei smiled faintly, reaching out to touch its beak. "You've taught us so much," she said softly. "But the world is still fragile. There's so much more to do."

Shenglong suddenly spread its wings and leapt into the air, circling the cavern before diving toward the central pool. It dipped its claws into the water, sending ripples of light cascading across the surface. Other dinosaurs emerged from the shadows, their movements deliberate and synchronized, as if answering an unspoken call.

Kai frowned. "What's happening?"

Mei watched in awe as the dinosaurs began to move in patterns around the pool. It was as if they were performing a ritual, their cries and movements weaving together into something ancient and powerful. Shenglong returned to the ledge, gesturing toward the carvings.

Mei followed its gaze, her breath catching as she noticed a previously hidden section of the carvings beginning to glow. The images depicted a catastrophic future—a barren Earth, devoid of life, with only shadows of humanity remaining. But alongside it was another vision: a flourishing planet, vibrant and green, where humans and dinosaurs coexisted in harmony.

“It’s a warning,” Mei murmured. “And a choice.”

Kai stepped closer. “The future isn’t set. They’re showing us what could happen if we succeed—or if we fail.”

The ritual sparked a renewed sense of urgency in Mei. She began traveling the world, sharing the dinosaurs’ story not just as a scientist but as a messenger. She spoke to world leaders, to children in schools, to activists fighting for their communities. Shenglong often accompanied her, its presence a living testament to the bond between ancient and modern life.

But not everyone embraced the message. Mei had been speaking at a global summit when a group of protesters stormed the stage, accusing her of prioritizing the dinosaurs over human development. As tensions escalated, Shenglong stepped forward, its imposing form silencing the room. It let out a haunting cry that seemed to echo in the hearts of everyone present.

Mei seized the moment. “This isn’t about choosing between humanity and the dinosaurs,” she said, her voice steady. “It’s about recognizing that we’re part of the same story. We can’t thrive without the Earth, and the Earth can’t heal without us. Shenglong and its kind aren’t here to take over—they’re here to remind us of what we can become.”

The room fell silent, and slowly, the tide began to turn.

Decades later, Mei stood on a hill overlooking a restored valley. Shenglong soared above, its golden feathers catching the light of the setting sun. Around her, children laughed as they planted trees, their parents guiding them with care. The air was fresh, the rivers clean, and the forests alive with the songs of birds and the calls of dinosaurs.

Kai joined her, his hair streaked with gray but his smile as vibrant as ever. “You did it,” he said.

Mei shook her head. “We did it. All of us. Shenglong showed us the way, but it was humanity that chose to follow.”

Shenglong landed nearby, its eyes meeting Mei’s. She approached it, placing a hand on its beak. “Thank you,” she whispered.

The dinosaur trilled softly, as if acknowledging her words. Then it spread its wings and took flight, disappearing into the horizon.

Dinosaurs Through Time

Maryknoll Convent School (Secondary Section), Syeda, Intisar – 12

The clock on Chan's desk ticked loudly, each sharp 'tick' reminding him that he was in trouble. He groggily squinted at his phone, which dimly lit up the room. The date on the top read: 16/7/2035, 12:48 a.m., followed by long list of missed calls from "Mr. Lee, Boss". His heart dropped. Rubbing his tired eyes, he caught a glimpse of himself in the screen— dark circles under his eyes, unkempt messy hair, and his glasses threatening to slip down his nose.

With a deep sigh, he braced himself for what was next. Closing his eyes, he took a deep breath and hit "call" on Mr. Lee's number. The boss's voice burst through the phone.

"Why haven't you answered my calls? You haven't finished the China dinosaurs report! It's urgent. Oh, you get on my nerves, you seriously do, Chan. Why did I hire you? I must've been drunk! You have 24 hours to finish it or find a new job. Take your pick."

"Wait what? No, no, no! Sir! I need more time! There's just so much to do—"

Beep. The call cut off, leaving Chan staring at the phone in shock. Panic spread in his stomach. What people call fluttering butterflies in their stomach were now monkeys dancing to heavy metal in Chan's. He looked around his messy office, cluttered with papers and a huge book titled *Dinosaurs: Profiles and Facts*. Amidst the chaos lay a small fossil he'd cherished for months. Anxiety bubbled up inside him; he had so much to learn.

"Oh, please, give me inspiration," he whispered, "I don't even have my mom living with me to cook me her delicious meals so my coping mechanisms are extremely limited..."

Exhaustion began pulling his eyelids down. Within moments, he drifted into sleep, his mind racing with worries about dinosaurs, deadlines, bosses and lack of delicious meals.

Suddenly, a loud noise jolted him awake. Panic flooded him as he jumped from his chair.

"Agh! What in the—? What time is it? The report!" His heart sank as he noticed the fossil was gone.

Breathing hard, he rushed to the door and flung it open, needing to escape his rising despair. The freezing chilly July air swept over him, shaking off his tiredness.

"Wait a minute! Freezing chilly July air?! It's the middle of summer! I admit I've lost track of time at some point but I can't be that far off! What is going on?" Chan wondered.

The garden ahead was silvery in the moonlight, but instead of the familiar sight he expected, he found himself face to face with something incredible—a *Bractosaurus*, a long-necked dinosaur he'd read about which was discovered in China.

"I must be dreaming," he murmured, pinching himself. "Ouch! Okay! Now not only are you having insanely realistic hallucinations, but you also have an ugly bruise on your arm. Great going! "

The pain was too real.

"This can't be happening." He said his voice dripping with uncertainty.

But the dinosaur just stared back, tilting its head, curious. Chan's heart raced, and although fear surged, he remembered how he'd always dreamed of seeing dinosaurs up close.

"The way you tilt your head...it's kind of...cute?"

Gathering his courage, he took a step forward.

"I'm going crazy, aren't I?" he whispered, squinting in the dim light.

But the dinosaur didn't move. Curiosity overtook his fear, and he continued to approach it. Suddenly, everything changed as the sun started to rise. The golden sunlight bathed the garden, and Chan rubbed his eyes. Another dinosaur appeared—a feathered creature with a long neck stood gracefully in the light. He felt dizzy again, surely from stress and lack of sleep.

"I'm going to faint!" he stammered, stumbling forward. But he quickly recognized it.

"*Beipiaosaurus!*" he said, thrilled to see a small dinosaur he admired for its amazing features. This also was discovered in China.

"You're a curious little thing, aren't you? Do you bite? Please don't, I finally got my dream job, my mom laid off my back and I'm loving it, although sometimes my boss is just like my mom. Do this, do that, blah blah blah. It's like he's channeling her spirit, you know? I guess some things never change."

He grinned at the fact that he was talking to dinosaurs. He thought he was a little special, but he was wrong. He now discovered that he was downright crazy, but he had never felt better. Energy surged through him, pushing away the drowsiness. He raced back inside, grabbed his notebook and pencil, and dashed back out. Seeing real dinosaurs filled him with a joy he hadn't felt in a long time. He began sketching and taking notes, feeling alive again.

"This is amazing!" he chuckled. "I'm seeing history unfold in front of my very eyes! How cool is that?" In the next hour, he moved around the garden, excitement bubbling within him. He jotted down quick notes on a large *Daxiatitan*, which towered over him, and a fast *Irisosaurus*, darting across the yard. Both discovered in China. He wondered whether he was off his rocker, but shrugged it off, because each dinosaur encounter felt like a treasure, pulling him deeper into a world where time didn't matter.

As dawn fully broke, Chan couldn't contain his happiness. The report no longer felt like a chore; it felt like an adventure. He scribbled pages filled with colorful sketches, each word bursting with excitement about dinosaurs. He thought of how thrilled the 5-year-old version of him would be if he could see what Chan was doing today.

"This report won't just be boring like every other one that Mr. Lee gives me; it'll be an exciting journey into the past!" he shouted, unable to hold back his laughter.

These dinosaurs were no longer just facts; they were vibrant creatures with their own stories. And now, he was going to share those stories. He was going to make 5-year-old Chan proud!

Returning to his desk, a huge smile spread across his face. The once-daunting report transformed into a thrilling opportunity. Inspired by his encounters, Chan began writing with passion, eager to share a world that had gone silent for millions of years.

"It's time to show everyone what they've been missing," he told himself, ideas racing through his mind.

With the clock ticking, Chan felt renewed—a passionate storyteller ready to connect the past with the present.

As the sun rose higher and his tiredness faded, Chan embraced the exciting journey he'd started. Filled with purpose, he wrote faster as the ideas flowed. No longer was he just some guy buried in deadlines—he was a storyteller, ready to give a voice to the dinosaurs.

"Although their roars are impactful! You hear one of those carnivores roar, the impact is immediate; it would go kind of like this: RUN! Haha! Let the dinosaurs tell their tales," he whispered gratefully, knowing he had not only discovered history but also rekindled his passion for it.

Dinosaurs truly are beautiful creatures, and the discoveries of China helped them evolve. Chan would never, ever forget this. All I can say is I bet the boss is eating his words now! Looks like wishing for the stroke of inspiration, along with determination and passion really goes a long way!

Zaltrani

Marymount Secondary School, Rai, Yatika – 13

CHAPTER 1

This is it. This is the one.

I've been working on this for two years now. My parents, who are King and Queen said that it couldn't be done, and not like they let me show anyone else. Well, they're not ALWAYS right. I gathered all my notes together from the table and shuffled them into a messy stack. I shoved them into my bag and bolted out of my room, "Mom! Dad! Look! I did it, I did it!" I shouted in joy showing them my notes.

They frowned as they peered down at them, "And what is this?" My dad asked, raising an eyebrow. "I did it! You remember what Grandma said? She said if the dinosaurs were living again, then the culture of the Zaltrani can be—SMACK.

Next thing I know, a hand slapped across my face, hard enough that my head was turned to the other side. I could feel the searing sensation of the hand imprinted onto my face, and how blood was already trickling down my chin. "Why would you bring this to us, Mira?! You know how much the Zaltrani are despised in this kingdom!" I heard my dad shout. I stood there, silently and motionless. My ears started ringing and my vision started to blur. What is this? I shook my head, trying to clear it. I looked around afterwards, remembering where I was again.

"Return to your room immediately and never speak of this again. Do you understand?"

Right, I was showing them my work.

I scoffed in disbelief, "What? You're just going to tell me to forget the project that I've been working on for years now, just like that?"

A prolonged silence, met with my father's disdained voice,
"You are dismissed, I will not say it twice."

I looked to my mother as she watched me, begging me silently to leave and not make a fuss. I bit my lip, shaking my head. I turned on my heel and stormed out, slamming the door behind me. I—I was so *angry*, so frustrated. I ran to my room and locked the door. I crawled into the cool sheets of my bed, hugging my pillow. "Sis?" A quiet voice peeped out and I jumped. I looked around and saw that it's just my little sister.

"Oh, hey Aria."

"What happened?"

"..."

Before I knew it, tears were welling up and I couldn't stop them.

"Sis?" Aria said again, more quiet now as she saw the tears.

"Yes?"

"Can you tell me the story of the Zaltrani again?"

I smiled bitterly. She always asks for that one story, especially when I'm sad because she knows it cheers me up too. "Really?" I chuckled as she nodded excitedly.

I cleared my throat. "This is the story that Grandma used to tell us before we went to bed every night. She said that long, long ago, there was an ancient clan, a community of people. But there were also dinosaurs in their age! With the dinosaurs they lived in peace and harmony. The people invented many things that could control the sun and moon, that could take you places as fast as light, and so much more! She said it was the era of discovery! But one

day, a powerful leader was corrupted by the powers of one of the inventions of the scientists under him. With the powerful weapon, he had two choices: it could further expand and improve the lives of everyone, or it could give him the strength of a trillion soldiers, the power of a billion wizards and the knowledge of a million sages. And...of course, 'the greed of mankind can never be beaten', as Grandma used to say. He picked the second option and hell was unleashed. Everyone died, except this one single dinosaur. This dinosaur was very clever and outsmarted the bad guy! It knew that the invention would become a lethal weapon if anyone were to possess it, so the dinosaur hid it far deep underground and swore never to let it fall in the hands of evil."

As soon as I ended the story, I heard a knock on the door.

"Honey? May I come in?"

I groaned. She came in anyway.

"I'm not really in the mood to talk, Mom"

"Aria dear, will you excuse us for a moment?"

I watched as Aria stumbled out. I turned back to my mother.

"What?"

"Look honey, I've been thinking and—"

"Save the talk, I'm not listening"" I cut her off.

"Oh honey", my mother sighed, "We know how much effort you've put into this and we *admire* you for it, but don't you think your efforts could be put into something...more useful?"

I sighed, "I knew it. Come on, Mom. You know the stories as well as I do. You were there when Grandma said that she believed that *I* would be the one to revive and find the dinosaur for the invention and now that I've actually found the solution, I can—"

"Mira." she cut me off that time. "You need to let go of some things."

I bit my lip. Of course she would say that. "Never mind then. Just leave. I don't want to talk"

She hesitated and I could tell she wanted to say something, but she just shook her head and left.

I looked down at my feet. That...was the right thing to do, right? I looked to my right as I felt someone take my hand.

"Aria, when did you get back in?" I said to Aria.

"Just now"

I nodded.

"Hey...if you don't see me tomorrow, don't look for me, okay?"

She looked at me curiously, before nodding. My sister listens to me, unlike other people around me. But I'll show them. And I won't stop until I do.

Tales of China's Dinosaurs

Marymount Secondary School, Wong, Hau Cheung Vania – 13

High up in the hills of Jiangxi Province, a group of paleontologists were to reveal a phenomenal find. The team was led by Dr. Lee, a scientist who has great passion for dinosaurs. The team was searching for fossils in an area which had a rich history, on that particular day. Equipped with brushes, hammers and chisels, they were expecting to find something remarkable.

While carefully sifting through the dirt, Min, the youngest member of the team, shouted, "I think I found something!" The others scurried over to see a large, curved bone emerging from the ground. Dr. Lee got down on his knees and swept the soil away from it. "This is incredible! It looks like a titanosaur!" she said with the joy of a child.

Titanosaurs were gigantic dinosaurs which were characterized by a long neck and a large body. As the team carried on digging, they found more bones and each bone gave the team a little more insight into the titanosaur's life which had been lost millions of years ago. Dr. Lee could picture the massive dinosaur moving through the woods, eating plants and trying to stay away from its predators.

The team kept on searching for the fossils every day. Nevertheless, as the time went on, something rather interesting occurred. After a long day of searching for fossils Dr. Lee decided to stay behind and look at the findings they had made that day in the evening. Then, suddenly, she heard some rustling in the bushes. She turned and there was a small dinosaur with feathers standing in front of her – it was a *Sinosauropteryx*, the very dinosaur which has changed the perception of dinosaurs for years.

"Is this real?" Dr. Lee whispered, feeling a mix of disbelief and wonder. The tiny dinosaur approached her, nuzzling her hand as if to say hello. Over the next few days, the *Sinosauropteryx* became a regular visitor, darting around the site and captivating the team of paleontologists.

Dr. Lee soon found out there was more to their discovery than just fossils – it was how do we save these amazing beings for the rest of time. With inspiration, she suggested the group film a documentary on their work and the necessity of the planet's historical archives.

One night while getting ready for the shooting of their documentary, the earth shook from underneath them. Panic ensued as the team scurried for safety. Dr. Lee saw the enormous titanosaur towering, its silhouette against the moonlight with a neck extended up. Simultaneously, the *Sinosauropteryx* started flapping its wings and soars into the air.

After the shakes stopped, the team made it out to a perch and watched in awe at the titanosaur still standing tall like a land guardian. They got it in that very moment, they realised the unique bond they share with these primordial beasts. They weren't just studying bones; they were in a story which had to be written by them.

As the weeks rolled on, Dr. Lee and her team continued their research, feeling more inspired with each discovery. The dragon stories of China's dinosaurs are more than just relics of the past; they are full color stories with life, survival, and nature on the razor edge. With their newfound purpose, the team set out to make sure these stories would live and be told by generations to come.

In the heart of China, the ancient world is waiting to be re-discovered — tales of wonder and connection. The journey for Dr. Lee and her team has only just started, and they were on a mission to get these stories out there.

New Tales of China's Dinosaurs

Pui Kiu College, Cheng, Shun – 12

The province of Liaoning had a secret hidden for millions of years, just waiting to be found. One fateful day, a farmer named Lin stumbled upon a hidden treasure that would astonish the world. While working in the vast fields, his calloused hands felt something unusual beneath the soil. Curious, Lin started to dig carefully, his heart racing with anticipation.

To his amazement, Lin made an amazing discovery. The ancient preserved remains of a dinosaur no one had ever seen before. Scientists who rushed over to investigate his findings were dumbfounded. This was the first ever clearly feathered dinosaur found! They named the new species *Sinosauropteryx*, meaning the China Dragon Bird, and it was the first clear evidence that some dinosaurs had been covered in feathers, not scales.

The discovery of the *Sinosauropteryx* attracted many other paleontologists from all around the world to search for more of China's hidden species. In the following years, they uncovered more than 40 new dinosaur species and 24 flying reptiles called pterosaurs. One of the most incredible finds was the massive titanosaur, discovered in the province of Jiangxi.

There are so many exciting opportunities ahead, and even if I'm not quite interested in dinosaurs, I'm still very thrilled about future discoveries. Just think of the incredible histories the fossils of China might reveal!

A Tale of Time Travel

Pui Kiu College, Cheng, Yu Yan – 13

The universe is a möbius strip. Any point in time is both the future and the past, never-ending, and with no conclusions.

"You cannot change history. Because Fate has already set it in stone."

Despair hit her like a brick wall.
It's Fate. Fate's games. Fate's rules.
And she was powerless to stop any of it.

All the travels in time, all the unforeseen consequences... The death of her friends, her family... Pivotal, yet devastating moments in history...
Nothing. Nothing changed.

In the end, Fate will fix it all. Fate can restore history.

Was this her punishment, then? For discovering the secrets of time?

She bit her lip so hard that it bled a salty iron-taste into her mouth. She turned on her heels and ran out the door of the time-travelling machine, her heart pounding with a mix of fear and determination.
She charged toward the forests.

On the empty dirt road, winds were no longer chilling — a bit damp, maybe, with comforting air currents that carried the scent of spring. The sky was a shade of ash gray, and the dark clouds acted as thick curtains, blocking all the sunlight. The leaves looked particularly fresh and tender, with raindrops trembling on the tips.

She heard a roar of triumph from afar, with growing fascination inside of her.

This was what she was here for.

She had unearthed fossils before — *The stone was beautifully preserved, and the intricate patterns on it looked almost like feathers. She felt a shiver running down her spine as she caressed the surface. She had heard stories of these ancient beasts, but never had she imagined finding a piece of their world.*

"This is a Sinosauropteryx," her colleague had said.

And now here she was, gazing at a pack of real, living dinosaurs.

Overwhelmed by wonder, she wandered deeper into the forest. Suddenly, she heard a low rumble, and the ground trembled beneath her feet. A massive titanosaur emerged from the trees, its long neck swaying as it grazed on the treetops. She watched in awe, her heart pounding. She had stepped into the world of the dinosaurs.

She encountered various creatures — dashing raptors sprinting through the underbrush, magnificent pterosaurs soaring above, and gentle herbivores munching on the lush greenery. Each moment felt like a gift, a fleeting glimpse into a time long forgotten.

She felt no less than pure bliss as she rode on flying dinosaurs, fascinated by the creatures' tales of survival and the challenges of living in a world ruled by instinct. *This was her dream.*

But as days turned into weeks, she began to notice changes. The vibrant colors of the forest started to fade, and the once-thriving landscape grew quiet. They couldn't understand, but she knew — the comet was on a collision course with Earth, and it would change everything.

She didn't want to lose it all again.

Determined to help the ancient creatures, she devised a plan. "We need to go — find a safer place! You guys will die!" She said, desperately rallying the creatures to escape the impending doom.

She felt a deep sense of connection with the dinosaurs. She felt that their fate was intertwined with her own. They had lived millions of years before her, yet their stories echoed in her heart. She was not just a visitor; she was a *part* of them.

"This is our home. We must stay," came the low rumble.

"But—" she protested. "You will die!"

"This is our legacy. We must stay," repeated the voice.

"You don't understand — it'll wipe all of you out!"

"Understanding is overrated," it replied. "Perhaps we are happy with what we know. Plus, where will we go? We are happy with where we are, my dear. Do not worry yourself over our fate."

"I have tried everything!" she sobbed. "Why does it never work?"

"Perhaps fate cannot be changed because it is the best as it is. Do not fret, child — for we have earned great wisdom from the millions of years we have roamed the Earth."

As they spoke, the sky darkened, and the air crackled with energy. The comet streaked across the horizon, illuminating the night with a brilliant light.

In that moment, the huge dinosaur held her close, protecting her with its own hide, "Thank you for doing everything you could."

With a deafening roar, the comet struck the Earth. The ground shook, and a wave of dust enveloped the land. But in the sheltered valley, a soft glow surrounded the dinosaur and her, protecting them from the chaos outside.

As she stood up from the explosion, a bright white light glowed, signalling her leave from this time frame. She braced herself for a new impact, but none came.

"Will you still try to alter the universe?"

Perhaps destiny is inevitable.

And maybe that's okay.

But that didn't mean she wouldn't stop trying to change for the better.

"No," she replied defiantly.

And the being in front of her chuckled fondly as if it had expected no less.

Fossilized Fragments: Echoes of the Past

Pui Kiu College, Cheung, Yik Ham – 14

In the heart of Liaoning Province, where verdant hills rolled like the waves of an ancient ocean, a young paleontologist named Mei Lin embarked on a quest to unearth the past. The late afternoon sun casted golden rays over the landscape, illuminating the rugged terrain that had concealed secrets for millions of years. Mei had always been captivated by the stories of dinosaurs that once roamed this land, but it was the thrill of discovery that propelled her forward in her professional pursuits.

This summer held particular promise; news of a remarkable find in Jiangxi—a new species of titanosaur—had ignited her fervor. What was this creature like? What narratives did its bones harbor? The anticipation coursed through her veins as she meticulously planned her next expedition, determined to explore the untamed wilderness of Jiangxi.

As she prepared her gear, her mentor, Dr. Chen, offered sage advice. “Remember, Mei, the past can be both a guide and a challenge. Keep your heart open to the stories the land whispers to you.”

With those words resonating in her mind, Mei set off on her journey. The train ride to Jiangxi was laden with expectation. As the landscape transitioned from rolling hills to dense forests, she felt an electric pulse in the air—a sense that something monumental lay just beneath her feet.

Upon arriving in Jiangxi, as Mei Lin settled into her campsite, she noticed an old man sitting by a crackling fire, his eyes reflecting the flames as he meticulously carved a small wooden figure. Intrigued, she approached him, drawn by the familiarity of his craft. The old man looked up and offered a warm smile, inviting her to join them. They quickly fell into conversation about their shared love for ancient stories. Mei shared her fascination with dinosaurs, recounting her discoveries and dreams of unearthing fossils. The old man listened intently, his face lighting up with nostalgia as he spoke of his childhood adventures exploring the natural world, hinting at legends of creatures that roamed the earth long ago. Their dialogue flowed effortlessly, bridging the gap between generations, as the fire crackled and the stars began to twinkle overhead.

"You know," he began, "there was a time when dinosaurs roamed these lands, giants that ruled the earth. Some say the very mountains were shaped by their footsteps." Mei Lin listened intently, captivated by his stories. Each revelation deepened her fascination with the past, making her feel a connection to the very earth beneath her feet.

Mei soon united with her team of local paleontologists and eager students. They congregated at the base of a rocky outcrop where the recent titanosaur discovery had been made. The excitement in the group was palpable as they examined the exposed rock layers.

“Here!” a voice called out. It was Li, one of the students, pointing to a series of fossilized bones partially embedded in the rock. The team rushed over, and Mei knelt beside the find, her heart racing. The bones were colossal, indicative of a creature that had once towered over the landscape.

“This could be it,” Mei whispered, her fingers gently brushing the surface of the fossil. “The new titanosaur.”

The team worked day and night, employing a vast repertoire of tools, ranging from razor-sharp chisels to soft-bristled brushes, to carefully extract the bones. As they delved deeper, Mei’s imagination soared, envisioning the titanosaur traversing the lush plains of ancient China, its long neck stretching toward the treetops, while distant relatives of the feathered *Sinosauropteryx* flitted through the air above.

Hours passed, and just as they were about to declare victory over their excavation, an unforeseen challenge arose. A sudden storm rolled in, casting a pall over their efforts. The once-clear sky darkened ominously, and torrential rain began to pour, threatening to wash away the site they had worked so painstakingly to uncover.

“Everyone, we need to secure the area!” Mei shouted over the roar of the wind. Panic rippled through the team as they scrambled to protect the fossils from the deluge. They hastily fashioned makeshift barriers from tarps and fallen branches, but the relentless rain continued to batter their efforts.

As the storm raged on, Mei felt a sense of desperation wash over her. The fossils represented not just remnants of a bygone era, but an opportunity to unravel the mysteries of prehistoric life. If they were lost to the elements, countless stories would remain untold.

After the tempest finally subsided, Mei surveyed the damage. The excavation site was partially flooded, and debris littered the area. The team’s spirits were low, but Mei refused to succumb to despair. “We can’t let this defeat us,” she declared. “We must find a way to salvage what we can.”

With renewed determination, Mei and her team devised a plan. They would excavate the most vulnerable sections of the site, prioritizing the bones and footprint they had uncovered before the storm. They worked tirelessly, employing ingenuity to create drainage channels to divert any potential runoff while carefully extracting the fossils from the saturated ground.

As they labored, Mei’s mind wandered back to the old man she had encountered at the campsite. He had spoken of the land’s memories and the stories it held. “If we listen closely,” she thought, “the fossils might reveal their secrets, even under duress.”

Finally, after hours of painstaking work, they successfully unearthed the prized bones and the massive footprint, preserving them from the encroaching floodwaters. Exhausted but triumphant, the team gathered around their findings, their hearts swelling with pride.

Later that evening, as they analyzed their discoveries, Mei recalled the old man’s words about the echoes of ancient lives. She felt a profound connection to the land, as if the bones were not merely relics but the very essence of the titanosaur’s existence. Each fossil told a story—of survival, adaptation, and the world as it once was.

Weeks later, after countless hours of dedication, the exhibit opened to the public. The centerpiece was the titanosaur skeleton, surrounded by displays of its environment, its contemporaries, and the narratives that interwove them all. Families gathered, children’s eyes wide with wonder as they learned about the titanosaur’s life and the vibrant ecosystem it inhabited.

As Mei stood in front of the exhibit, she felt a profound sense of fulfillment. The whispers of the past had transformed into tales of wonder and discovery. The old man’s wisdom echoed in her mind: the bones were indeed echoes of ancient lives, and now they had become stories that would inspire generations to come.

In that moment, surrounded by the laughter and awe of visitors, Mei realized she was part of something much larger—a continuum of exploration and understanding that bridged the past and the present. The tales of China’s dinosaurs were alive, their stories beckoning to all who dared to listen. And through her perseverance and the unity of her team, they had not only salvaged the bones but had also woven a narrative that would endure through time.

The Galaxy War

Pui Kiu College, Ho, Cheuk Yiu – 13

I had never encountered a real life dinosaur before that day in the lush forest of Liaoning. My family was a line of archaeologists who made grand deliveries, like digging out fossils of a 12 feet long T-Rex, finding well reserved bones of a baby diplodocus which sadly died during a landslide and more. My parents' amazing jobs inspired me to run every day in the words, clutching a shovel and brush in my hand to search for more undiscovered dinosaur bones.

There was one particular day which I still remember now. It was a sunny Saturday morning, and as always, my parents were in some other country making discoveries (pretty sure it was Egypt). I did my morning routine, and went to the backyard to gaze at the magnificent trees and buzzing wildlife. The giant green leaves, and the gigantic wise trees called to me, and so I grabbed my digging supplies, skipped into the forest.

The fresh earthy wind kissed me gently on the face, and the soft soil and grass were like the carpets of the forest. Occasionally, some wild game may walk past and glance at me, welcoming this visitor in the forest. I looked around, finding a good spot to dig for bones, until I heard a rustle behind me.

I felt the soft breathing on my neck, it was damp and warm, something I never felt before. I slowly turned around, as a combination of red, blue and yellow rushed into my eyes. Upon closer look, I was frozen from top to bottom – there was a real life raptor standing behind me. I screamed and tried to move my stiff legs, however they were stuck to the ground, and I only succeeded in stumbling around and ultimately falling towards the ground. I put my arms over my head, hoping that it won't come near and hurt me. After a few seconds, nothing happened. I slowly opened my eyes, and found it watching me with its curious eyes. I put down my arms, and gradually looked at its magnificent furry body. The body was azure, and the bright red crest on its head quivered. The tail flickered as it crawled near me, licking me its bright pink tongue like an affectionate dog. I laughed as the tongue tickled my face, and gently pushed it away. I stroked the chin of it and felt the soft, almost dreamlike fur as it gently laid its head on my lap.

I decided to name it Scarlet, after its bright red crest. Scarlet took me to its nest, and I saw its beautiful; eggs lying in soft straw. Ever since that day, we have had a special bond. Every day, we would meet in the forest, and I would usually prepare some fresh meat to feed it, but not too much as I did not want to take away its natural hunting abilities. We had great times together until one day, it didn't come to our usual meeting place. I was so freaked out, so I quickly ran to its nest and found it laying there with its eggs hatched! I saw multiple bright blue baby raptors lying closely to its mother. Now, not only is there one raptor in the huge forest, but now. I have made it a secret, as I don't want anyone to find out our secret bond.

As the years passed, the forest became a sanctuary for me, scarlet, and her growing family. Every day was filled with laughter and joy as I played with the now-teenage raptors, whom I named Ruby, Sapphire, and Topaz, after their striking colours. Together, we explored the hidden corners of the forest, climbing trees, splashing in streams and discovering the wonders of nature. But as much as I cherished our adventures, I knew that secrets have a way of attracting attention.

One afternoon, while playing hide and seek, I spotted a group of hikers in the distance, their cameras aimed at the treetops. Panic surges through me. I had to protect Scarlet and her young one from being discovered. With a heavy heart, I gathered my raptors and led them deeper into the forest, where the trees grew thicker and the underbush was dense. We found a hidden cave, its entrance obscured by vine and moss. It was the perfect place for Scarlet and her children to stay safe. As they nestled inside, I felt a mix of sadness and determination. I had to find a way to keep them hidden.

Over the next few weeks, I visited them every day, bringing food and spending time together. I crafted a plan to create a barrier of fallen branches and natural camouflage around the cave, making it nearly impossible for anyone to

stumble upon it. One evening, as I sat outside the cave, watching the sunset paint the sky in hues of orange and yellow, I realized how much I had learnt from my time with Scarlet and her hatchlings. They taught me about loyalty, courage, and the importance of love. I knew that while I couldn't keep them hidden forever, I could ensure they lived free and wild, just as nature intended.

One fateful day, I heard distant voices approaching. My heart raced as I recognized the sound of familiar footsteps – my parents had returned from their trip and were looking for me! I hadn't told them about Scarlet, fearing they would think I was dreaming. But as they entered the forest, I knew I had to show them the truth. I led them to the cave, my heart pounding. At first, they were shocked, their eyes wide with disbelief. However as they watched Scarlet and her young ones interact, their expressions softened. They understood the bond we shared, and their scientist hearts were filled with wonder. Instead of taking them away, my parents promised to help protect the raptors. They contact a group of forest rangers who specialize in safeguarding endangered species. With their help, we established a protected area in the forest, ensuring that Scarlet and her hatchlings could thrive without fear of being discovered and harmed.

As the years went by, I watched as Ruby, Sapphire, and Topaz grew into magnificent creatures, roaming freely in their protected home. I finally decided to publish my stories with Scarlet and her kids online, and became a spokesperson for them, sharing our story with others to raise awareness about the importance of preserving wildlife and their habitats. And so, in the lush forests of Liaoning, the legend of a young archaeologist, a curious raptor named Scarlet, and her family lived on, inspiring generations to cherish and protect the wonders of the natural world.

New Tales of China's Dinosaurs

Pui Kiu College, Tong, Tsz Yat William – 13

“Back in my day, we kids would go out and play all day, laze in the sun, and not....”

It seemed like it would never end with my grandpa. I decided to take the easy way out, sprinting out of the house while he continued blabbering about his youthful days. Here in the Liaoning province, there wasn't much to do except sprawling on the bed napping. There was a mountain right next to our house, but it wasn't any out-of-the-ordinary and sometimes dangerous to go near. Today was different, as if I don't find a way to entertain myself until dawn, I might actually go crazy from boredom.

Running up the mountain, the light pierced through the patterned leaves, shining a light in front of me, as if a leading pathway. It was unusually quiet. The chirping of birds couldn't be heard, and the deprivation of life was unsettling. Suddenly, the ground beneath me gave away, I tried to immediately jump but I was already tumbling into a dark hole. The murkiness inside sent chills down my spine, I looked for a way out, yet I couldn't even see my very fingers. Out of the blue, a meek chirping sound rang in front of me. Instinctively without reason, I followed. Maybe, it was leading me out of this pit? A sudden light in front of me grew brighter and brighter. As I walked into it, my pupils were blinded — I finally got out! I turned around, just to find a feathered yet scaly creature staring at me. My initial reaction was to scream and run and freak out, but a wave of curiosity washed over me. This didn't look like any normal animal. This looks something more prehistoric. More ancient.

“Stay here.” I said.

I didn't expect it to understand, but it seemed to acknowledge my order. I ran down the hill, rushing into my house to find an encyclopedia of dinosaurs. My grandpa was already fast asleep, snoring loudly. After a few minutes of searching, I was in disbelief. Not a single match! This dinosaur is a rare one, and...It's still alive. I could barely contain my excitement. I rushed back up the hill, where the dinosaur was still waiting. I patted it and fed it some raisins. It didn't seem to be fond of eating humans, which was a relief. The dinosaur was covered with fur of orange hue, with stripes of black dashes and white streaks. It had scaly yellowish feet and a thin but muscular body. It had nimble movements, tossing its head from time to time, observing me also. This was such a major discovery, which I couldn't keep to myself. Examining online, I got in contact with a paleontologist, and had the reason for “possible fossil discovery” to meet up with him. I hid the ancient reptile in a miniature box where it laid quietly without fuss, and I set off to meet the paleontologist. At a nearby fossil site, I was greeted by Dr Yu. We shook hands, and he asked me where and what fossils I found. To his surprise, he was as shocked as I was when I showed him the dinosaur. In fact, he was going berserk more than I was.

“A lifetime discovery!” He kept repeating to himself.

“So what are you going to do with it?” I asked curiously.

“Dissect it, of course. With the living genes of an ancient reptile, imagine all of the new discoveries the biologists of this era could make!” He replied excitedly.

I couldn't believe my ears. An innocent life was about to be killed and examined, for the sake of “evolution”? My mind told me not to, but my body started to move on its own. I picked up the box and rushed away, ignoring the doctor's shouts. I ran back to the mountain, leaving the doctor behind my dust. He couldn't find me anymore. As I went back to the pit, I opened the box and let the dinosaur out.

I quietly shoosed it away. It looked at me one last time and dashed away. A cool breeze brushed against my face, seemingly telling me to forget about it, and move on.

The Last Dinosaur

Pui Kiu College, Wong, Lok – 13

“Back in my day, we kids would go out and play all day, laze in the sun, and not...”

It seemed like it would never end with my grandpa. I decided to take the easy way out, sprinting out of the house while he continued blabbering about his youthful days. Here in the Liaoning province, there wasn't much to do except sprawling on the bed napping. There was a mountain right next to our house, but it wasn't any out-of-the-ordinary and sometimes dangerous to go near. Today was different, as if I don't find a way to entertain myself until dawn, I might actually go crazy from boredom.

Running up the mountain, the light pierced through the patterned leaves, shining a light in front of me, as if a leading pathway. It was unusually quiet. The chirping of birds couldn't be heard, and the deprivation of life was unsettling. Suddenly, the ground beneath me gave away, I tried to immediately jump but I was already tumbling into a dark hole. The murkiness inside sent chills down my spine, I looked for a way out, yet I couldn't even see my very fingers. Out of the blue, a meek chirping sound rang in front of me. Instinctively without reason, I followed. Maybe, it was leading me out of this pit? A sudden light in front of me grew brighter and brighter. As I walked into it, my pupils were blinded — I finally got out! I turned around, just to find a feathered yet scaly creature staring at me. My initial reaction was to scream and run and freak out, but a wave of curiosity washed over me. This didn't look like any normal animal. This looks something more prehistoric. More ancient.

“Stay here.” I said.

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I quietly shooed it away. It looked at me one last time, and dashed away. A cool breeze brushed against my face, seemingly telling me to forget about it, and move on.

New Tales of China's Dinosaurs

Pui Kiu College, Wong, Tsz Ni Jeannie – 13

“Encountering a real life dinosaur? Ha! You must be delusional. They don’t exist!” Never in a million years would I have imagined that they only existed in fiction stories, but that thought has been completely transmitted since the day in the forest....

It was a delightful afternoon, the weather was pleasant, the sky was crystal-clear, the birds were singing their hearts out and the flowers were having a dance battle. The day was going peacefully as I was taking a stroll in the forest while appreciating the picturesque view. What could possibly go wrong, right?

As I walked further into the woods, I suddenly saw something moving in the bushes and heard rustling sounds. I thought to myself, “Oh, it must be just a normal creature, I wonder what it is!” I rushed to the bushes full of curiosity with my eyes sparkling with anticipation.

Just as I was close to the bushes, an excruciating and a thunderous growl broke through the silence. Chills went down my spine as I was in a state of disbelief due to the deafening sound. It was at the moment where the fairy tale turned into a nightmare, the sky turned dark, the adorable animals were nowhere to be seen and a chilling breeze whispered into my ear. What is going on? When I was going to turn back and make a run for it, I noticed a humongous shadow hovering over me! My body felt glued to the spot as I nearly jumped out of my skin when I looked up and saw an intimidating dinosaur in front of my own two eyes!

My stage of fear and shock both reached their peaks while my jaw dropped to the ground. This is surreal! I must be daydreaming out of the blue, a thought popped up in my head, wait – is this the legend of the existing Chinese dinosaur? Deja-vu went into my bloodstream when I recognized the familiar figure from a famous Chinese myth that was known for harming people.

In a blink of an eye, the unfriendly dinosaur’s hiss woke me up and I was snapped back to reality.

“Should I fight or flight?” I thought to myself immediately. Witnessing the amount of fury in its eyes, I dashed as fast as a rocket launching and flew through the entire forest repeating “I’m doomed!” in my mind over and over.

When my legs felt like heavy metal, dragging me down with each step I took, I was going to lose the battle to the dinosaur who had been struck to my back. Thankfully, it had given up on chasing me! The knot in my stomach untangled and I felt as light as a feather.

Not long after, I finally got out of the forest and arrived at the place I thought I would have never seen again – home. Phew! Fortunately, I was safe. Thank god! Who knew what my ending could be like!

In the end, after much hesitation on what I should do about such an unforgettable experience, I decided to sell the story to Hollywood and became a well-known public figure – “The Dinosaur Guy”!

New Tales of China's Dinosaurs

Singapore International School Hong Kong, Larad, Charles – 13

A few hundred kilometers from Beijing, China, 2125

Men dressed head to toe in black sprachle through the thick, sinking snow, each holding a powerful flashlight, but they were not efficient against the heavy blizzard. All around them, exorbitant, high-tech equipment drill holes into the nearly impenetrable river — now permafrost. At first glance, it is a very questionable decision to send hundreds of men to the tip of Heilongjiang, a river bordering Russia, and also the coldest province of China, in the most frigid time of the year. But what may not meet the eye: a 200 ft long dinosaur buried in the ice, perfectly preserved.

A few hours later, with the help of several gargantuan cranes and hundreds of other intricate pieces of equipment, they managed to get out the piece of permafrost with the still unidentified dinosaur that would certainly break a world record onto a few enormous transporters, quite like the ones that they used to transport the *Saturn V* equipment. From there, the transporters would take the dinosaur all the way to Beijing for further research and analysis. No one realised, however, that the moment it left the river, its red eyes flew wide open.

NIBS (National Institute of Biological Sciences), Beijing

The NIBS was in a complete state of panic. They just conducted a test on the dinosaur and concluded that it was not dormant, and could break through the ice any time. They gave it a name too: *Natura Obnubilatrix*. Scientists from across the world were immediately brought to Beijing, and with the help of the rest of the world, the scientists of the NIBS managed to keep the dinosaur in an underground container they thought would hold it.

1 month later

Alarm bells all over the place were ringing, lights were flashing, the Chinese military was storming in, and above all, a 50 foot tall dinosaur, the *Natura Obnubilatrix* was crashing about. Even miles away, you could hear the *thud, thud* of its heavy footsteps. Already, hundreds were dead, the container obliterated, (hence the name *Natura Obnubilatrix*!) and the NIBS was closer to just a pile of rubble rather than the magnificent building it was a few minutes ago. But one thing was certain: the monster was on the loose.

Beijing was devastated. Completely. The heavy, dark green blur had trampled over pretty much everything, killing thousands, in search of something even the top scientists weren't sure of. This wasn't just a national disaster anymore. Military from all over the world were coming in, but even thousands of submachine guns shooting millions of rounds a minute would not pierce through the monster's unbreakable skin. There was only one hope: a delivery man named Li Wei.

Of course, Li wasn't any average delivery man, he was a genius, a prodigy from the age of 3. Li had been raised from a very poor family, who had barely been able to pay for his school fees. Despite his incontrovertible passion for paleontology, and his phenomenal school grades for biology and computer science, which allowed him to skip multiple grades and graduate from high school as a valedictorian barely 16, his parents still refused to send him to university, in spite of the fact that prestigious universities from not only China like Harvard, MIT and Oxford were offering him full scholarships, claiming that he was still too young to leave them. Being very filial and pious, he agreed to stay in his hometown of Tianjin.

Tianjin, China

Li watched the scenes in Beijing unfold with trepidation. He quickly grabbed some extra clothes, his life savings (\$1050 – just enough for a high speed rail ride to Beijing), some equipment and headed off to the nearest railway station.

30 minutes later, Beijing, China

The area near the subway station wasn't that badly damaged, but it was about to be. The *Natura Obnubilatrix* was bearing down on him just 200m away. Li quickly dived for cover in a nearby half-destroyed building, and the ground trembled as the dinosaur passed. He dug out his tracking equipment and threw a few antennas at the dinosaur as it passed. (Li had acquired some scrap metal and tools on the train). His aim was spot on, and the monster wouldn't have felt a thing. Li took out another fancy-looking gadget, pressed some buttons, and activated the antennas. Then, he got out a piece of paper and a pen, and started recording the *Natura Obnubilatrix's* movements.

Another 30 minutes later

Li was agape. The *Natura Obnubilatrix's* target: the old artificial intelligence hub! Artificial intelligence was stopped and banned in 2025, when the governments of the world united and put a stop to artificial intelligence, fearing that it would wreak havoc on human civilization. Li suddenly realized that the *Natura Obnubilatrix* was a living proof of that. He had to spread the word. The *Natura Obnubilatrix* was simply AI. All they had to do was emit a high-frequency EMP and the *Natura Obnubilatrix* would stop working. It had always been rumored that criminals had hid away the last piece of AI somewhere in China. It was always thought to be a myth because no one found it. There was just one problem. No one believed him.

The military called him a liar, the news reporters said he was crazy. But he couldn't stop. Not when thousands were dead, and millions more could die too. He had to take matters to his own hands, and no one could stop him. Using his equally strong engineering and salvaging skills, Li quickly found the materials he could use to make a DIY EMP.

The machine was ready. But was he? Li had the power to destroy every single electronic device in a 5 kilometer radius, and he would most likely be sent to jail. But he couldn't stop. Not when the dinosaur was on its way to Tianjin. And then he pressed the button.

The force of the EMP was miscalculated by Li, probably because he had about 5 minutes to do the calculations. As it turns out, there was a shockwave that reached 20 meters, which destroyed everything, *everything*, in its path. Li stood no chance. He was instantly vaporized. His last thought was: *at least the world is safe without AI.*

Chronicles of a Sinosauropteryx

Singapore International School Hong Kong, Lo, Jaymee – 14

Sinosauropteryx, Early Cretaceous, Early Morning

Dappled sunlight spills over the verdant field, the lush landscape unrolling before me like that of a scroll painting. The trees are thick-trunked with deep grooves, stained in varying shades of honey-brown by the sun's delicate caress. In the distance, a mountain rises crudely from the earth, an angry slash in the serene landscape. I have always revelled in its rudimentary beauty – a reminder that my life as a sinosauropteryx is never smooth.

I yawn, gently shaking my striped tail, the reddish brown bands glinting in the morning sun. Beside me, in the copse of trees, a few of the other dinosaurs stir but do not wake, their minds still lost in the land of dreams. I pad over to the edge of the glade, where the forest is a silent presence on all sides, always intently present, yet unspeaking, its secrets hidden in the folds of the wind's breath. I then scamper into its arms, the smell of damp moss and crisp conifers pervading my senses, rolling over me in exultant waves.

Yes, I tell myself. *Today will be the start of a new chapter, of fresh beginnings and a vivacious life – a new era of ME.* Or as my charming friend Psittacosaurus prefers to say, “Reliving an identical day to yesterday and tomorrow.”

★ ★ ★

Interlude

The mountain slouches like a paper lantern folding in on itself, thick veins of hot magma pulsing madly under its surface. Its grinding heart beats to the erratic rhythm of the Earth, unpredictable and elusive.

It exhales and groans, a raucous grating sound that sends brief convulsions spasming through the landscape.

Then all is silent.

All is still.

There is no pause – nor staccato – in the rhythmic snores of the dinosaurs dozing in the grassland, their chests rising and falling periodically as a metronome. Life continues, as it always has.

★ ★ ★

Sinosauropteryx, Early Cretaceous, Late Morning

A gentle breeze brushes past, infused with the smoky scent of moss and damp bark. The bright twittering of birds intertwines with the dense rustling of leaves and the splashing of water not far off. As I trek to the heart of the lush forest, I arrive at a small lake. It spreads like a puddle of ink, a deep blue pool amongst the foliage. The waves are calm, undulating crests rippling across the glassy surface.

As I glance down, I feel a sharp pain stabbing into my claw, and I grimace to find a pebble lodged against it. While I scrape it loose against the bark of a tree, there's a rustle of leaves in a nearby bush. My gaze snaps back up and my heart skips a beat.

Caught off guard, I watch a shadow peer out from behind a bush and tread gently towards me. His stiff feathers bristle as he moves, his short neck bobbing along.

Upon reaching me, we stand side by side at the edge of the lake, the swishing of his tail against the dirt the only sound permeating the fond silence.

Flashing a lopsided smile, I say, “Hey Beipiaosaurus.”

“Good morning yourself, Sinosauropteryx,” he greets cheerfully, cautiously dipping his talons into the chilly water.

I gaze up at him. Even stooping, back hunched, he towers over me, nearly three times my height, the barest wisps of buttery sunlight leaking through his deep brown feathers. I don't remember when it began, but it has become a daily routine for us to convene at the lake to satisfy our yearning for companionship – not that either of us would ever care to admit it.

Gazing at my reflection in the water, I preen my russet feathers whilst watching Beipiaosaurus prod at himself with his beak. It is then that we hear a thudding of footsteps as Psittacosaurus emerges from the bushes, the maple brown of his rough, striped scales accentuated by the sunlight deflected off the lake's surface. He plops down beside us, eyes half-closed, expression as stoic and indifferent as ever.

He is the oldest of us all, though his age shows through his cynical frame of mind rather than his appearance.

Psittacosaurus burrows his snout into a shrub, emerging with it full of multicoloured berries, two streaming rivers of purple and blue juice leaking from the corners of his mouth. He lays some of the little fruit on the grass – an offering for Beipiaosaurus. He knows better than to offer me any: even with my seemingly harmless appearance, I'm still a carnivore.

In return, Beipiaosaurus cracks the outer shell of his own yellow fruit in half against a jagged rock, kicking it across to Psittacosaurus.

As the sun climbs across the clouded sky, we talk and talk and talk, unaware of the passing hours.

It isn't until late afternoon that we part. "Later!" Beipiaosaurus hollers, waving his tail excitedly.

I throw a casual glance over my shoulder as I trek on, "See you tomorrow!"

Psittacosaurus shrugs his heavy shoulders, nodding in acknowledgement, murmuring offhandedly, "If there even is a tomorrow."

I scoff, shaking my head. *That Psittacosaurus... Always the pessimist.*

★ ★ ★

Interlude

White plumes of acid-laced smoke rise from the mouth of the mountain, cracks splitting across the ground like a network of cobwebs and hot steam forcing its way through the seams.

The mountain is anxious, impatient, aching *desperate* to prove its might. It is more than a mountain –

It's a volcano.

And it's ready to blow.

★ ★ ★

Sinosauropteryx, Early Cretaceous, Afternoon

A flash of red and yellow. Four tiny legs scampering across the dirt. The lizard scurries across the forest floor, oblivious to my presence.

Seeing this, I smirk to myself: prey acquired.

Without wasting a second, I give chase, accidentally letting out an excited squeal.

Startled, the lizard's head whirls around in my direction. He dashes off in a panic, but I'm not far behind.

I follow him as he weaves between the bushes nimbly, and we reach the edge of the clearing before he disappears from sight, swallowed by the shadows. I shake my head and let out a sigh, defeated.

It's okay, I reassure myself. *There's always tomorrow.*

Sinosauropteryx, Early Cretaceous, Evening

The sun dips below the horizon, washing the earth in its fiery gaze. In the near distance, the volcano stands firmly, towering over all. I gaze at it, torn between admiration and fear.

Just then, a deep rumbling commences, summoned from the very heart of the Earth. The ground trembles and shakes, sharp squawks of fear from other dinosaurs splitting the still silence. They tumble to the ground, their legs giving way.

I glance down and quickly close my talon around a vine stretching across the forest floor, tugging at it to ascertain its strength.

When I raise my gaze once more, I see a pair of bright yellow rivers streaming down the mouth of the volcano, their lambent edges tinged vermillion. They leak down the charred black rock like blood from vampire fangs, a mesmerising beauty.

Around me, transfixed dinosaurs ooh and aah in excitement at this newly-discovered wonder.

A wise-aged dinosaur looks affrighted, urgency and fear carved into his features. He shakes his head, desperation contorted across his gleaming face. "There is no way out," he whispers, his peridot-tinted eyes reflecting the tides of yellow as they crest across the ground.

We all stand gazing at the volcano, enthralled by the flowing red rushing down it. That evening, underneath the burning stars, we welcome beauty, and beauty embraces us, fervent and all-consuming as we offer it all of us.

Epilogue

Life was smothered from the land, the lights snuffed out from each of the ingenuous critters' souls. The volcano had ravaged all in its path, leaving a barren landscape stripped of zeal in its wake.

The next morning, the rays of the sun leaked from the sky, soaking the desolate wasteland. Wiry frames of once-flourishing plants curled in on themselves, dried and shrivelled.

In the distance, a mountain rose crudely from the earth, a bleeding scar across the crimson-stained landscape. Its stomach rumbled and the ground trembled, the atmosphere crackling with the promise of its return.

Tyrannosaurus Rex

Singapore International School Hong Kong, Yu, Yat Hong David – 13

As Jiang Lin settled into the plush seat of the time machine, a gentle hum embraced him. The control panel flickered to life, displaying a cascade of numbers.

With a soft whirring sound, the machine began to vibrate, colours morphing into a whirlpool of light. Jiang Lin rocked back and forth in his seat, his face pale, jaw stiff. He felt the trembling in his arms and found his hands tight on the gun which was used for self-defence purposes. First a month, then a year, then a decade passed! Thoughts raced in his mind as Jiang Lin watched the numbers tick down.

There were seven men in the machine – Wang Hao, the tour leader and five other passengers who glanced at each other nervously. Moments later, the vibrations ceased, and he stood out in the clearing.

With a loud hiss, the door swung open, and people began climbing out, mouths agape in wonder. Grinning like a Cheshire cat, Wang Hao stated, ‘That, my friends, is the jungle of 145 million years ago in ancient Jiangxi.’

A turquoise-blue stream wound its way through the field. Babbling and burbling, it sprung over the rocks in its way. Chords of soft light shone down from above, bathing its surface in gold. Jiang Lin gazed in awe at the beauty of it all. Suddenly, a colossal figure emerged from the foliage – a towering Brachiosaurus, its long neck arched majestically as it reached for the treetops.

‘Just look at that,’ Jiang Lin said, his voice barely above a whisper. ‘It’s incredible.’

As he glanced sideways, he saw a plethora of magnificent dinosaurs grazing. Their long, sweeping crest curved elegantly over their heads, showcasing a blend of lavender and canary yellow. Overhead, reptiles with slender beaks outstretched their wings as they soared elegantly, bodies adorned with shimmering colours of deep crimson and fiery orange, cawing joyously. Jiang Lin grinned uncontrollably as he admired the creatures in wonder.

All of a sudden, a clap of thunder startled him as he jumped back. The azure blue sky darkened into night in a second.

The forest loomed ahead, dark and foreboding, as the sun dipped below the horizon. Towering trees, their gnarled branches clawing at the rising moon, cast long shadows across the damp ground.

As Jiang Lin stepped forward, the crunch of twigs underfoot broke the silence. A thick mist curled around the underbrush, slowly swallowing the fading light. Coils of vaporous mist wrapped the shaggy oak trees. They writhed around it like a milky smoke, sensuous and illusory. It deadened sound, haunted trees and poured into empty spaces.

The chilling breeze whispered through the leaves, carrying with it an unsettling feeling that something watched from the depths of the woods. A distant hoot of a pterodactyl echoed, mingling with the creaks and groans of the trees. Twisted roots protruded through the ground like skeletal fingers reaching for him.

‘Hold it,’ Wang Hao whispered, and everybody froze. The corner of his lips slowly turned up as he continued, ‘There he is. Just behind that boulder. The king, the royal majesty of all animals himself.’

The chattering of the jungle faded as the pounding of footsteps smacked one by one against the floor. Out of the corner, in great strides, came the Tyrannosaurus Rex.

It was a monstrous silhouette against the sun, towering forty feet from snout to tail. His jaws, lined with teeth that glistened like jagged blades, opened wide in a fearsome, deafening roar that reverberated through the dense jungle. Its icy reptilian eyes had no expression, sending chills down Jiang Lin’s spine. The ground trembled beneath his weight, sending vibrations through the earth as it flexed his robust arm muscles against his oily, saliva-ridden chest, clawing at the humid air.

‘It can’t be killed,’ Jiang Lin quietly announced his verdict. His breathing quickened, and the rifle in his hands felt like a toy gun. ‘We were imbeciles to come. We’re all dead! Dead!’

‘Shut up!’ Wang Hao snapped. ‘The beast will hear us!’

‘Get me out of here. I didn’t know it was going to be this gargantuan, this ferocious. Now I want out.’ Jiang Lin mumbled.

‘Then go! Hide in the machine. We’ll remit you half of your fee!’ Wang Hao exclaimed.

"Yes." Jiang Lin was numb with panic. His feet twitched back and forth, as if he was trying to make them move. He gave a muffled grunt of helplessness.

‘Jiang Lin!’

His face was clammy and as pale as a ghost. He blinked a few times, then took a few steps, shuffling.

‘Wrong way!’

At the first sight of motion, the Tyrannosaurus Rex lunged forward, covering a hundred meters in a few seconds. Its mouth twisted into a menacing grin as it reached down to fondle with the men, to crush them like egg shells, to cram them into his throat as they were still shrieking at the top of their lungs.

The men immediately jerked their guns up and began to fire a torrent of metallic bullets, pelting his coarse and hideous skin. Enraged, the beast unleashed a thunderous roar and charged forward.

‘Stand your ground!’ Wang Hao ordered, his voice drowned out by the rapid footsteps of the Tyrannosaurus Rex.

Jiang Lin’s vision blurred, yet he pushed on blindly through the dense vegetation. Thorns and branches tore at his flesh, but provided no hindrance to his relentless pursuer. Jiang Lin could hear its heavy footsteps gaining, feel its hot breath upon his heels. With a final burst of adrenaline-fueled instinct, he dove headlong into a tangle of scrub. He was safe.

All of a sudden, a shrill shriek pierced the starry sky, and a few seconds later there was the sickening pop of bones crunching. Trembling, Jiang Lin slowly looked up and saw Wang Hao, limp and lifeless, dangling in the slaving jaws of the beast. In a moment of panic, Jiang Lin fired again, but at his metallic eyes, at his pitch-black pupils.

The ground trembled ominously as the massive Tyrannosaurus rex staggered, its powerful limbs quaking under the strain of its own weight. A guttural roar erupted from its throat, a sound filled with both fury and despair. With a final, despairing bellow, the great beast faltered. Time seemed to suspend as it slowly tilted backwards, its huge head bowing toward the ground. Dust and debris erupted around it, swirling in a chaotic frenzy. Slowly, the Tyrannosaurus Rex collapsed.

As the dust settled, an eerie silence fell over the forest.

He could feel the beads of perspiration trickle down his neck. He was trembling. ‘I did it,’ Jiang Lin thought. ‘I killed a Tyrannosaurus Rex.’

Shaking, he got up slowly and walked around the carcass. Within, he could hear blood running a final instant from sac to spleen, everything shutting off and closing up forever. Next to the beast lay the distorted bodies of the men, faces twisted in a silent scream. Blood pooled around their head, staining the grass a dark maroon, and each body had jagged marks of sharp teeth from head to toe.

A cold wave of panic washed over him. What if he was next, what if another dinosaur was stalking him at this very moment? The thought tightened around his chest, urging him to escape this nightmare. He turned around, heart pounding, desperate to flee from the horror that lay before him.

Gathering up all his courage, he took a deep breath and made a break for the Time Machine. Jiang Lin sprinted through the dark recesses of the jungle, his breath ragged. Adrenaline coursed through his veins, and he could barely see a few feet ahead of him from this speed. He felt alive, his calf muscles burning up and the chilly wind biting into his lungs.

The time machine was up ahead and he could see it crystal clear. He quickly opened the door and slammed it shut, before dropping down to the chair and slumping against the backseat. As he sighed, relief washed over him like a gentle tide, washing away the remnants of fear and dread. He was no longer tethered to the horrors of the jungle, and he felt the heavy weight of the world lift from his shoulders.

He immediately leaned forward and set the dials for the year 2100. There was a blinding flash of white light, and he clutched his rifle tightly. Finally, the heavy metal door swung open and he stepped out.

He was welcomed by the sight of people gathered around him, expressions changing from excitement to shock, seeing as he was the only one.

‘Where are the others?’ An elderly lady demanded.

Panic suffocated him as he sputtered, ‘They... they’re all dead! They got killed by that... that beast!’

The elderly lady opened her mouth to speak, but her voice cut off as her face froze suddenly. ‘Behind... behind you.’

Jiang Lin slowly turned around and met the same icy, metallic eyes of a baby Tyrannosaurus Rex glaring back at him.

The All-seeing Eyes: A Black and White Revelation

St. Clare's Girls' School, Lau, Cheuk Yiu, Valerie – 12

Thousands of moons ago, the world was serene and undisturbed. Flowers bloomed all over, animals grazed on vast fields of grass, and the air was crisp and fragrant, filled with the sweet scent of blossoms and the earthly aroma of damp soil.

Deep in the Luminous Leafwood, I slept as the world revolved around the sun. Millennia passed, and I've seen the world from all angles. I've seen radiant and innocent hearts, as well as the nefarious and malicious ones.

I once had a human friend named Yu. Yu was an incredibly hard-working man. I met him while he was digging a river path.

I questioned him, "Hello there, young man. Who are you, and why are you digging a river path in the middle of a snowstorm? Each day, I soar freely in the sky, and I can see you here, working tirelessly no matter the conditions."

"I am Yu. I am digging a river path to build a path for the water to flow into the ocean. The dam that our ancestors built has been weakened over time, and it is threatening to break soon. Every time it breaks, the water destroys our crops and houses. Nonetheless, we have found a way to let the water into the ocean without further destruction.

Although it takes a long time to finish this, I am confident that we will succeed, majestic beast." He declared with a determined look in his eyes.

"I have no doubt that you would not," I remarked.

After that, I started to visit him more often. I noticed that each time the darkness had fallen, he would not go to his tiny little house but stay at the riverside, sleeping until the first rays of light appeared and he would use that mini little tool to continue digging a river path. As I watch him from high above, I wonder why he wouldn't go to his tiny little human house. I tried to shrug off the thought, but curiosity got the best of me. I flew down just to find that Yu has aged decades and the river...

"You still have a short path left to dig until it reaches the ocean!" I exclaimed.

"Yes, and I'll finally be able to reunite with my wife and son!" Yu rushed the words out in a fevered tone.

"Wait... you have not seen your family in these few months?" I was astounded.

"A few months? A few decades have passed! Perhaps to a majestic beast like you, it is an extremely short amount of time, but to us humans, it is an exceptionally long time. I haven't stepped inside the doorway of my house since I succeeded my father. Even when she birthed our child, still I didn't go inside."

"Be that as it may, why?"

"Even though many people might think I don't care about my wife or child, it's not true. Each rainy season, the water rises, and the dam breaks, flooding the whole village. By digging this river path, I can redirect the water to the ocean and prevent our village from being damaged. I hope my village won't have to suffer any longer," he explained. At that moment, I realized that Yu was truly an extraordinary man. No other man would have spent decades digging a river path just to save his village from flooding and suffering.

Tempus Fugit. Another few centuries slipped away like grains of sand through an hourglass, following the stretch of a long winter's hibernation.

Beside a tranquil lake, where the water glistened like diamonds under the sun, Ying Zheng found me. Unlike Yu, who was kind-hearted and cordial, Ying Zheng was vigilant and haughty, radiating an aura of command.

He approached cautiously, his gaze flickering between appreciation and greed as he studied me. Reluctant to show interest, I narrowed my eyes at him. "I've never seen a heavenly creature like you," he exclaimed, his voice filled with awe. "It would even look better in my gardens."

"I won't and will never be contained!" I snarled, my voice a rumble like distant thunder. Flames erupted from my mouth, crackling with intensity and threatening to engulf him in fire.

With a piercing shriek, he turned sharply on his heel, fleeing from the inferno that was my rage.

Drawing up to my full height, I unfurled my wings wide, majestic, and powerful. With a forceful beat, I soared skyward, retreating to the Luminous Leafwood—a hidden sanctuary far from the prying eyes of humanity.

That encounter marked my first meeting with this lowly human, and I could not ignore the weight of that moment.

On a breezy autumn day, with the air crisp and full of decaying leaves, I wandered the woods in search of prey.

However, the unmistakable scent of smoke curled around me like a warning, compelling me to investigate.

There was an enormous hole in the ground, and fire was blazing from it. I flew closer to take a look. Inside there were—

Scrolls? The humans were burning the scrolls they spent moons writing, their work—turned to ashes and smoke before my eyes. A wave of despair washed over me as I heard the haunting chorus of tiny voices, high-pitched and filled with anguish. I felt compelled to draw closer, the chilling cries echoing in the still air.

I tucked myself behind a gnarled, towering tree, the shadows wrapping around me like a shroud, hidden from the frantic crowd of humans, yet unable to escape their cries of terror and sorrow.

"—Please! Without him, we cannot survive!" the voices wailed, trembling with fear. "Don't kill me! Please! I beg you!" Each plea dripped with desperation, a cry for mercy that pierced the gloom surrounding us. "I'll do anything! Please!"

What horrors are unfolding here?

My heart ached as I beheld the grim scene, the humans swallowed by the enormous hole, their bodies interred alongside the ashes of the scrolls—so many dreams and stories extinguished, lost to the relentless darkness.

As I journeyed halfway to the enchanting Luminous Leafwood, my gaze caught sight of a lone human sprinting desperately, fleeing from the confines of the kingdom. His face was marked by a blend of fear and determination, each stride fueled by a primal instinct to escape.

When our eyes met, he stumbled over the uneven stones of the path, his surprise palpable in the way he lost his footing. It was as if my very presence had cast a spell upon him, rendering him momentarily frozen in awe. The forest loomed behind me, its vibrant foliage shimmering with ethereal light, while he lay sprawled on the ground, captivated and vulnerable in that fleeting moment.

"A—a—a dinosaur!" He gasped, his eyes wide with terror and awe as he stumbled backward. "Pleased to meet you, too," I responded politely. He looked as if he was about to faint.

"May I ask what you are doing?" I questioned him curiously. He sighed wearily and started, "My life was hard enough when the seven kingdoms went to war against one other. It was chaos. Now that Emperor Qin Shi has won the war, it's absolute pandemonium!" His voice quivered as he recounted the turmoil.

"Who is Emperor Qin Shi?" I inquired, genuinely puzzled.

"You don't know him?" he exclaimed, incredulity flashing in his eyes. "He is the founder of the Qin dynasty and the first emperor of China. Perhaps you would recognize him by his birth name, Ying Zheng."

I shook my head slowly, still trying to grasp the significance of the name he offered.

"Could you describe him?"

"Certainly! He may look like an average person at first, but his designer clothes reveal his wealth and sophistication. His arrogance and short temper make him hard to be around, and beneath his polished exterior lies greed and a mean streak. Recently, he ordered all the scholars to be buried out of fear that someone smarter would steal his throne!"

Wait... doesn't the description match the human I met a few months ago?

It suddenly dawned on me that the human who fled before me a few months ago was none other than Emperor Qin himself.

These two humans are among the countless souls I've encountered on my journey.

I've discovered that a solution always exists, regardless of how daunting the challenges may seem. Yu is proof of this truth, as he finds a way to channel the water into the sea, safeguarding his village from destruction.

I've also come to understand that while light exists in the world, so does darkness. Ying Zheng, a cruel man who caused untold suffering, ultimately faced the consequences of his actions as his people rose up against him over the extreme pressure. As my time on earth draws to a close, I hold onto the hope that even in the darkest moments, there will always be a shred of light.

Back in Time

St. Joseph's College, Choi, Pui Hin Adrian – 14

“Breaking news: the National Dinosaur Lab of China has successfully invented the first Time Machine, allowing them to travel back in time. Redirecting to Rafael, who is currently in China, for more information.”

"Thanks, Jane. As you can see, the whole lab is buzzing about this. The first passengers will be three paleontologists, Lin, Wang and Chen traveling back to the Cretaceous Period to investigate more about the new species of titanosaur recently discovered in the Jiangxi Province," the reporter explained as the camera filmed the surroundings, including the large capsule that was supposed to be the time machine.

“All right, are you two ready?” Lin asked her colleagues next to her, Chen and Wang, as her eyes glittered with anticipation. “I can’t say I’m not, can I?” Chen muttered.

The hatch lowered as the three settled in the capsule and everyone fell silent. The most critical moments came. Whirring steadily but surely, the three perspectives fell into a blur. The velocity and air rushing to their faces made it impossible for them to open their eyelids. Finally, the whirring stopped. As the hatch unfolded, the stuffy air in China greatly contrasted with what the paleontologists inhaled. They were still in Jiangxi, the same place and location, but in a completely different environment.

The climate hadn't changed much, but the clouds that usually gathered due to air pollution had dissipated. Nothing blocked the view except the lush, green mountains. There were no skyscrapers or houses, just the blooming sun and the flowing waters of the river system.

“Wow... ever seen anything like that? It's like we're in Jurassic Park!” Lin exclaimed, spinning around to admire the view.

“We are in the Cretaceous Period, do you realize?” Chen replied, narrowing her eyes.

“Still, after years of studying these particular periods, the stunning landscape is challenging to visualize by just looking at the lifeless photos in the books, isn't it?” Wang said, marveling at the landscape.

They came prepared for every kind of hazard they could imagine. Their clothes were like astronaut suits—keeping them warm, cooling when necessary, and coated with a special material so that it was impossible for the dinosaurs even slightly to dent the suit. Moreover, the machine can be shrunk to the size of a hand, so escape can be immediate.

When they arrived, it was already mid-noon. Their only sense of time was the watch they had been provided, and they hoped the reptiles wouldn't chew it off.

"Gods! It's so uncomfortable not pulling out my phone and checking our bearings! What's even worse, since the magnetic field isn't working like it does in modern times, even compasses are not functional!" Chen moaned as they paved through the overgrowth.

"Well, at least the mountains are recognizable. I can't believe they have been here since now!" Wang chuckled.

"Look, Professor Wang! Isn't that the Wuyi Mountains?" Lin pointed.

They discovered a cave near the waters and decided to camp there. After dinner of fish they caught and roasted, they retired to their tents.

All were awakened simultaneously before dawn. As they peeked out, they knew something was nearby. Nobody dared speak or shuffle. They were confident that a reptile was around the corner, carnivore or not, and they didn't hope to face it directly. The three froze in motion as if even blinking would lead to their demise. Seconds felt like a year, and finally, the unwanted guest left.

Suiting up, the three broke camp and decided to use this cave as a base. It had everything they needed nearby. They managed to find a fair-sized boulder to cover up the cave. Wang and Lin went on to investigate the "guest" that visited them just now, while Chen volunteered to find edible food sources.

To their disappointment, the "guest" was nowhere to be found, except for a feather on the floor, discovered by Wang.

The next day was more or less the same, but with the duty of Chen and Lin swapped, Wang and Chen wandered around, finding trails of the dinosaurs.

"Wang, can I ask you something?" It was already half an hour or so since they had spoken.

"Sure, go ahead," Wang replied, confused by the abruptness of Chen. He had never seen him like this before.

"What are we going to do about the dinosaurs?" Chen asked as he stared into Wang's eyes, his grim expression evident to his colleague.

"The dinosaurs? What dinosaurs?"

"The fossils! The bones and even your feathers! It's easy to make millions of dollars if we sell it!" Chen blurted, waving his hands for emphasis.

Wang fell silent, unsure how to respond. He knew Chen was a successful entrepreneur himself.

"What's that? I've never seen that before!" Wang pointed elsewhere, hoping for Chen to fall for the oldest trick in the book and escape his question.

However, the way he pointed intrigued him as well: A looming figure that Wang estimated to be about twenty metres, with a green radiant crest on its back was chewing on the tallest leaves grown on the high branches of ferns, which was something both of them had spotted so bizarre that it didn't have any sort of resemblance to anything they saw during this trek.

Wang scrambled for his camera, adjusted the lens, and pressed the button. Click. The reptile responded almost instantly, turning its head in its direction and discovering the two figures staring at it. Rushing towards them like a rhino, the duo's first reaction was to run for their lives.

Through ragged breath, Chen said, "If it's so noise-sensitive, why don't we hide in the bushes? It probably doesn't have good eyesight, does it?"

Chen and Wang ducked into a bush, crouching motionlessly, and watched the creature stumble rather blindly into the woods.

"That ought to be enough information to report to the higher-ups!" Wang grinned, now starting their way back to Lin's location.

The two talked about the dinosaur they encountered with Lin that night.

"I think it's a herbivore," Lin suggested.

“In my opinion, it’s an omnivore. It’s stocky and tall, but it will live in herds if it’s a herbivore, right?” Chen countered.

Wang, chuckling, pacified them by saying, “Calm down you two. No matter what, that’s an enormous discovery for the scientific community.” Glancing at Chen, he shifted uncomfortably, avoiding Wang’s eyesight.

The next few days passed rather uneventfully, and the team decided to pack up and return to the modern era. The information is enough to redefine the paleontological community for a good while.

After another timeless whirring and gushes of wind slapping onto their faces, the hatch slowly lowered. A mob of researchers in white coats gathered in front of the machine as the three paleontologists climbed out of the capsule. Everybody fell silent. Then Lin announced, “We’ve got a few to share.” The lab erupted into cheers and whistles.

A press conference was held immediately, and the three revealed everything: the feather resembling the *Sinosauropteryx*, the photos of the unknown dinosaur, and even a prehistoric fish Lin put in a zip-lock bag. These discoveries shocked the world, and paleontology was under the spotlight.

“Looks like we’ve done our job. Higher-ups already gave us a two-week off,” Lin yawned as he stretched, easing his muscles.

“Hopefully,” Wang responded.

“You don’t seem so sure.”

“Don’t know what Chen’s planning. He simply hurried away after the conference.”

“Who knows? Maybe he found the dinosaur in the photos! Anyway, see you in a week or so,” Lin yawned again, waving her hand and bidding farewell to Wang.

“Wang! Lin! I found it! I found it!” Chen howled over the phone, unable to conceal his excitement.

“Calm down. Now tell us where you are and what the “it” is,” Wang replied, clearly as confused as Lin.

Chen paced his voice, realizing his previous sentence made no sense without context.

“Remember the dinosaur, the one we met with a big crest on its back? I found a fossil!”

“I’m coming over. Where are you right now?” Lin said, standing up and starting to pack up.

“I’ll send my location.”

“I’m coming as well,” Wang added.

A few hours later, the three gathered at the foot of the Wuyi mountain range, a large excavation site surrounded by “DO NOT ENTER” signs.

“Well, what do we have here?” Wang said as he crouched next to the slightly exposed piece of bone.

“This crest is unmistakable as there are no documented dinosaurs in the area that bear it,” Lin commented.

“What are you going to do about it?” Wang raised his head, facing directly to Chen.

“I was planning on selling some parts of it...”

“You WHAT?” Lin hollered, incredulous at the words.

“Trust me, it’s for the greater good! Did you know that the invention of the time machine alone cost a billion dollars? Do you think the government can fund all of that?” Chen retorted, getting increasingly agitated with every word. “You know how much we make every year!”

“This is important scientific evidence. You’re telling me that a scientific discovery is less important than profit? Listen to what you’re saying, Chen!” Sighing in frustration, she stormed out of the site.

Chen turned around, facing Wang. Wang simply shrugged, “She’s not wrong. I hope you think it out wisely. Your discovery can be rather revolutionary, after all.” As Chen watched his silhouette disappear, he stood there, fazed.

“Breaking news: The fossils of an unknown dinosaur have been discovered between the borders of Fujian and Jiangxi, and some of the parts have been sold to an anonymous private collector through an auction for an amount of 2 million,” with a look of despair on Lin’s face, she slumped on her sofa, a sense of foreboding upon what will happen to the paleontology society, and all the scientific discoveries being commercialized in the future.

The Lost Battalion of Dinosaurs

St. Joseph's College, Ho, Ngo Ka Garrick – 13

Heading for the last battle to unify China, I climbed on Ling Ling. With a powerful leap, she soared into the air; her massive wings stretching wide like sails catching the wind. The sensation was exhilarating – with a surge of adrenaline to my head, we ascended higher into the beautiful blue sky. Below us, the sprawling landscape of ancient China unfolded in a breathtaking panorama. We glided over lush green valleys dotted with patches of vibrant wildflowers and children frolicking through the meadows, the flower's colors splashing against the deep green, creating a robust contrast. Rivers wound beneath us, glistening like silver ribbons as they flowed through the landscape, reflecting the sun's warm embrace. I could see small villages nestled in the hills, their rooftops thatched and golden with sunlight. The majestic peaks of the Himalayas soon came into view, their snow-capped summits piercing the sky. I took in every ounce of the majestic scenery, contemplating where I came from.

On the night of the nine planets' alignment, I was teleported here to this unexplored part of the Terracotta tombs packed with dinosaur fossils for my archeological research. In front of Qin Shi Huang's throne, I slowly gained his trust and have since become the general of his dinosaur battalion, with a Zhenyuanlong named Ling Ling becoming my rider. These thirty dinosaurs, that had miraculously survived the extinction event, had been the secret to each great dynasty's rise, and now they were fighting alongside us in the final battle to unite China. With almost daily preparation for war, the mere sight of them was enough to bring even the most battle-hardened army to their knees.

As we flew, I marveled at Ling Ling's opalescent scales shimmering in the sunlight—hues of emerald and gold that changed with each beat of her enormous wings. Her feathers, soft yet sturdy, sparkled like multicolored jewels. The wind whipped through my hair, filling my lungs with the crisp, fresh air of the mountains, almost non-existent in modern times due to global warming.

With each powerful wingbeat, I felt my worries fading, replaced by a profound sense of belonging. We were soaring through the heart of a world lost to time, and I was honored to be a part of it.

As we continued our flight, I realized that this was more than just an adventure. It was a bridge – a connection between Ling Ling, myself, and the ancient world of dinosaurs in China. As I stroked her gleaming feathers, she purred softly, a sound of reassurance and trust.

And at last, we arrived at the battlefield. We glided over humongous armies of soldiers, snatching them off one by one. I thought of how we had flown almost every day, marveling at the ancient picturesque canvas of China, and now we were no longer spectators of history – we were part of its violent reformation, painting that timeless canvas with streaks of blood.

Before long, the battle was over. We landed, and I tickled her behind the ears, smiling “Thanks for the ride, Ling Ling, you were great.”

I had fashioned a metal ornament from my modern tools and hung it around her neck. She purred in happiness, nuzzled me and flew back to the palace stables.

With all the wars fought and China united, Ling Ling and I could finally retire into serenity. She took me across China, showing me its ancient wonders. Years passed since the last war, and Qin Shi Huang became increasingly different from the great emperor he once was. As the old saying goes, ‘power corrupts a man and creates endless greed’.

Qin Shi Huang deteriorated, his mighty reputation replaced by indulgence and vanity. Obsessed with entertainment and wealth, he forced people into grueling labor to construct extravagant palaces for his personal enjoyment. He also

dug up ancient mountains, ruining the ecosystem there, just to dig a huge crater at Huang Shan for seemingly no purpose. His name was less mentioned in awe now, but had instead become a symbol of death and trepidation.

One night, I awoke in cold sweat to the crackle of a giant fire. Disoriented, I immediately looked around for Ling Ling, who was supposed to be sleeping next to me.

She and the other dinosaurs were gone.

I rushed outside and saw a massive blazing inferno on Huang Shan. Then it all clicked. Qin Shi Huang, blinded by his power and feats, had become jealous of the dinosaurs being a crucial part of each battle's success, so he decided to burn them with all the scholars and books that marked their existence. This was the historical burning of books and burying of scholars. I rode on a horse, whipping it to urge it to go faster.

I arrived at the fire, seeing many land-dwelling dinosaurs already burnt to a pulp. Ling Ling and the other aerial troops were drugged, with guards nearby ready to burn them to a crisp. But then I saw Ling Ling twitch her leg feebly, as if she was slowly regaining consciousness. I knew that all hope still wasn't lost.

"Stop!" I screamed. The soldiers glanced at me. Stunned.

The emperor's voice cut through the chaos "There! Kill him!"

His guards slowly advanced on me, their razor-sharp spears just inches away from my skin. I scoffed and looked up at the aerial troops flying away to safety. I closed my eyes and prepared for the cold embrace of death. It was all worth it, protecting these beautiful dinosaurs. I could almost feel the sharp point of the spearheads grazing my skin.

A whoosh of morning air hit my skin, and I pulled my eyelids open. Ling Ling had come back to save me. I immediately climbed on and escaped with just an inch of my life left. However, her wing was grazed by a spearhead that was meant to murder me in cold blood.

Although we had finally escaped from Qin Shi Huang's grasp, Ling Ling's strength was ebbing away, her injured wing faltering with every beat, with no safe haven in sight—soldiers swarmed the terrain below, their weapons glinting ominously in the dim light. There was nothing I could do but pat her head softly, like how I used to do all those winter nights, and whisper sweet things into her ears. At last, she shrieked, a blood-curdling cry that echoed through the forest. We slammed into a deep hole and I got flung away from the collision. She started to bleed, torrents of crimson-red liquid pooling out, depleting her remaining life force with each ounce. Her tail flopped feebly, and she cried out faintly, not once but thrice, each time shattering my heart into atoms. But at that moment, soldiers started piling at the edge of the cave, their bows pointed straight at us.

There was nothing I could've done differently.

At the same time, the moonlight box in my bag was starting to glow. Amidst the chaos, it had opened. I looked up at the sky and saw the nine planets had aligned again.

I turned to Ling Ling, crawling towards her as my heart shattered with every inch I covered. She was struggling to breathe. Coughing up strings of blood, she still held a glimmer of affection in her eyes as they locked onto mine. I held her grasping onto the metal ornament, as I'd done all those freezing winter nights – a last embrace to a true friend. I screamed, clutching her tightly, refusing to let go of the only friend I had in this harsh, unrelenting world. She had been my solace on the darkest nights, my ally in every skirmish and my unwavering protector. Yet now, here she was—broken, vulnerable and slipping away Into an endless pit of murky darkness!

I woke up screaming for Ling Ling. The paramedic chuckled softly, shaking his head. 'You fainted in the cave,' he said. 'Probably just a hallucination.' Was it all a dream? But then I opened my tightly clenched hands. It was the same metal ornament as the one signifying my friendship with Ling Ling.

Ten years have passed since the last alignment. I had been searching tirelessly for the fossils of Zhenyuanlongs.

Despite my efforts to bring the luscious fruit, there was no way to identify Ling Ling.

I still had countless questions begging to be answered. Did the Mongols harness the power of dinosaurs in their incredible Western conquests? Why was the border of China shaped like a dinosaur? And... What became of Ling Ling? Did she survive that fateful night? Or, did she perish from the cold-blooded arrowheads of the archers?

I often find myself lost in thought of how things could have been different for Ling Ling, for the other dinosaurs, and for me.

I gaze at the night sky, my eyes falling on a familiar sight: the nine planets aligning once more. It was the last alignment of this century, the final chance for answers – or perhaps redemption.

I pick up the moonlight box.

Awakening the Past: A Tale of Dinosaurs and Discovery

St. Joseph's College, Hung, Kin Hei Marcus – 14

As the streak of light pierced through the sky, it cast an eerie glow over the dense forests below. The ground started to shake beneath my feet, and deafening roars echoed through the trees. Gigantic figures sprinted towards me—dinosaurs! Awe and terror filled me as I stumbled backward. My heart raced as the ground trembled with each heavy footfall drawing nearer.

In an instant, reality itself seemed to twist and contort, consumed by a void of nothingness that swallowed me whole. Fear and uncertainty gripped me as I braced for what would come next.

“Matthew, Matthew!”

A familiar voice jolted me awake from the nightmare. Gasping for air, I realized it was just a dream...or was it? The memory lingered as my mother scolded me for oversleeping. “Get going now, or you’ll be late for school!” she said. I glanced at my alarm clock and realized I had overslept. Skipping breakfast, I ran to campus, arriving breathless just in time for Professor Lee’s lecture.

Professor Lee started his speech once everyone was seated. The topic that day was dinosaurs, which I had been longing for. He started off with the introduction of the meteorite impact 66 million years ago that caused the extinction of dinosaurs. This made me recall my dream last night.

Throughout his speech, he cleared misconceptions about these creatures and shed light on their true history. His lecture was engaging and kept me thoroughly captivated, reminding me why I admired him so much and why I pursued paleontology in the first place.

Later, he mentioned something intriguing which caught my attention: it was about the Liaoning Province – a region that had become a treasure trove of feathered dinosaur fossils since the first discovery in 1996.

“That moment marked a turning point in the paleontological community,” he explained, “revolutionizing our understanding of dinosaur evolution and their link to birds.” I had always been fascinated by dinosaur fossils, but I had never considered China, my native land, as a hotspot for paleontological research.

As the lecture drew to a close, Professor Lee ended with an announcement. “The university has just approved funding for an excavation program in Jiangxi this summer,” Professor Lee revealed. My heart leaped at the prospect of participating in an actual dinosaur dig.

Professor Lee continued, “We’ll be taking a small group of students with us. A team of professional paleontology researchers in Jiangxi will be guiding us along the way. Those interested should submit their applications by next Friday.”

As the other students left the auditorium, I lingered behind. “Matthew,” Professor Lee said warmly. “I had a feeling this activity might pique your interest, knowing your enthusiasm for dinosaurs.”

I nodded eagerly. “Certainly! It’s a dream—come—true, Professor. I’ve been fascinated by dinosaurs since I was knee-high to a compsognathus.”

He chuckled at my joke. “We’ve had some tantalizing satellite imagery of the area we’ll be excavating. There are strong indications of a major fossil bed, possibly including some species we’ve never encountered before.”

My anticipation grew. The chance to be part of such a discovery was an opportunity I couldn't pass up. "This is a once in a lifetime opportunity. Don't pass up on it! I look forward to seeing you there," Professor Lee said as he walked towards the door.

The prospect of the excavation trip was overwhelmingly exciting. I couldn't help but wonder what secrets the site held and how this experience would shape my future in paleontology. I submitted my application later that evening, and received an email the following week confirming my acceptance.

I packed my bags in a hurry, making sure not to leave anything important behind. As I rushed out, a cool breeze tempered the sun's heat. At the university's front door, I saw a group of students gathered around a white coach. My heart raced with excitement at the adventure ahead.

Professor Lee arrived and announced our departure. We settled into our seats, and during the journey, my mind was filled with endless possibilities of what we might discover and what fossil research facilities are like.

After a three-hour journey, the coach pulled into the rendezvous point. Two local researchers, Dr. Li Wei and Mei Chen, were waiting for us by the side of the road. Dr. Li, with his graying hair and calm demeanor, and Mei, with her bright smile and energetic presence, introduced themselves. "Welcome to Jiangxi Paleontology Research Center. We will be your guides for the following week. The dig site is not far from the center, and we will be going there sometime later this week." They led us to the facility, a modern building nestled within a dense forest.

We left our luggage in our dormitories and had a brief orientation session with Professor Lee, who reminded us to handle artifacts with care and always stay within earshot of someone else. That evening, Dr. Li and Mei toured us around the facility, showcasing state-of-the-art laboratories. As we explored, I jotted down notes in my notebook, learning along the way.

Over the next three days, most of the time we spent was on learning soft skills and knowledge, such as more in-depth about the ways the local researchers conducted their findings and analysis, as well as the various dinosaurs discovered in China, such as the Feathered dinosaurs of the Jehol Biota in Liaoning Province, namely the famous *Sinosauropteryx*, the first dinosaur known to have feathers, and also the first dinosaur to have been discovered in China. It was the most profound one for me.

As time went by, I started to develop an even deeper sense of awe and reverence for the ancient creatures that had been uncovered. Each dinosaur fossil was a window into a world that existed millions of years ago, and the more we found, the more our understanding of these magnificent creatures would grow.

On the fifth day, we finally got to conduct fossil hunting hands-on. The local researchers identified an area reported to have possible fossils, and tasked our group to look for them. The area was a dense forest. I could imagine how easy it would be to get lost in that labyrinth.

Luckily, none of us had to go alone. We were told to go in pairs as there could be lots of unforeseeable dangers in the wild. Dr Li and Mei also gave each of us a gps tracker and radio, which would help us navigate back to the center even if we got confused. Since the number of students was odd, Professor Lee decided to go with me. I felt slightly nervous, but was at the same time full of anticipation.

Hours passed with only fragments to show. Just as doubt crept in, I noticed something protruding from the earth. "Professor Lee, over here!" I called out.

He hurried over and knelt beside me. "This looks promising," he said, his eyes gleaming. We carefully cleared away more sediment, and revealed a nearly complete skeleton of a dinosaur. Its thick and rather massive bones resembled

those of sauropods. The intricate patterns of its vertebrae and limb bones were very well-preserved, certainly a rare find for fossils millions of years old.

"This is extraordinary," Professor Lee murmured, marveling at the fossil. He activated the radio and notified the center of our location. Dr. Li responded promptly and dispatched a team to assist with the excavation.

After carefully examining and analyzing each piece, the professionals in the facility confirmed it was indeed a new species of titanosaur.

In the aftermath of our discovery, it was established in the headlines of science journals and newspapers. We were even credited for the find! Everyone in the group was elated and proud. The discovery highlighted the paleontological potential of Jiangxi, garnering interest from researchers worldwide.

Reflecting on the journey, I realized how much our experience had added to the tales of China's dinosaurs. These ancient creatures, once believed to exist only in history and fossils, have come to life through our discoveries. It left us with more questions than answers, fueling our curiosity and driving us to continue our quest for knowledge. I couldn't help but wonder what other secrets the Chinese landscape held, waiting to be discovered.

The Last Day

St. Joseph's College, Lo, Wang Chi – 15

Maastrichtian, Late Cretaceous, 66 MYA, Jinzhou, Liaoning

The squeaking rodent was right in front of me, so close yet so annoyingly fast. I jumped from tree branch to tree branch to keep up with it through the forest as it kept escaping my jaws. Growling in frustration, I kept pursuing it until finally the rodent made a mistake, running into some thorny vines, impaling itself on the long green tendrils hanging from the evergreen tree branches above. The sunlight's rays shone on the dead rodent, as if beckoning me to dine on it. Moving closer to my prey, I opened my jaws, and just when I was getting ready to chomp down on my prey, I heard my name being called from somewhere. "Mei, time to wake up!"

Suddenly, the whole forest collapsed, everything exploded, and I opened my eyes, shrieking, only to see my mate, Qing's snout right in front of me gently growling, reassuring me. Grumbling, I pushed him off with a grunt as we walked to the river to freshen up.

Sky-wings flew above, and the sun in the sky shone brightly. But even as he groomed me soothingly and picked off any pesky little bugs, I looked at the clear water and the face in it. Disgruntled as usual. I let out a breath as I looked up to the bright and surprisingly cloudless sky above, wondering why the rodent always escaped my grasp, forever truly close yet unbelievably out of grasp.

"You've been having those nightmares again, haven't you?"

I turned over and nuzzled his neck and grumbled, "What do you think? I'm quite annoyed by how I can't catch the rodent each time; it leaves me hungry every morning." As if on cue, my stomach rumbled loudly at once, signaling my hunger.

"Well, I suppose it's time to go hunting then... maybe we can catch a rodent today, who knows?" he teased, chuckling as we jumped onto the trees and went off.

I could feel the clear forest air whoosh past under my wings, but even as we glided and hopped between the tree branches, I couldn't keep my mind from the foreboding dream, still replaying in my head. I can only hope it isn't an omen to my future hunting. It'd be absolute torment to keep attempting to run down prey I might never catch. As for the part where the forest explodes; I can't even imagine what that foretells—like what, in this world, can make a whole world go boom? Turning my head to look around, the forest looked so peaceful, and I could see nothing out of the ordinary as well. Yet, I felt like something bad was about to happen, something not even the strongest and biggest of us would survive.

"Mei, are you coming?" Qing called out somewhere from the trees ahead.

"I'm coming along."

I gave the mountains one last look before I went ahead. Why did I feel like this would be the last time I would see the great snow-capped ridges and peaks in the distance?

The scent of fresh prey wafted across the air, and we quietly sneaked up on a group of lizards, panned out by the river in the sun warming up. I exchanged a glance with Qing and, dipping his head in confirmation, we swooped down on the lizards, giving them a proper fright as I pinned two of our prey with my feet while my mate picked up

another with his jaws. They squiggled in our claws as they tried to escape our jaws, but we broke their necks and ended their misery, slowly eating them up, the warm blood slowly seeping into the forest floor.

Although the lizards were quite big and half our size, we finished what we could comparatively soon and left. But as we left the river, something suddenly took over my eyes, and all I could see was fire everywhere, burning up all the trees in front of me, and in the distance I saw a great wall of water, eating everything up in its path, and just as I could feel the water, everything stopped, and my vision returned to normal; seeing the river, and the lizard bodies still there, I shivered as I could feel my spine tingling, chilled from the dream just now.

I heard the sound of hurried footsteps getting closer. “Mei, you OK? You kind of... spaced out there.” Qing ran back over and gently bit my neck, obviously worried.

I brushed his flank with my tail as I reassured him. “Yeah, I’m... fine I guess. Just had a bit of a fright from my mind just now. Let’s go home.”

By the time we got back to our den, the sky was already filled with stars, and the moon hung silvery-white in the sky, lighting the forest with a gentle, serene hue. Looking at the sky, I started to feel relaxed, and felt that I was overthinking everything. The dreams were probably just nothing but my brain’s imaginations.

I gazed at the sky for who knows how long, looking at the shining stars hanging above like little eggs, but over some time, I noticed a peculiar orange dot that had only been growing gradually larger since it first appeared. “Hey, uh Qing?” He had fallen asleep far earlier than me, and he groggily sat up. “What’s the...matter?” He looked at me, obviously annoyed.

I pointed at the orange dot in the sky and asked, “Why is that orange dot getting larger and larger? It was the size of a like a really small pebble, when it came into sight, but now it’s the size of a rodent. Or am I hallucinating?”

Qing’s eyes widened a bit as I had piqued his curiosity. He looked up, and he saw the dot as well. “I don’t know what that is,” He paused a bit and opened his jaws again. “But one thing I do know is that something the color of fire in the sky, getting bigger, which means it’s getting closer, won’t be anything good.”

I looked at the dot as it got even bigger, now the size of a whole boulder. “So, uh, should we like to go to another cave and hole up just in case?”

But by the time my sentence ended, we heard a tremendously loud ‘boom’, and I saw the atmosphere go an orange tint as the dot split into several dots, and one was still aiming right at us, becoming clearer as it got closer and closer; it looked like a shooting star, but instead of heading into the horizon, it was heading right for us.

As I looked up to the sky in horror, it looked like itself was on fire. I suddenly thought of my dream: a forest exploding, and then just darkness. Could this be it? Was my time up? I had subconsciously huddled up to Qing as we watched trails of fire fall down to the earth, which were actually rocks. One of them hit the clearing, and it left a big dent in its place. We both quivered as I saw my life flash before my eyes—my dreams... they did come true, but in the worst way possible. I started to go dizzy with fear.

In my trance, a voice broke through. “Mei, whatever happens, I love you. But right now we need to go into our den. Now.”

I looked at Qing, finding the strength to reply, my voice trembling. “O-OK. I-I-I l-lo-ve you t-too.”

As we sat in our den, I glanced outside to see the mountain getting hit by a deafening boom, an orange blast wave rushing toward us. The den collapsed, and the last thing I saw was Qing’s horrified eyes mirroring my own alarm. Then everything went pitch black.

August 2025, Jinzhou, Liaoning, North of the Yixian Formation

“My my my, aren’t you a beauty?” Professor Chow examined the fossil, showing what seemed to be two feathered, and possibly even winged dinosaurs wrapped together in what looked like an embrace, right before their death. The fossil was preserved perfectly, with all the major bones accounted for, even containing a bit of soft tissue on the arms. In fact, at first glance, he thought it looked like what would very likely be, the first ever discovered species capable of gliding, or even powered flight in China in the Late Cretaceous.

He stood up with a smile as he faced the expedition team. “Let’s excavate this beauty and ship it back. I think we have just made one of the most phenomenal discoveries in paleontology this century. The folks back home are going to be ecstatic about this quality of preservation.”

Just a couple of weeks later, the newspapers all around the world, regardless of language, all had the same headline: Missing Dino Link to Birds Found in China. And right on the cover page, was a photo of Mei and Qing in their last embrace.

New Tales of China's Dinosaurs

St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Chan, Toa – 14

In the lush hills of Jiangxi province, where the mist clung to the earth like a memory, a team of paleontologists was on the verge of a groundbreaking discovery. Dr. Mei Lin, a passionate young scientist specializing in dinosaur paleontology, led the expedition. This region, rich in geological history, had remained largely untouched, offering a hidden treasure trove for fossil hunters.

As the team meticulously brushed away centuries of sediment, an unusual glint caught Mei's eye. She knelt down, revealing the edge of a massive bone. It was unlike anything they had previously encountered, hinting at a new species. The team worked tirelessly, excavating the fossil layer by layer, unveiling an enormous, elongated skeleton. Preliminary analysis suggested it belonged to a titanosaur, a group of long-necked, herbivorous dinosaurs known for their immense size.

Word of the discovery spread quickly, igniting a frenzy among scientists and enthusiasts alike. Local villagers were captivated, sharing tales of an ancient legend about a colossal beast known as the Sky Serpent. According to folklore, this creature could command the weather, bringing rain or drought at will. Intrigued, Mei began to explore the connection between the fossil and the local mythology. She learned of a hidden cave said to contain the Heart of the Sky Serpent, a crystal that glowed with an ethereal light. The cave, rumored to hold ancient artifacts and evidence of human interaction with dinosaurs, piqued her scientific interest and sparked her curiosity.

With her team's support, Mei embarked on a journey to find the cave. They trekked through dense forests, crossed rivers, and climbed steep hills, each step fueled by the allure of discovery. Along the way, they encountered local residents who shared stories of the Sky Serpent and its mysterious powers, often describing it as a guardian of the land. One evening, as the sun dipped below the horizon and cast a golden hue over the landscape, they finally reached the cave's entrance. Inside, the air was cool and thick with anticipation. Flickering lanterns illuminated the walls, revealing ancient drawings of the Sky Serpent, depicting it soaring through the skies and commanding storms.

As they ventured deeper, they stumbled upon a pedestal at the cave's center. Upon it rested a large, pulsating crystal, iridescent and mesmerizing. Its glow seemed to resonate with the very essence of the earth, possibly linked to the local environment and the folklore surrounding it. Mei approached the crystal, her heart pounding with excitement and trepidation. As she reached out to touch it, the ground trembled beneath her feet. A low rumble echoed through the cave, and the crystal unleashed a brilliant light that engulfed the entire chamber. The walls shuddered, and the ancient drawings began to animate, depicting the Sky Serpent flying over lush landscapes.

Suddenly, the vision shifted. The team was transported into a scene from the past, witnessing the Sky Serpent in its prime as it soared over the land. They observed the vibrant ecosystems that existed millions of years ago, with lush foliage and diverse species coexisting. However, the scene turned darker as a group of ancient hunters emerged, seeking to capture the beast for its power.

As the vision faded, Mei found herself back in the cave, the crystal still pulsating. The experience left her shaken but enlightened. The Sky Serpent was not just a tale, it symbolized the delicate balance between nature and humanity. The realization struck her that the hunters had ultimately succeeded, leading to the extinction of the creature and the loss of its wisdom. Feeling a profound sense of responsibility, Mei recognized that they had uncovered a vital piece of history. They now had a chance to protect it. Just as she resolved to share their findings with the world, a violent tremor shook the cave. The crystal began to crack, and the cave started to collapse.

In a moment of clarity, she recalled the legend that the crystal was said to hold the essence of the Sky Serpent. If it were destroyed, the spirit of the creature would be lost forever. With renewed determination, she reached for the crystal and, in an act of bravery, pulled it free from its pedestal. As she did, the cave erupted in blinding light, and

Mei found herself outside, the crystal safely in her arms. The cave crumbled behind her, sealing its mysteries forever. Back at the university, Mei presented her findings and the crystal, which now radiated a soft glow.

The discovery of the titanosaur, a colossal herbivore that once roamed the Earth, was groundbreaking not only for its size but also for its potential connection to the Sky Serpent legend. As scientists studied the fossil, they began to see parallels between the titanosaur's immense stature and the mythical descriptions of the Sky Serpent, which was often depicted as a guardian of nature, capable of influencing the weather and nurturing life. The titanosaur's role in ancient ecosystems, as a gentle giant that shaped the landscape, resonated with the villagers' beliefs about the Sky Serpent as a protector of the land. This connection bridged the gap between paleontology and folklore, enriching both fields with new insights and fostering a deeper appreciation for the natural world.

In the years that followed, Mei dedicated her life to paleontology, inspiring a new generation to explore and protect the world's natural heritage. The Heart of the Sky Serpent became a symbol of their shared responsibility, reminding them of the delicate relationship between humanity and the environment. Under a starry sky, Mei often gazed at the crystal, now housed in a museum, its glow a beacon of hope. She reflected on the legends, the thrill of discovery, and the adventure that changed her life forever. The world remained full of mysteries waiting to be uncovered, and she was determined to seek them out, one fossil at a time.

New Tales of China's Dinosaurs

St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Chan, Tsz Chin – 14

In the heart of China's Yunnan Province, a groundbreaking theme park "Dino Haven" was set to open. The park was the brainchild of Dr. Mei Lin, a brilliant paleontologist who had spent years unearthing fossils in the region. Inspired by the legends of dinosaurs that roamed the Earth, she envisioned a sanctuary where people could witness these majestic creatures brought back to life through advanced genetic engineering.

As the grand opening was approaching, excitement filled the air. Families from around the world arrived, excited to experience the wonders of the Mesozoic era. The park promised an array of attractions, dinosaurs discovered living from years ago, all housed in realistic habitats designed to mimic their natural ecosystems.

On the morning of the launch, Dr. Lin stood at the entrance, her heart swelling with pride. She guided a group of VIP guests, which included reporters, scientists, and a few curious children. The tour began at the Triceratops exhibit, where the gentle giants grazed peacefully on lush vegetation. The crowd marveled at the sight, and children laughed in delight as the dinosaurs interacted with their surroundings.

However, beneath the excitement lay an undercurrent of tension. As they moved on to the Velociraptor enclosure, a sudden storm rolled in, darkening the sky and sending chills through the air. Dr. Lin felt a knot tighten in her stomach, but she pressed on, determined to showcase her creation.

Just as they reached the T. rex habitat, the storm unleashed its fury. Thunder rumbled, and the lights flickered ominously. The ground shook as the power grid began to fail. Panic erupted when the electric fences surrounding the exhibits sparked and dimmed. The dinosaurs sensed the disturbance, their instincts kicking in.

"Stay back!" Dr. Lin shouted, but it was too late. The Velociraptors broke free, their sleek bodies darting through the gaps in the enclosure. Screams filled the air as visitors scrambled for safety, but the chaos only intensified. In the distance, a loud roar echoed—the T. rex had escaped.

Dr. Lin quickly gathered a small group, including a brave young girl named Lila, who had always dreamed of seeing dinosaurs. "We need to get to the control center!" Dr. Lin instructed, her voice steady amidst the chaos. "It's our only chance to contain the situation."

As they navigated the darkened pathways, the ground shook beneath them. They heard the thunderous footsteps of the T. rex drawing closer. Lila clutched Dr. Lin's hand, eyes wide with fear yet filled with determination.

Finally reaching the control center, Dr. Lin began typing commands into the console, but the system was down. Time was running out. The group huddled together, listening to the distant roars and the sounds of chaos outside.

"Look!" Lila pointed to a backup generator. "Can we use that?"

Dr. Lin nodded, her mind racing. They quickly moved to the generator, working together to get it online. Just as they flipped the last switch, the lights buzzed back to life. The control panel illuminated, and Dr. Lin rushed to seal the enclosures.

With a few deft keystrokes, the park's security systems reactivated. The T. rex's roar faded as the electric fences re-engaged, trapping it back within its habitat. Breathing heavily, the group felt a wave of relief wash over them.

Outside, the storm began to subside. As they emerged from the control center, the park was eerily quiet, the chaos of moments before replaced by an unsettling calm. Dr. Lin turned to Lila, who had faced the ordeal with remarkable courage.

“You did well today,” she said, a smile breaking through her worry. “You showed bravery in the face of fear.”

Lila grinned, her eyes sparkling with excitement. “Can we tell everyone about this adventure?”

As dawn broke over the mountains, painting the sky in hues of orange and pink, Dr. Lin knew that “Dino Haven” was not just a theme park; it was a living story—one filled with ancient mysteries, the thrill of discovery, and the timeless connection between humanity and the creatures that once ruled the Earth. It was a new tale of China’s dinosaurs, forever etched in their hearts.

The Untold Story of the Discovery Of Dinosaurs

St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Chan, Wing – 12

Dinosaurs, a once unknown species, now displayed in exhibitions around the world. While these exhibitions mainly focus on the dinosaurs themselves, today, we're focusing on an ancient legend, a legend hidden from society, burned to ashes by the Qin Emperor. What is this legend about? Well, it's about me, finding a fossil and becoming a god afterwards!

Sorry, I got ahead of myself there. My name's Ming. I don't really remember how old I am, not that it really matters anyways, when you've been here for at least 100 years, you stop counting. And this is my story as a once mortal now god.

I woke up, ready to start a day of hard work in the emperor's palace. It wasn't always the best being a servant in a place full of arrogant people, but it was certainly better than what my family has endured to survive. I started to prepare breakfast for the emperor, a process that takes up hours to complete.

Afterwards, I checked my schedule. "Oh no, I have to wash the emperor's dirty clothes." I picked up the laundry basket from the emperor's room and went to the nearby river with some wood soap to wash the clothes. Everything was normal when suddenly CRACK! I had stepped on something! I looked down expecting to see something like a twig, but when I looked down, I saw a small bone. 'That's strange.' I thought, but continued to painfully scrub the silky clothes of the emperor nonetheless. That is until I saw it, submerged halfway in the water was a massive white thing with two holes in it that resembled eyes, and there was even a mouth! Next to the weird creature floats a few feathers. "May the Chinese gods help me." I said. I was petrified, scared out of my mind, yet there was a lingering curiosity. The "eyes" stared at me with hatred, as if daring me to step closer. And so I did, I stepped cautiously, making sure I didn't break anything again.

After hearing something break, I immediately ran back to the palace, panicking. I ran through the corridors of the palace, trying to grasp my breath and calm down before presenting myself to the emperor. Finally, I got to the throne room, where I saw many of my fellow servants walking around with food. I walked past them straight towards the emperor, telling him about what I had just seen. The servants formed a circle around me and the emperor, like a swarm of bees. With every sentence I said, shouts came from all directions, "You're crazy!" said a servant, "Are you sure you're alright?" said another worker, but the emperor, as surprising as it was, believed me! He ordered some guards to follow me to the river and bring back the skull to him. We soon got there and the skull was still sitting in its place on the ground. The guards started to dig the skull out of the ground to get it examined. The skull was taken immediately to the emperor, which was then taken to a scientist after the emperor had the description written down. The emperor congratulated me on discovering such an important thing for science, then sent me back to my room for rest.

That's when I heard a loud sound from above. I looked up and saw a radiant beam of light staring down at me., I was stunned. Then, there was a figure flying down at me. I had no idea what it was, until I saw what it looked like: it was a godly creature, it was a dark humanoid with no features., I still didn't know who this creature was until GOD OF THE HEAVENS AND THE JADE EMPEROR, YOU ALONE ARE THE FIRST PERSON TO FIND THE FOSSIL OF A DINOSAUR, FOR THAT I WILL ALLOW YOU THE GIFT OF IMMORTALITY.' I thought about it, and accepted it, the thought of being able to live forever excited me.

It's been thousands of years since that has happened and people have forgotten about my discovery since the Qin emperor burned all the books about it and the "official" discovery of dinosaurs happened years and years and many years after mine.

New Tales of China's Dinosaurs

St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Cheng, Chun Him – 13

A long long time ago, there was a person named Xing Yu in China. He was a brave and adventurous man, he always liked to discover fossils of rare animals, he had found Triceratops, Tyrannosaurus Rex and Pterodactyl fossils before. He was awarded gold, pearls and lands by the emperor as the emperor really likes fossils.

Later, after Xing Yu left his family and house, he went up a mountain. The mountain was full of trees, flowers and a clear stream, he was astonished by what he had seen. There was also a large piece of land which was full of grass, so he decided to settle down and dig to see if there are any fossils.

One morning, Xing Yuan (Xing Yu's son) suddenly heard a loud bang outside his house while he was at home writing a poem. He immediately ran out of his house; he was shocked by what he had seen. Xing Yu's face, clothes were covered in blood and he was in great agony, some villagers were trying to carry him, "I am...I am going to die, I...need to...to talk to my son," he told them. Therefore, the villagers brought him to Xing Yuan, Xing Yu said "I am...going to die. When I was digging, I was attacked by...a group of bears. Luckily, I managed to escape. I have dug up a fossil which I...have never seen, go to the mountain and take it...but first go to the emperor to take some army with you and name it Bearnoradactyl because..." then he passed away without finishing his sentence. Xing Yuan kept calling "Dad! Dad! Don't die! Please!"

The next day, Xing Yuan went to see the emperor and asked for some army, the emperor said, "I am sorry to hear that your father passed away, but may I ask the usage of the army?" Xing Yuan replied by telling what his father had said to him. The emperor quickly promised and lent him 3000 soldiers. Xing Yuan started his adventure with the 3000 soldiers, they used 3 days to go to the mountain. When they were on top of the mountain, they found some blood and a bunch of large footprints. Xing Yuan was heartbroken when he saw this place, there must have been a horrible fight, and he could imagine his father escaping this place.

Soon later, Xing Yuan went to a hole to dig and receive the fossil, the calls of the bears suddenly came out of the woods, the soldiers held their bows and circled around where Xing Yuan is to wait for the bears to come out, the floor were shaking violently and bears started to come all over the place, there was a least 200 bears! The soldiers used arrows to shoot them. Xing Yuan dug faster as he was scared that the army could not defend the bears too long. "Ahh!" some soldier screamed, a soldier told him "If we don't go, we will be stuck and killed by the bears!" "I am digging up the last piece, please try your best," he answered, the soldier told him "Be faster, almost half of our army is dead" Xing Yuan nodded.

A minute later, Xing Yuan finally finished digging and placed them all in a bag, he told the soldiers "I am done! Let's leave this place as fast as possible. Then they rushed out of the circle full of bears, when Xing Yuan was rushing out, he saw the floor was full of dead soldiers, bears and their blood. He was disappointed to see the soldiers sacrificing just for him to collect the fossils. At last, only Xing Yuan and 389 soldiers survived.

When Xing Yuan was at home, he assembled the fossils and found out it was a bear with spikes on its back, he now knew why there were bears on the top of the mountain and why his father named the dinosaur fossil Bearnoradactyl.

New Tales of China's Dinosaurs

St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Choi, Wing Lam – 14

China's dinosaur researchers have been fossil-hunting and it led us to such exciting news—four new species of dinosaurs! They were recently found in China by our dinosaur researchers and had successfully found most of the bones of four of the dinosaurs. One of them is herbivore, two of them are carnivorous and one of them is omnivorous. Here are some details about each of their specials and their behaviours.

First for the herbivore—Saichania. They were found in Mongolia. It is 5–7 metres, mass 2,000 and its special is they have an armour around their body. Saichania was more robustly built than other members of the Ankylosauridae since the head was fully protected by bulbous armour tiles, neck vertebrae, shoulder girdle, ribs and breast bones were fused or firmly connected and they even has a sidearm which is their tail-club.

Secondly for the carnivores, they are the Alectrosaurus (aka eagle lizard) and the Archaeornithomimus (also known as the ancient bird mimic). For the Alectrosaurus, they were found in the same place as Saichania, Mongolia, and its height is around 5–6 metres, a weight ranging from 454–907 kilograms .As it is also named as eagle lizard, they are very good in climbing and has a sharp eye which leads them to find their target easily. Next for the Archaeornithomimus, they were discovered in Uzbekistan. They were 3.4 metres long and weighed over 71.5 kilograms. Its species type is asiaticus and they have a special talent—mimicking the birds's voices to attract their target to come over and eat them. This is why it was known as the ancient bird mimic.

Lastly, it is the Sinornithosaurus which is omnivorous. Its fossils have been found in places such as Liaoning. They had existed from 130 million years ago to the Aptian Age. They had lived in a terrestrial habitat, reproduced by laying eggs and 2 different specimens have been found by paleontologists. It was among the smallest dromaeosaurids, with the holotype measuring 1.2 metres and weighing 3–5 kilograms.

To sum up, it is a big breakthrough for the dinosaur discoveries to have 4 more species to be known and found. In the future, we hope to discover more new varieties of dinosaurs and to learn more about them!

New Tales of China's Dinosaurs

St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Chu, Ho Ching Kanson – 14

China has grown quietly into a treasure trove for paleontological finds, a window to the secrets of a world as old as several million years. From being a lesser-explored region for fossil excavation, China has now emerged as the focal point for the most exciting dinosaur discoveries. From the feathered *Sinosauropteryx* to massive titanosaurs, these discoveries have not only revolutionized our understanding of dinosaurs but also painted vivid and exciting new tales about the creatures that roamed ancient Earth. This essay shall explore some of the most notable discoveries, their significance, and the stories that these fossils tell. The Rise of China as a Fossil Hub

In the 1990s, a farmer from Liaoning province in China inadvertently uncovered a fossil which was about to change paleontology forever.

That was the discovery of *Sinosauropteryx*, a first unequivocally feathered dinosaur. This small, bird-like dinosaur was the missing piece in the puzzle of evolution that directly showed some dinosaurs were feathered and were closely related to modern birds. This discovery has bridged dinosaurs with birds, setting the record straight for a theory debated over many years among scientists. Since then, Liaoning became one of the most important sites in the world for the discovery of fossils. The total number of dinosaur species unearthed in this single region exceeds 40 and has become a paleontological hot spot.

Of the discoveries made, over 24 species of pterosaurs were flying reptiles that took to the skies. Such finds not only add to knowledge but also create new questions about the behavior, appearance, and environment in which these ancient creatures lived. The Feathered Revolution Probably the most exciting aspect of the dinosaur discoveries in China was the treasure of well-preserved fossils with their feathers intact. The prehistoric lake beds of Liaoning were ideal for such fossilization processes to occur, even preserving delicate structures such as feathers. Since then, it has become possible to study the color, structure, and functionality of dinosaur feathers in a way that was not done before. For instance, we now understand that feathers in some dinosaurs, like *Microraptor*, were used for gliding or powered flight, whereas in other instances, such as with the large, feathered tyrannosaur *Yutyrannus*, they were more for insulation against cold climates. These findings have transformed our way of envisioning dinosaurs, pushing out the long-held picture of scaly, reptilian beasts and replacing it with a far more dynamic and colorful vision of prehistoric life.

Discoveries Beyond Liaoning

While the discoveries in Liaoning have been most prominent, other parts of China have also given a lot to add to the knowledge about dinosaurs. Very recently, a new species of titanosaur—a long-necked herbivorous dinosaur—was discovered in Jiangxi province. The titanosaurs were ranked among the biggest land animals ever to have existed, and this new discovery indeed provides valuable insights into their evolution and distribution.

The great diversity in the geography of China has been a goldmine for fossils. Each region, from the Gobi Desert in the north to the lush hills of Jiangxi in the south, tells a different story about the dinosaurs that lived there. These discoveries reflect the amazing diversity of dinosaurs that once roamed ancient China, from small, bird-like creatures to massive, lumbering giants.

The Stories Fossils Tell

Each fossil discovered in China is a time capsule that has preserved a moment from a world long gone. These fossils allow scientists to rebuild not just the appearance of dinosaurs but also their behavior and environment. For example, feathers suggest that some dinosaurs were warm-blooded, capable of regulating their body temperature.

Fossilized footprints and nesting sites give evidence of their social behavior and show that some species lived in groups, taking care of their juveniles. In addition, findings of fossils with plants, insects, and other animals allowed the

reconstruction of whole ecosystems by scientists. These reconstructions provide an insight into the complexity of life interrelationships concerning how dinosaurs interacted with the environment and with each other. The Global Impact of China's Discoveries These Chinese dinosaur discoveries have really turned the scientific world on its head. They've not only built up our knowledge of the prehistoric world but have also inspired a new breed of paleontologists. Nowadays, museums from all over the world use Chinese fossils as the main attractions of their exhibitions, attracting millions to gaze in wonder at these wonders from ancient times. In addition, these discoveries have triggered an ever-growing interest in paleontology inside China. The local universities and research institutions are engaged in a busy training process of fresh cadres of scientists willing to learn more from beneath the ground. Thus, growing interest guarantees a continuous leading role for China in this science for at least some time.

What is the Outlook?

Despite the great progress that has been made so far, much of China remains unexplored by paleontologists. Large swathes of the country are yet to yield their secrets, and scientists are optimistic about what they might find next. Could there be even larger dinosaurs than those already discovered? Or perhaps new species that challenge everything we think we know about prehistoric life?

With each passing day, as technology advances, paleontologists find new ways of studying fossils. Such techniques as CT scanning and 3D modeling enable scientists to peep inside the fossil in ways that were unimaginable previously, disclosing secrets hidden inside these creatures and solving some mysteries that have puzzled the minds of researchers for decades.

Conclusion

The story of China's dinosaurs is one of discovery, innovation, and wonder. From the feathered *Sinosauropteryx* to the giant titanosaur, these fossils have revolutionized our understanding of dinosaurs and their world. They have shown us that dinosaurs were far more diverse, dynamic, and fascinating than we had ever imagined.

And as paleontologists continue to explore China's rich fossil beds, new tales of these ancient creatures are waiting to be told. Each discovery adds another chapter to the story of life on Earth, reminding us of the incredible history that lies beneath our feet. Who knows what the next fossil will reveal? In the meantime, let the discoveries already made inspire us to look back in awe and look forward with anticipation.

The Feathered Secrets of Jiangxi

St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Chu, Rachel Jae Xian – 14

In the heart of Jiangxi province, where there are dense forests, tall mountains covered by clouds and damp caves, a team of paleontologists was working hard to investigate the new species of titanosaur that has been recently discovered by the Chinese palaeontology team. Among them was Dr. Jack Horner, a renowned American paleontologist. Horner's research has mainly revolved around dinosaur habits and their evolution and his work has significantly influenced the field of paleontology. In recent years, he has been involved in research related to the origins of birds, including the study of fossilized eggs and embryos to understand the evolutionary transition from dinosaurs to birds.

As Jack surveyed the excavation site, he marvelled at his team of bright, young palaeontologists who were carefully digging through the rocky surface. One afternoon when the sun was setting, Sid, one of Jack's teammates stumbled upon a cluster of bones yielded by the surrounding earth. Jack knelt down to brush the dirt to reveal a skull of a microraptor. The small dinosaur which resembled a bird was a crucial piece of understanding to the evolutionary transition from dinosaurs to birds. "This is extraordinary!" Jack exclaimed, carefully holding the skull up to examine it as the golden sun rays shone on it.

Days passed, and the team unearthed other parts of the microraptor, including its vertebrae, ribs and wings which helped them connect dinosaurs to modern day birds.

One morning, as they dug deeper, the soil shifted and unexpectedly revealed another object nestled in a rock. Jon, another palaeontologist at the site, delicately brushed away the dirt to reveal the feather. "You won't believe what I found guys!" he shouted to his teammates. They all rushed to surround him and awed at the glimmering fossilised feather, preserved so remarkably as he raised it up to the light. "This is crucial for understanding the evolution of flight!" Jack exclaimed. "This goes to show that the microraptor has a close evolutionary link to birds due to its feather-like structure," he continued. "Yes you're right, we need to continue finding more evidence to help us have solid evidence on what you said," Jon stated.

After the amazing discovery, the team happily continued digging deeper, eager to find out more. As time passed, the sky became overcast and dark clouds filled the sky. A storm rolled in swiftly and the wind picked up, sending a gush of cool wind through the camp site. "Hurry and get back into the tents!" Jack ordered. He and his team rushed to secure their tents but the storm was relentless. Within minutes, thunder rumbled and rain poured so heavily that the tents flapped violently. Jack and his team tried their best to salvage some equipment but the storm was too powerful and destroyed several tents.

It took a couple hours for the storm to subside. Once it did, the team emerged, drenched in rain water and disheartened at the broken makeshift homes. "That was very unfortunate but instead of sulking and being mad at the storm, let us clear the debris and see if the storm exposed anything new," Jack called out to his team. With lifted spirits, his team started to clear the damage made by the storm. As they began to clear the debris, Jack noticed a significant shift in the ground. The rainwater had washed away layers of soil which revealed a new section of soil just below the surface. With renewed hope, the team began to excavate the newly exposed area.

Not long after, Alan, a senior palaeontologist unearthed another well-preserved feather fossil. This time, it was almost 5 times the size of the first feather fossil. Jack examined it closely. "These findings could provide evidence of feather evolution across different species. They could help us understand how these adaptations played a role in the survival of these dinosaurs."

The team worked late into the night, driven by the thrill of discovery. They meticulously documented each find, realising that the storm, while destructive, had also led them to an incredible trove of fossils that could transform their understanding of dinosaur evolution. Finally, as they wrapped up their excavation for the day, Jack stood back and surveyed the site. The chaos of the storm had given way to a moment of clarity. "We've uncovered something

monumental," he said to his team as they all caught their breath. "These fossils could change how we view the connection between dinosaurs and birds."

Days turned into weeks, and the excavation continued to yield remarkable discoveries. Each fossil they unearthed brought them closer to understanding the evolutionary narrative that linked these magnificent creatures to modern.

It had finally reached the end of their stay at Jiangxi. Knowing that there was more to unravel at the fossil-filled site, Jack and his team reluctantly departed the site where many memories and discoveries were made, knowing that their journey was far from over. And with that, the future palaeontology in China looked brighter than ever, filled with promise and endless possibilities.

The Golden One Isn't What We Found

St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Eriksson, Lennon – 14

My name is Bob Wilson, well, my life started way back in the United States, Me and my brother Billy were fanatics of dinosaurs, fascinated and put in awe to the gargantuan size of these ancient beast.

Back in our tender years, me and my little brother would pace around the town ransacking libraries for dinosaur novels and scientific facts. Then we would spend hours upon hours reading them way past our bedtime. It was really an obsession rather than a hobby. I always wanted to see them in person, so my mother brought us out that afternoon to a museum.

Years passed and we followed identical paths to graduate as a certified archaeologist. Success was granted with little turmoil and here's where my story begins.

Our first mistake in our career is when we chose the United States as our search ground and headquarters. We made big money in the start selling fossils to state museums and other fanatics who wanted to display another t-rex in their bedroom. However, the economy and society caught up to us and competition was too fierce. Big government and museum owned cooperations took over the market and we all thought it was best to rebirth and start up a fresh start in China. Who knows what can be lurking beneath the soil and sand of the vast landscape anyways.

Then as fast as in a blink of an eye, news came as scientists have studied the DNA of the existing Sinosauropteryx and found out that there must be a special breed with golden feathers. Finding this breed would throw us out of this shameful pit and back into business. We will probably be broadcasted in international headlines for that matter.

We set out for the hunt with maps, gps equipment, maps of fossil concentration areas, supplies and cash. We felt well prepared as if nothing could stand in our path as a pitiful obstruction, but little did, we know, we were not alone on this trip.

Malakar Dreadbane, Victor Vilethorn and Lucian Blackwater were the international "Archaeologist's nightmare" They have a massive team of labourers and a selection of fine excavation tools and vehicles. If you were searching what they were searching for, it is a guaranteed loss of you ever finding the fossil. All three of them always wore a red bowtie on a business suit, wearing intimidating shades and always smoking that lung ending cigar.

On this occasion, they were secretly sponsored by a secret Mexican government organisation to hunt down this bird to gain international recognition and glory to turn Mexico into an international ancient fossil museum hub starting with this one bird, yeah, these guys were no joke.

We arrived at the town of Gegyai in the western areas of China after painstaking hours onboard slow commuter trains. We chose Gegyai because it was the closest town to the epicentre of these fossils, just 400 kilometres or so. We were joined by two friends, Sam Richard who is keen in driving our rented jeep to and from the cite, and Rob Johnson who brought all the necessary equipment such as drills, shovels, binoculars you name it.

It wasn't later that day where we met our first obstacle. A small but powerful river to cross, it gave contrast to the desert, sprouting an oasis filled with lush palm trees, mossy boulders and massive ferns welding the visibility from the ground to the very treetops. Me and Sam got of the jeep to scout out a suitable crossing point shallow enough for the jeep to cross over. Fifteen minutes later and we opted for this shallow bank just north of out jeeps position. Simple and practical.

Commencing from the river, we saw a mountain of dust in the distance looking like how steam would appear of the funnel of a steam train gloomed closer and closer to us. It soon appeared to be vehicles, sizeable ones indeed. "It's them!!!" gasped Rob. I swiftly grabbed Rob's Binoculars and about 1km away was a large fleet of armed trucks with guns mounted on them. Before I could react, a hail of bullets rained town on our trekking jeep as the sound of distant gunfire echoed throughout the desert landscape. Sam slammed the peddles as we were pushed into our seat.

“It’s Malakar Dreadbane and his delusional squad! They were tasked for finding the Golden Feathered Sinosauropteryx and were told to eliminate any opposition!

In a fraction of a second, one of the 50 Caliber bullets hit one of the tires, bursting it and making us swerve out of control, jumping over a large sand bank and smashing into solid sand, headfirst. It all happened so quickly. All went silent as I dozed off away. That was the last time I saw Sam and Rob alive.

I woke up seeing my brother pull me out of the wreckage. “Bob! I’m glad you are alive!” said my brother. I woke up sobbing in tears, still in shock of what just happened. We finally gathered up courage after what felt like days of agony. The sun began to set as we limped up the sand bank. “How many kilometres Billy?” “About 89 north east to Gegyai” in our path was a huge number of distant spotlights. “It’s them and I want to ruin their stupid excavation project” shouted Billy in anger. I was fuelled with an overwhelming amount of anger. “THIS IS IT” I shouted, I began to charge at the distant lights with Billy following behind me. On our minds were to do as much damage to them as possible. Break a leg if we had to.

During my heroic charge, I mysteriously tripped on a rock and fell onto the desert sand in a way so funny and silly that it miraculously made my depressed brother burst into laughter. I got mad, cursing on the rock and kicking it multiple times. “wait!” Billy shouted in a mature tone. “that’s not a rock, that’s a fossil!” I started digging with my bare hands, I dug and dug with a power I never seen before. I soon found out it was an eye socket some 100 cm across. Me and Billy joined efforts and soon enough, an entire head the size of a sedan, it did not resemble that of a dinosaur but rather a Chinese dragon. “THIS WILL BE THE BIGGEST DINOSAUR EVER DISCOVERED! WHILE THEY LOOK FOR A LITTLE BIRD!” shouted Billy in joy. “ill go back and get more tools while you sit and guard” shouted Billy. I couldn’t comprehend and describe how happy I really was back then in that moment of darkness.

Billy arrived moments later with drills and shovels. “How are we going to bring this back?” I questioned. An idea struck me moments later “if we repair the engine and grab the undamaged wagon we were pulling with the jeep, we would be able to build a makeshift car to drag our trophies back!” The idea was simple but made easy with the amount of tools Rob brought.

We ran back to the wreck site finding every nook and cranny the wrecked jeep had to offer. I do not know how me and Billy was able to pull this off but after using the spare tire for the damaged one, carefully dismantling the 4-wheel drive from the jeep and hammering bolts to attach the cart and the axle together. We managed to build a working car. Fuel was also not an issue since we stored a couple of jerry cans for backup in the cart.

It worked and we spent the evening burning through every ounce of strength lifting the giant head out and all was left to do is to drive back to Gegyai.

After an uneventful trip back, we sold it to an interested Chinese Billionaire for 5.83 billion USD. We ended up spreading words of the wrongdoing of Dreadbane and his friends and an international search commenced to hunt them and arrest them for murder, sending them to hide in a Russian Bunker up north. Furthermore, the officials behind sponsoring Dreadbane for the search for finding the Golden Tail Sinosauropteryx has been arrested for corruption.

Later that month and many more archaeologists dug up the rest of the fossil. It had a snake like bone structure some 50 meters long and resembled a Chinese dragon. The information had later been classified and is covered up to be a Titanoboa snake from the Cretaceous period, but we know what we saw. Maybe all the legends were true all this time and should be not known a fiction and folklore. Now only time could tell.

New Tales of China's Dinosaurs

St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Ho, Ching Lam – 13

Millions of years ago, when the Earth was new, it was filled with vibrant colors and sounds. There was a hidden valley, deep within the mountains, of what is now China. The hidden valley was surrounded by mist and mysteries, it was crowded with different types of dinosaurs, big and small, with various shapes and sizes. The sun glittered in the sky, and the waves splashed on the shore.

I was a dinosaur, a Stegosaurus, which is a type of herbivore to be specific. With my spiky back and sturdy legs, I roamed the lush green plains and munched on abundant grass and ferns. Life was peaceful, but never easy, I had to compete for food with my next door neighbors everyday. Such as, the big Apatosaurus, who had such a long neck to consume leaves on trees and plants in freshwater. He always picked on me for being much shorter than him. He shoved me away every time he wanted to eat the grass I was eating, with his neck and looked down on me, calling me "shortie". Also, there was a Diplodocus that lived near my cosy cave and would never stop munching on grass. I still remembered the time when I always complained to my mom about the volcano, right next to our cave. Because the volcano was always grumbling and mumbling, and it seemed very dangerous, we should have moved out to somewhere else. What if it wiped out our whole bloodline? That's a horror. But my mom said that volcano soil is very rich, fertile soil, as thin layers of ash can act as natural fertilizer. Where can we find flavourful, fresh and juicy grass if we moved to a new place? Most of the places we searched for a better home were either taken by other larger dinosaurs, or weren't fertile. Not finding a new home was the biggest regret of my life.

One fateful day, while exploring a new area of the valley, I found another dead fossilized dinosaur, the legendary magnificent Changmiania Liaoningensis, it was very rare. I was wondering what could have killed the beast. Just then, the sky darkened, different types of deafening roars and screams echoed through the valley. The ground shook, probably because everyone was running. Panic spread among the dinosaurs as they fled in every direction. The largest volcano in the valley erupted in the distance, sending a plume of ash and smoke into the air. I tried to run, but the ash fell like heavy rain covering my eyes and nose, coating my body, making it difficult to breathe. In that chaotic moment, the heavy air was thick with unspoken fears, wrapping around me like a suffocating blanket. I stumbled into the darkness, feeling the weight of the world press down upon me. I died, buried upon the province of Liaoning by the volcanic ash and the sand and mud that casted by.

Since then, my spirit was light as ever, as I drifted through the Earth, I was lost and forgotten. I wandered through the silent valleys and ancient forest, witnessing the growth of new sprouts, blooming of young flowers, with the wild trees growing as wild as ever, and all the changes around. I experienced cold lonely winters, without anybody noticing my existence. I walked through the endless snow, hundreds of times. I witnessed the birth of the first humans, and how they grew up. Then next, came the Stone Age, The Bronze Age, civilization, the rise of the First Dynasty, the most extravagant emperors and bloodiest wars. Everything seems to be repeating day after day. I waited for my time to leave, but I never did. I was only an "eye" watching the world, never able to experience and explore, or to be seen again. I was a forgotten fracture of memories, just like hundreds of others.

Millions of years later, My fossil was finally discovered by a Chinese paleontologist named Wu Yuan and his team digging for fossils. He said, " This is a new species ! I wonder what amazing stories the ancient fossil will tell! " As he brushed and dug out each part of the bones, some lost memories were recovered. He examined my fossilized body bit by bit. Firstly, he examined my body fossils. He noticed that I was a herbivore, with my dull teeth. I had large bony plates along my back and spikes on my tail. My body was unique, with a broad, bulky build and a small head relative to my size. Next, He analyzed the chemical composition of bones to provide insights to the diet and habitat of me, so he could understand my role within the prehistoric ecosystem.

It felt like he was unfolding a scroll of knowledge about my past. A document was written about me, being a very important discovery and it was a huge contribution to the mysteries of dinosaurs, as my fossil was the only few Stegosaurus discovered in China, but not in the Morrison Formation in North America, where most of my relatives were. The discovery about me was later published into a book. My fossilized body was displayed in the most famous museum in China, with the fossils and remains of more than 40 dinosaur species found in the province of Liaoning,

including 24 pterosaurs. There were also both, the bully, Apatosaurus's remains with a few missing bones, and hungry Diplodocus 's fossil. Their spirits roamed around the museum just like mine and we played together everyday.

In the morning, visitors from all around the world marveled my fossil with curiosity and wonder. They were learning about my life, my place in the world, and the beauty of the age I had once belonged to. I was no longer forgotten, my story was being retold. This is how I want to be remembered.

At night, the janitor or security guard would open the air conditioner in the summer and warmer in the winter to keep us in the right temperature. Now, I have a home to live in, and it is such a comfortable place. I should thank Wu Yuan for putting me here. And the service from Chinese people is quite nice. I even forgave Apatosaurus for bullying me and we became friends.

A Journey to the Age of Dinosaurs

St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Kwok, Yan Ching – 12

A boy called Elias is doing Math and solving some hard questions. He is a smart boy and good at making machines. He and his sister, Lily, always go on adventures together with their dog, Aqua, with Elias's inventions. Lily is a kind person; she always takes care of Elias even when he is sick or hurt. She is his little guardian, always looking after him during their missions and adventures. One day, Elias's History teacher Miss Chan assigned them to do a project about the history of dinosaurs for their Christmas homework, which gave him the idea to build a time machine. In class he secretly started drawing blueprints for the time machine he had to sketch and draw the parts he needed.

His goal was simple, he just had to make a time machine nobody had seen before. After school he quickly ran back home to prepare for his newest invention's arrival. At home he was still clear of his goal; he began buying and collecting the materials for the machine. Since Lily's teacher had given her the same project to work on, she decided to help him too. The due date for the project was in January. They had about a month to complete before it. After about 3 weeks searching for materials, solving the equations and building night and day, they finally finished the time machine. After he finished, he felt that he was one step closer to his goal, making him feel relieved and happy about it. Lily on the other hand felt happy for him as well for he had made something that no other human has made before she was proud and trusted that his machine will bring them back to time safely.

Since their parents are always at work, they have the house all to themselves, which makes it easier and more convenient to go through time without interference and troubles. So, on the next day, they got ready for the trip. "Elias, are you sure that this is safe for us to travel in? What if we got trapped and went extinct with the dinosaurs?" Lily asked, "It will be perfectly safe. I will bring my time remote as well in case we get lost or the time machine gets broken. So, rest assured!" Elias replied. Soon they were on the doorstep of the time machine. They were nervous but excited about this adventure, Aqua barked happily and followed them inside. After they stepped in, Elias set the time and place to where and when they wanted to go. Out of a flash, they soon fell into what seems to be a glowing tunnel. It wasn't as deep but it made them quite dizzy so they fainted inside the glowing time tunnel.

As they opened their eyes, they found themselves in the middle of a desert. It was a hot and sunny day. After only a few seconds, they were already sweating like they had never sweated before. "Why is it so hot now! It's the middle of December. It should be cold, not hot!" Lily said, "It's normal, Lily, because we are back in time and so right now it is May, which is one of the hottest times of this year." As he said this, he handed Lily a bottle of water and gave a bowl of water for a quiet as well in case they had any trouble with the heat. And soon they can go on their journey and find different dinosaurs to complete their mission to learn about their habitats and whereabouts. They knew it was hard but their spirits stay strong and continued their hard journey in finding them.

After they started to walk around, they soon reached a green forest, inside they could see that the forest was lively and full of life. It had trees growing to the top of the sky. Soon after a while, they felt something touching and bumping against their legs, after they finally manage to see the little creature against their legs it turns out it was a small dinosaur which is known as *Anchiornis*. "Wow, it's one of them! I think it is called Anchiornis, which is a crow-sized, feathered dinosaur that lived in prehistoric Asia. Curved claws may have helped it to climb trees. It had wings and feathers on its arms and back legs, and some experts consider it a four-winged dinosaur. But it probably doesn't use the back wings much in the air." Elias said after he used a machine to identify the dinosaur. Lily replied, "They are so cute! They are like lizards but with wings!" Aqua started chasing and playing with them, he started barking at them playfully. Before they left, both Lily and Elias didn't forget to make notes about the knowledge they just obtained from the dinosaurs they just met for their history project.

After a while, they arrived in the middle of the forest where there was a lake surrounded by mountains and fields. Soon they saw that there were tall trees-like dinosaurs which the machine identified. *Datousaurus* is a gigantic herbivore which means that it eats grass and leaves for a living; it has one of the longest necks of all known dinosaurs. It lived in the mid Jurassic which is 170 million years ago. They are about 15m tall – while they were sitting on the

Datousaurus's back, they noticed some other interesting dinosaurs. Since they weren't sure of the species yet, Elias took out his machine and identified it as a Huayangosaurus, which is in the armored dinosaur group. It has spiky spikes poking out from its body; it was used to protect themselves and their younger ones. They are about 4.5 m long which is about as tall as two and a half of a door.

Not long after they encountered more dinosaurs like Allosaurus, Barosaurus, Camptosaurus, and Diplodocus. "Some of the most iconic dinosaurs known lived and died in the area now called Dinosaur Ridge, long before the Rocky Mountains uplifted," said Elias. "Good thing I brought us some hiking boots and some warm jackets for all of us, or else we would get sick," said Lily. "I'm so glad you prepared them, thank you Lily!" replied Elias. Not long after they came across a huge family of dinosaurs, which is known as the Stegosaurus. They are large, heavily built, herbivorous quadrupeds with rounded backs, short forelimbs, long hind limbs, and tails held high in the air. Due to their distinctive combination of broad, upright plates and tail tipped with spikes, *Stegosaurus* is one of the most recognizable kinds of dinosaur. The function of this array of plates and spikes has been the subject of much speculation among scientists. "Who would know we would be so lucky to see a family of them? There is even a baby with them," said Elias. Lily said, "Yeah, they are so adorable like a real-life doll!" "Keep your voice down, sis! We can't trigger them. They might be cute but they have very hard scales to protect themselves, it can potentially become a weapon so let's keep our distance." Elias warned with a wary voice. As he carried Aqua and holding Lily's hand in case of any incident happening.

"Aqua is very happy to be able to play with the baby dinosaurs. His tail is like it's about to fall down just from wagging so much excitement. It was adorable to see and play," said Lily. They took a picture of a few other dinosaurs and had a lot of fun but soon it was time for the day to end. "We should go now; Mum and Dad will come home soon. If they find out we went missing, they will be very worried." Lily said. "As much as I enjoy it here, I agree it is about time to head home now." Elias replied. They soon start packing their bags and stuff making sure that nothing would be left behind. Before leaving, they looked at the beautiful earth before the time humans arrived. Then, they returned to the original time zone they were from.

After they returned home, they used the notes and pictures they had taken to put it in their project. A while later, their parents returned and they gave them the hug of the lifetime as usual. In the end, as the night sky came "The dinosaurs are very beautiful and majestic creatures. It's a shame they went extinct," said Lily. Elias replied, "Even though I agree, I think it was for the best for us to not interfere with time since that would mean we changed history." Aqua barked as well to tell them that he agrees to their thinking. The children then went to sleep dreaming about the things they did in dinosaur time happily and peacefully. They secretly hope that one day they will meet their little friends and play with them again.

The Dinosaur Crisis

St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Kwong, Chak Ying – 12

“Mayday Mayday! We need backup right now! We are under attack by a group of creatures. No way! There are thousands of dinosaurs!” The call came from Torres, Air Force Unit 1A. A red alert warning was issued by Beijing, where the city had drastically changed from well-organized to chaotic in just over one night. “We must take revenge by all means!” The chief military officer ordered.

“Let me introduce myself. I am Professor Xia, a renowned geneticist at Beijing Renmin Hospital and this is Professor Chen, my supervisor. He is a paleontologist at Tsinghua University and is currently leading a government research project on dinosaur fossils.” I recalled my time as an undergraduate at the School of Paleontology at Tsinghua University.

This semester, my colleagues from the molecular biology department and I were studying the effects of genetic mutation on bird evolution. It was the first time our department had a joint venture study with another department and we all hoped that something could be done.

At first, we excavated bird fossils and compared their structures with modern-day ones. There was nothing special until one of my colleagues successfully extracted DNA from a bird fossil. “Well done, guys! What an achievement! Maybe we can bring prehistoric animals to life one day,” Professor Xia exclaimed with joy.

In the following months, I brought several dinosaur fossils including the Sinosauropteryx, pterosaurs and the recently discovered titanosaur to the lab to see if we could find any clues from dinosaurs as well. We worked hard from sunrise to sunset to uncover the genetic secrets of these ancient creatures, but Professor Xia worked even harder than we did. The lights in his office were still on even after we left at seven in the evening.

I remembered that summer night when I returned to the lab to retrieve my forgotten wallet. I couldn’t believe what I saw – Professor Xia secretly sneaked into a room behind his office. Out of curiosity, I peeked inside through the crack of the door and glimpsed black shadows darting around the room. There were also some small creatures immersed in chambers filled with liquid. I was stunned, frightened, and empty-minded. I knew something was terribly wrong.

My heart didn’t settle even after a week. I wondered if I should ask Professor Xia about what had happened that day. Finally, I plucked up the courage to talk to him. “I have tried to clone dinosaurs from the fossils you brought us. I will terminate them once they reach the fetal stage.” Professor Xia confessed. “Then why are there some dinosaurs running around in your secret office?” I questioned. “I don’t know. I tried to terminate them, but they developed resistance and continued to grow,” Professor Xia exclaimed with panic. Worse still, some had already escaped from the office.

What we didn’t know was that these dinosaurs were actually very intelligent. They cooperated with one another and worked as a team to look for food. They ate all the livestock from local farms. On top of their rapid reproduction, they could even understand what human beings were saying. Their existence posed a significant threat to humanity, and chaos was now reigning over the city.

“Mayday Mayday! We need backup right now! We are under attack by a group of creatures. No way! It’s thousands of dinosaurs!” The call from Torres, Air Force Unit 1A, echoed again. A red alert warning was issued by Beijing, where the city had drastically changed from well-organized to chaotic in just over one night. “We must take revenge by all means!” The chief military officer ordered. However, Professor Chen, the paleontologist, took a different view. He believed that we should not fight back, instead we should negotiate with them since they could understand human language.

Professor Chen attempted to communicate with the creatures using an animal sounds translator AI. Surprisingly, what they wanted was actually a place to live. They wanted to build a community and were not meant to hurt humans in

the way that humans had hurt them. They just wanted to protect their fellow creatures, not take over the reign of the world.

The misunderstanding was finally resolved. A peaceful island far away from China was offered to the dinosaurs for their settlement. Everything seemed to reach a satisfactory resolution, but one thought still lingered in my mind: Are humans too ambitious?

New Tales of China's Dinosaurs

St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Lai, Pui Kwan – 14

A suspicious Time Machine was found in a cave that I was hiking alone, I hesitate if I should go in it because i was scared of going inside alone. After a while, I plucked up my courage and went inside it, at first, I felt a bit weird about my headaches and it was pitch black inside it, I was scared of the dark so I shut my eyes and waited until it ends, and the story about the adventure in the Time Machine has begin!

I have fallen asleep inside the Time Machine and suddenly I felt some sunlight going in my eyes so I woke up. I was shock about where I am because there was a only trees beside me, I was still alone so I'm scared of taking the first step. All of a sudden my friend Mary fell from nowhere in front of me! I woke up her and we went to adventure together, finally, I have someone going with me in this mysterious place.

We were able to find some animals that we think that it is some kind of dinosaur, we think that it was a dinosaur because me and Mary was watching the television one day and saw people trying to find some fossil of dinosaurs, there were over 40 species of dinosaurs that they found! Mary suggested that we should find some more different species of dinosaur to make the adventure more meaningful and interesting, so we started looking for the dinosaurs.

Several hours has passed and the sun was going to sleep, me and Mary was able to find 46 species of dinosaurs! We were very proud of ourselves so complete the mission that we were trying to do here. We were happily thinking of going back to the Time Machine and go home safely but we realised that the whole place was tree, we can't remember where was the Time Machine at! At night, the dinosaurs were having more energy than day time, if we take the wrong way, we are going to die! We carefully picked up some leaves to mark where have we been do we will not get lost easily.

A loud noise of a dinosaur roar and me and Mary quickly hid behind a tree, two dinosaurs were fighting each other of some food. After a while, me and Mary safely returned home.

This was the coolest adventure I have ever had in my life, even though I was very scared, I still managed to complete the challenge! Next time when I see a Time Machine again, I will not hesitate and go inside it! This was a very memorable experience!

New Tales of China's Dinosaurs

St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Law, Patrick – 13

Dr. Smith, an experienced paleontologist, stood at the edge of a dense forest in southern China, his heart racing with anticipation. He had traveled to a remote village to study fossils masked by the dense woods in the nearby mountains. The locals spoke of a hidden valley where dinosaurs still roamed, but most dismissed it as a legend, but Dr. Smith was determined to find out the truth.

He walked into the woods, carrying a rucksack full of equipment. Solitary rays of the sun managed their way through the treetops of this high canopy and scattered dappled shadows across the grounds. After hours of searching, he came upon a narrow, lush path inviting him.

As he followed the muddy path, Smith tumbled into a breathtaking valley: towering woods, vibrant flowers, and in the distance, gigantic silhouettes that almost didn't look real, moved gracefully through the dense forest. Overwhelmed with shock he has never experienced, he documented everything when a deep rumble interrupted him. A colossal dinosaur approached, looming over him with its huge shadow.

The excitement in Dr. Smith quickly turned into pure fear as he raised his head and looked at the creature's head. A chilling sensation spread through his veins as his whole body stood frozen in front of the creature. The guardian dinosaur slowly lowered its head, trying to examine the tiny human being standing in front of him, looking around and sniffing him as if there were markings that could let it tell if he should be accepted in the valley or not.

As the nerve racking process came to an end, the guardian dinosaur signaled Dr. Smith, telling him to follow it. Dr. Smith understood that he had been accepted into the valley of the only surviving dinosaurs

As days passed into weeks, Smith learned from the dinosaur. Through vivid visions, it showed him the valley's history, a harmonious ecosystem where dinosaurs and humans coexisted peacefully. But greed loomed over it, and exploitation was impending.

One evening, while the sun was setting, the dinosaurs unfolded before their new friend a vision of somber clouds gathering over this valley. A chill caught Smith, and he suddenly realized the imminence of the threat. He rushed back to the village, having his mind racing.

Mei told the townspeople of her findings and the warning from the dinosaurs in the valley. Skeptical and afraid to lose potential development-related economic benefits, many did not believe him, as Mr. Zhang had planned to clear the land to build a luxury resort that promised jobs and prosperity.

The village elder, Elder Wu, spoke to them about the legends of the valley and the connection the villagers shared with dinosaurs. Inspired by the stories told by the elder, the villagers started re-evaluating what is more important to them.

As Mr. Zhang's machinery eventually started arriving near the valley, the villagers felt the tension rise. Smith organized a peaceful protest, publicizing it on social media to attract the attention of environmental activists and the press.

On the day of the protest, villagers gathered at the entrance of the valley. When the machines started to step foot on the valley, Smith and the villagers confronted them. When all was seemingly lost, a deafening rumble shook the valley, the dinosaurs people who once thought were only a myth appeared, their giant form inspired wonder in all who were present.

It was at this moment that Smith rose to his feet: "This valley is not land; it is a living testament to our history and a sanctuary for these magnificent creatures. We must protect it!" In the face of such community support, Mr. Zhang had no choice but to back down. The media attention changed his mind, which proved to be a public relations disaster for his company.

Subsequently, the villagers were able to declare the valley a protected area. Smith remained, working on research and conservation with the community, instituting eco-tourism projects that would preserve the beauty of the valley.

The guardian dinosaur became the symbol of their unity for nature's protection. As time wore on, with the passing seasons, so often would Mei find herself standing beside the great dinosaur and observe the bond between nature and humanity grow stronger.

It had been years since Smith gazed out into the foggy and mysterious valley and thought of just how it all came about. This sanctuary, both dinosaurs and humans, had come to be due to their common history. And as long as he remembered and respected the past, he knew the guardian of the valley would always protect them from danger.

The Malice Reaper

St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Lee, Jayda Alexandra – 14

Jiangxi Province, a land known for its myth and mystery, had long beckoned adventurers and scholars alike for its enchanting landscape and prehistoric paradoxes.

Amidst the dense underbrush of the province's ancient forest, Dr. Mei Lian navigated the terrain with determination. She was a renowned paleontologist that had garnered international acclaim for her groundbreaking discoveries of fossils once long lost in history.

She had always been drawn to the tales that the local villages in the Jiangxi Province had to offer, believing that they may harbor truths waiting to be uncovered.

After weeks of searching for something she was never certain existed, her efforts had yielded little; her excitement had begun to wane, and doubt crept into her mind. Yet, she pressed on, determined by the flickering hope of once again discovering something extraordinary.

On the third day of her expedition, a storm had rolled in, dark clouds swallowed the fading light. The air crackled with electricity and the distant rumble of thunder set her nerves on edge. As raindrops began to patter against the leaves, Mei sought shelter beneath a gnarled tree. It was then that she noticed something peculiar on the ground – a glint of bone, partially obscured by mud and debris.

With a newfound determination, she crouched to examine the artifact. As she brushed away the dirt, her heart raced; the bone was unlike anything she had seen before. Massive and serrated, it bore the unmistakable marks of a predator. Could this be the remnants of a long-extinct carnivore?

Hours later, the storm subsided, leaving the forest drenched. Mei had called her team to come and assist her in extracting the fossil, knowing that this could be the breakthrough she had long sought. They wrapped the bones in protective cloth and hurried back to their camp. The team was unsure of what ancient terror Mei had unearthed, their minds raced with possibilities.

The fossils were meticulously extracted and transported to the National Museum of Paleontology, where it was rushed to be prepared for display. The exhibit, titled "The Malice Reaper," was meant to showcase this unprecedented find. Anticipation coursed through Mei as she presented her find to her colleagues. They gathered around the fossil, their expressions shifting from scepticism to awe. This was no ordinary discovery; the bone's size and structure suggested a creature of unimaginable ferocity.

The night of the grand unveiling arrived. Crowds formed in anticipation and esteemed guests gathered, their conversations a low murmur as they admired the exhibits. The centerpiece, however, was the massive skeleton of the Malice Reaper, its bones arranged in a menacing display, seemingly poised to strike. Amidst the scattered chatter, Mei noticed something abnormal about the atmosphere – the lights flickered periodically and a sense of unease hung in the air, thick and suffocating.

As she took to the podium, her voice steady but her heart racing, she recounted the creature's discovery. "This magnificent creature roamed our world over 100 million years ago, a predator unparalleled in its ferocity. With each fragment we uncovered, we gained insight into a past rife with violence and survival."

As Dr. Lian concluded her speech, a sudden darkness enveloped the room. Gasps of infusion turned to screams as the lights flickered and died. Panic erupted, and in the chaos, the Malice Reaper's display became the focal point of horror as the skeletal remains began to stir.

The bones rattled and the once-inanimate structure was now animated by an unseen force. With a deafening crack, the skull snapped into place, and the eyes – hollow sockets that had long known the dust of ages – glowed a menacing red.

The Malice Reaper was reborn.

The creature, a colossal nightmare, lashed out with its massive claws, bone splintering into lethal shards as it struck. Guests scattered like terrified prey, their screams swallowed by the groans and growls of the Reaper and the true horror of Mei's discovery laid bare.

The Reaper lunged at crowds of people, hoisting them into the air with its talons. The last pieces of them evaporated as the beast's maw descended upon them with a sickening crunch, spraying blood across the polished marble floor.

One guest stood frozen, entranced by the creature's majesty. That was until that very creature's claws carved through him, reducing him to a grotesque mass.

As the skeletal dinosaur unleashed its wrath, the museum transformed into a macabre canvas, each wall stained with the blood of its victims, painting a gruesome masterpiece.

It was then that Mei had understood the weight of her actions. She had unearthed not just another fossil, but a force of nature – a harbinger of death that had laid dormant for eons. And now, it was free.

In a desperate bid for survival, she sought ancient texts she had studied prior to the event, buried within the archives. She thought perhaps there was a way to quell the beast, to return it to its eternal slumber. As she rifled through the dusty tomes, the growls drew nearer, the scent of blood thickening in the air.

Finally, she had found a passage about an incantation – a means to bind the creature. Her voice trembled as she recited the words. The ground shook violently and the Malice Reaper paused, its gaze fixated on Mei, a silent acknowledgement of the challenge she posed.

With each syllable, the air crackled with energy and the Reaper grew hesitant, flickering between the realms of the living and the dead. But just as victory seemed within her grasp, the ground quaked and the museum trembled as if the very heavens resented her interference. Perhaps this was the way it was meant to go.

In a final cataclysmic moment, the beast lunged forward, shattering the remnants of her spell. The last thing Mei saw was the creature barreling towards her, teeth bared and eyes aflame with fury.

When the dust settled, the museum stood silent, a husk of what had been, a mausoleum of horror. Blood soaked the floors, the scent lingered intoxicatingly, and screams echoed in ghostly whispers.

The Reaper, having sated its hunger, returned to its original staged pose. Its skeletal form now stood eerily still, as if awaiting the next batch of victims.

Outside, sirens wailed in the distance, but the beast remained undeterred. Its hollow eye sockets glew faintly, an invitation to the next unsuspecting guests who may wander too close.

There, the museum stood as a haunting testament to the horrors unleashed, a place where art and death had intertwined, forever marked by the blood of the fallen.

New Tales of China's Dinosaurs

St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Li, QiYong Angel – 13

It is 2056, in Heilongjiang, China. Small flakes of snow begin to fall. It is a snowy morning. The ground is covered by the soft, white snow, and so do the big pit beside. "Come on! Dig it deeper!" "It is covered by the snow!" "Then clear it away." In the pit, there are dozens of people who are digging the hole. The man who is speaking is the team leader of the Dinosaur Fossil Archaeology team in Heilongjiang, Liu, and the man who is answering is his teammate, Zhang. "Be careful!" said Liu, "Do not break any fossils!" "Yeah, if we broke it, we wouldn't be able to afford it," said Wang, another team member. They are sent by the higher authority to seek for dinosaur fossils. One month ago, a farmer said that he had found a strange bone in his field after a big thunderstorm. Researchers had detected a kind of dinosaur DNA in that bone. However, it is different to all the DNAs of dinosaurs in the world, the team has been working for 4 days, but nothing has been found yet. "Oh my God, another rubbish. Look at that white one, it might be a plastic bag," said Zhang, who is going to grab the white object up, "Hey! Stop!" yelled Wong, quickly stopped Zhang. "I don't think it is a plastic bag," said Zhang, looking carefully at it. "And I don't think you would be able to afford it if you threw it away either, call the leader." Soon, Liu comes, he and the other teammate patiently dig the object clearer, it is a bone. "There might be other bones nearby! Dig them – all out and put them all together! Go!" assigned Liu. Half of the day passed, all bones nearby have been digging out and placed together. It is a kind of long, big creature which has five big, sharp paws, a flat tail like a fishtail, some long, flat fins, and some scales. "Is that a kind of python?" someone asks. "Look at the two big horns on its skull, and the two long palpi, is that really a python? As well as its huge body, I think at least ten giant pythons can compare with that," said Wong, who is shocked by the magnificent creature. "Then it is a new type of dinosaur!" said Zhang. "I don't think it's dinosaur," said Liu, who is taking photos, "I need to report it to the superiors, think it is a new creature."

Three months later, the DNA analysis results come out. The bones are not belonging to dinosaurs, but a dragon. "A dragon? a dragon in our folk tales? A dragon in some paintings?" cried Wong, "Yes, I was thinking that they are imaginations of ancient people and only exist in myths," said Liu. "Should we find some Taoist priest here? Haha!" laughed Zhang. "I know?" said Liu, "This will be a big news in the world." "Yeh, and maybe there are more miraculous creatures waiting for us to discover. That is the biggest pleasure of our job, isn't it?" said Wong. "Now guys, there is a new work for us," smiled Lin. "Journey to JiangXi! It's time for us to discover the past and the future!"

The Discovery that Changed the World

St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Tan, Yui – 13

“No, no no! That doesn’t make any sense! Iris, when you’ve come up with a logical and REASONABLE reason, call me. I do not want to hear your humbuggery on the creatures. It is impossible that these creatures have survived after the tragedy. Your foolery is beyond me.” Iris’s boss had her back turned, glaring at the papers strewn across her desk. Iris’s heart sank as she stood by her, the weight of her words pressing heavily on her shoulders.

“Dr Chi, if you would just listen! I strongly believe that they did in fact survive. I do not speak from my beliefs, but from the scientific data and proof. The information is remarkable, and it could redefine our understanding of these creatures—” “ENOUGH.” Ms Chi had cut her off. “Iris, you are an intelligent and promising young lady. However, haven’t we decided to put a stop to this investigation?” Dr Chi said with her eyes raised before muttering “Even Mr Herodotus couldn’t possibly find a way to explain your stubbornness.”

“Just get another task— Oh look at the time, I must go, or I’ll be late for a meeting. RONALD GET ME MY FILES. Iris. I’m giving you one last chance. Please be more serious.” Dr Chi said as she started to walk away. “Dr Chi, whether you permit it or not, I’ll prove you wrong. Mark my words.” Hearing that Dr Chi let out a scoff and said before walking away, “If I were you, Iris, I’d watch my words carefully.” leaving an ominous trail behind.

Iris let out a deep sigh as her fellow co-workers began to snicker and mutter with each other. They had all been working on a case in which a farmer from China in Jiangxi had discovered the remains of a bird-like creature. After some research it had come to the conclusion that they were the ancestors of the present-day birds. However, soon the research was given up on as it took a considerable amount of time, effort and resources. Resources which the company did not have. Iris soon came to the conclusion that these birds survived longer after the meteorite disaster struck, sadly, Iris had a difficult time proving her theory was in fact valid.

Soon, days turned into weeks as Iris continued to immerse herself in an endless pile of research. She had collaborated with other palaeontologists, combing through fields of notes, cross-referring to fossil records. As she continued to explore, the more evidence she found. Fossilized eggs, remnants of feathers, even signs of nesting behaviors reflecting the similarity to present-day birds. With each discovery, her determination continued to fuel.

One evening, while analyzing the stratigraphy of a newly unearthed site, Iris stumbled upon something extraordinary. Among the typical marine fossils, laid a collection of small, fossilised teeth that look distinctly unique compared to anything she had seen before. Anxiousness and excitement filled within her as she carefully documented her findings as she lifted it gently and with the greatest care, as if it was the most precious thing in the whole world. “Could these be from the creatures I’m studying?” She wondered, her heart racing with anticipation. The teeth seemed to belong to a smaller and agile species— one that could have thrived in the shadows of the larger dinosaurs.

As she prepared her samples for further analysis, she couldn’t shake the feeling that she was on the brink of a major scientific breakthrough, one that could change the world, based on the way people think and perceive the world. As she continued to have her head up in the clouds, she failed to notice a concealed rock that blended right in with the environment surrounding. Before she could rescue herself, she tripped and fell headfirst along the dirt.

As she came to, she was horrified to realize that her samples had been destroyed. As a horrified Iris stared at the broken pieces, she felt her fantasy begin to shatter into millions of pieces. As tears began to fall from her eyes, suddenly she was reminded of her childhood friend Barry. “It’s okay Iris, we all make mistakes, whether big or small it doesn’t matter, what truly matters is how you get up and work back right?” Barry had said that to her when she accidentally dropped their group project that they had been working on. Even though Barry had invested so much time and effort into the project, he always reminded her of the element of never giving up. As Iris rubbed her eyes, her eyes suddenly had a glimpse of determination and hope.

After digging through the dirt for another two hours, Iris was about to give up when she spotted another pile of identical bones. Excitedly, she picked them up and gently placed them in her box. Soon she got up and went back to her lab humming a happy tune.

The day arrived, Iris could vividly remember the conference room filled with different people and the auditorium buzzing with anticipation. Iris stood in front of them all, her heart pounding as she looked across the sea of faces. Dr Chi sat in the front row, arms crossed, skeptical yet intrigued, nearby her colleagues had a look of boredom. Iris ignored them and began her speech “Thank you everyone for being here today. I am very excited to share my findings on a new species of dinosaur discovered in Jiangxi, one that challenges our understanding of their survival,” Her voice slowly started steadying despite her nerves.

As she presented her data, she could see the initial skepticism in the audience slowly shift to intrigue. The fossilized teeth, nesting behaviors and implications of her findings began to paint a vicious picture of a world where dinosaurs had adapted rather than vanished.

“I believe these creatures had not only survived, but also thrived in environments previously inhospitable to them.” She concluded her voice resonating with conviction. “This discovery opens the door to understanding dinosaur evolution in ways no one has ever considered.”

A murmur spread through the crowd and Iris could see Dr Chi leaning forward, a glimmer of interest in her eyes.

After the presentation, the audience erupted into applause and Iris felt a wave of relief wash over her. Dr Chi approached her, a thoughtful expression on her face

“Well done, Iris, I’m impressed.” She said, extending her hand.

“Thank you, Dr Chi, if it wasn’t for your lack of confidence in me, i wouldn’t have done this.” She joked lightly before shaking her hand firmly.

In the months that followed, Iris’s findings gained attraction from various companies. Collaborations were formed, grants secured, and expeditions were organized to explore the implications of her research.

One day, while examining a newly discovered site, Iris received a call from Dr Chi. “Iris’s, you won’t believe what we’ve found. You need to get here now!”

Her heart raced as she made her way to the site, anticipation bubbling within her. As she arrived, she was greeted by a stunning sight: a series of fossilized footprints leading into the forest. They were small, agile, and unmistakably belonged to a dinosaur.

“This changes everything,” She whispered her mind racing with various possibilities.

New Tales of China's Dinosaurs

St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Tsang, Angus – 13

Dr. Lin was in his office. His desks were filled with geography maps and piles of books about dinosaurs. While he was busy flipping over the books and checking the maps, a mosquito that was near landed on Dr. Lin's neck. Annoyed, the doctor wrinkled his eyebrows, and tried to catch the mosquito. The mosquito quickly dodged his attack and escaped to an opened window. Dr. Lin was devastated by the defeated attack on the mosquito. Just then, he was mesmerised by the view outside. He saw a number of skyscrapers and high-rise buildings that were placed on top of the hilly mountains. On the mountains there are roads, cars, and pedestrians all over. Looking from the office window, Dr. Lin can hear the noisy sounds of car engines and the rushed people on the road. After seeing this view, the doctor had an imagery that is quite the opposite of this crowded view. He thought of his hometown, Sichuan. When Dr. Lin was young, he lived in the most remote place possible in Sichuan. There were lots of strong, tall bamboo trees and grass surrounding his old home's yard. Inside of his old home, his grandfather is sitting on a chair talking to young Dr. Lin "It's about dinosaurs." The doctor remembered. Suddenly, he had an epiphany and realised where to find the dinosaur bones.

A few hours later, Dr. Lin is in a meeting room. The rest of the people were his students. "Where are you going?" Asked Chris Wong, a keen but inexperienced student.

"We are going to Sichuan, where the remote parts are." Said Dr. Lin.

"What? Isn't that place famous for marine species? We are looking for dinosaurs!" Exclaimed Mary, another student.

"We'll see," said Dr. Lin "Pack your bags and be ready for the trip to Sichuan. We'll meet at the High-speed rail station tomorrow at 9 a.m."

"Dismiss." Called the doctor.

The next day, Dr. Lin was waiting for his student. When all the students arrived, they all took the high-speed rail and travelled to Sichuan. After they left the station, they took a taxi to the chosen location. But the location is so remote that even the taxi driver said that he cannot drive there.

"Oh no! What are we going to do?" Asked Mary, who was terrified, "How are we going to get there?"

"No worries. I got maps." Said Dr. Lin, showing the evidence.

Everyone in the team followed Dr. Lin. Throughout the walk there were mountain lions that left their tracks in the dirt, and rattlesnakes sometimes sheltered under traps. When going uphill, a lightning bolt suddenly hit the top of a nearby cliff, and a juniper tree that was close to the horrified team burst into flames. People scattered for shelter. After a few hours of intense walking, the exhausted team finally arrived at the spot.

"Finally!" Exclaimed Mark, who was lying on blades of grass. "I can't move!" He panted.

"Shall we rest for a bit?" Asked Mary. "My feet are numb."

Dr. Lin glanced at the tired team for a while, as if they just finished a marathon.

"Fine." Sighed the doctor, "I'll give you guys 30 minutes to rest."

Dr. Lin looked at the surroundings, he found a very big space on the lush grass hill. The sky was clear. Dr. Lin can hear the chirping birds and the buzzing insects, he saw a ladybug fly across Dr. Lin's eyes, as if Mother Nature herself

is calling for him. Dr. Lin closed his eyes. He thought of playing tag with his childhood friends at the grassland. He can hear the happy shouting and the giggling sounds.

Minutes passed by and it's time for the team to stop resting. The team bought the tools for digging, and a tent for placing fossils that were discovered.

"Now, where does the excavation take place?" asked Chris Wong.

Dr. Lin glazed everywhere in the grassland, but then he remembered of him stumbling over a white object when playing tag as a child. The white object seems to be connected to the ground. Dr. Lin searched low and high, carefully calculating the possibility of finding the white object. Just then, Mark tripped and fell.

"Ow!" Yelled Mark "This hurts!"

Everyone quickly moved their legs to Mark. That is when Dr. Lin found the white object. The doctor's heart was beating at an unusual rate. He shouted "Everyone get your tools and start digging! We found artefacts!"

In the matter of minutes, everyone in the team gathered all their tools. Chris Wong, Mary, and Mark used concrete saws, rock hammers, chisels to excavate the fossils. During the process, they worked hard. But because of the high level of difficulty, they wanted to give up. Just then, Dr. Lin told them "Digging a fossil is like helping it to get out of prison. If you guys give up, the fossil gets no freedom. Don't give up!" Hearing this great speech, the fire in the team's heart ignited and gained a strong desire to finish digging the fossil out. Finally, a few hours later, the fossil was completely dug out. "Finally, the skull of a dinosaur has been dug." Said Dr. Lin. This is when the team found out that the actual size of the skull is so big that even a car can fit it inside.

"But how do you know that it is a dinosaur?" asked Chris Wong. "Remember that Sichuan is famous for its marine species."

"Let's check the teeth of the dinosaur." Said Dr. Lin "If the teeth is flat and broad, it is a herbivore, which is not a kind of marine species." Indeed, the dinosaur is a herbivore.

The sun in the sky was falling down. The colour of the sun spread slowly into the sky. It was so pretty as if it was a reward to the team. Looking at this marvellous landscape, Dr. Lin felt like he was dreaming because the picture is the same as the one the doctor always saw when he was young. Everyone smiled.

"Wait, this dinosaur doesn't look right." Said Mary. "I knew all kinds of dinosaurs, but this looks nothing compared to all of them."

Dr. Lin glazed closely at the skull. A few moments later, he finally said "Yes. You are right. What shall we call it?"

Mark said "I think that this dinosaur should be named 'Redasaurs'. This emphasises its unique name and the culture of China."

Everyone agreed. Then they proceed to use jackets of burlap and plaster to place around the fossil to protect it, they then used heavy machinery for the lifting because of the enormous and heavy size of the skull, weighing more than a ton. Finally, they lifted the fossil to the tent. They discovered that the skull was just enough to fit in the tent. After the job was done, the sun was long gone.

Dr. Lin and the members of the team lay in the grassland. The sky was dark. The doctor can see the glowing stars. The stars look like diamonds, shining in their eyes. Looking at the stars, Dr. Lin was totally fascinated by it. He remembers his grandfather telling dinosaur stories to his younger self. "This marks the beginning of my journey to research dinosaurs" The doctor thought, smiling. When he turned his head back to the members of the team, they had been asleep long ago because of the excavation of the skull. A few minutes later, Dr. Lin fell asleep too.

After the skull was taken out from the ground and was taken to Hong Kong for research, the villages that are near the location that the skull was discovered had learned the news and spread it over the world in the matter of days. The team was then often interviewed by newspapers and was shown in famous magazines. The skull of the dinosaur is then donated to the Dinosaur Museum of China, which is shown in the entrance.

A few days later, Dr. Lin looked through the window of his office. It is the same view of skyscrapers and a bunch of roads. He thought “This is just the beginning of the journey of my team and I.”

The Last Echo of the Dragon

St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Wong, Hei Yu Karis – 14

Far, far away in the Sichuan Mountains, where mist clung on the trees, in the midst of peaks, a little boy called Lian lived. The elderly people talked much about ancient dragons “that flew in the sky”, they thought these were dragons of the mountains and guarded them for good.

Lian is a boy of curious fascination, and one afternoon, while examining a hidden cave, he retrieved a shiny scale much bigger than his hand that began to sparkle while it was really warm on pickup. He started to feel himself attaching himself to something in particular. He was extremely excited, Lian rushed into the village. "Hey, look at what I just found!" He shouted it out loud to show it to Wei, the elder of the village who has seen many seasons. Wei's eyes turned big. "This is the scale of a dragon," he whispered. "It has been long, it has not been seen, and if one believes in its powers, then it might change his life."

The villagers stood around, staring at the dragon. All along, they had thought dragons were just stories, but here was the proof. The scale seemed alive, and Lian felt a strong connection with it. If the villagers understood its importance, they could reconnect with their past.

That night Lian dreamed of flying dragons across the sky with their shining scales in hues of green and gold. A huge dragon alighted before him: "Lian," he said, "You have woken up our spirit. Nature is out of balance, and we need your help to fix it."

When he awoke, he was very determined. He explained his dream to the villagers, but none of them believed him. "For dragons are but myths," they said. Yet, Lian felt called to do some great thing. Provided they should believe him, their lives could alter. Now determined to verify the truth behind the dream, Lian set into the mountains to follow the whistling winds and the calling of the scale. Days turned into weeks, as he climbed higher and higher, the paths becoming increasingly challenging. One evening, he stumbled upon a hidden valley with a large stone altar covered in ancient carvings. He placed the scale on the altar, and as he closed his eyes, energy coursed through him. Suddenly, the ground shook, and the scale began to glow, illuminating the valley. If the villagers could see this, they would understand the power of the dragons.

Before him stood the dragon from his dream. "You have answered the call," he said. "Greed has upset the balance, and if we do not bring back with us the spirit of the dragons, the land will suffer."

Lian set on a journey to restore the valley to health. They went to the riverbanks, pleading that the water spirits flow once more. He trekked into the forests, calling to the trees that needed to wake up. If the villagers helped, their work would be stronger.

As they all worked together, the villagers began to recall the old stories that were told before. They gradually joined Lian in planting trees and cleaning the rivers. The months passed; the valley changed. Lian felt the dragon's spirit blend with his own.

Then, the dragon appeared once more. "You have done well, Lian. The balance has been restored. If you respect nature and take care of each other, true strength is actually found in your bonding with earth." After saying that, he took off into the sky with a trail of light. The villagers with the magic of dragons in them rejoiced. From that day on, Lian became the guardian of the valley and shared the stories of the dragons. The scale remained on the altar, a reminder to all that, if future generations continued to honor this legacy. The spirit of the dragons would live on.

New Tales of China's Dinosaurs

St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Wong, Lai Yi – 14

In a small village nestled among the rolling hills in Jiangxi, there lived two young and humble farmers named Peter and Mary. They were famous ,popular and full of curiosity . They were known for their hard work and love for the land, and curiosity about the world.

One sunny morning , a clear blue sky and abundant sunlight, a day full of excitement had started.

Mary went out from home to land for farming as usual. As she plowed her field, she noticed that there' something unusual sticking out of the ground. She shouted "Peter! There is something under the ground, come out and see!" Peter rushed out of the house with his pajamas immediately and asked curiously " What? What was that?" Mary said " we will know it in a minute. But before that, we got to brush away the dirt first." Then, Mary stopped her tractor and put it away. They knelt down and brushed away the dirt and gasped. There was a large curved bone. It was unlike anything that they had ever seen before. Excitement filled up in them cause they knew that they had stumbled upon something extraordinary.

Peter and Mary carefully excavated the bone , wanting to know more about its length and shape. They get the whole bone out, knowing that it was heavy and fossilized." They realised that it could be a dinosaur bone! Their heart bits raced in excitement.

They decided to take the bone to the village elder , Mr Wang, who had a deep knowledge of the local history and folklore. They thought that he might know what kind of dinosaur's bones were.

When they arrived at Mr Wang's house, his eyes widened in astonishment as Peter and Mary presented the bone to him .

“Where did you two find this!? This could be a piece of bone of a dinosaur that lived millions of years ago I" Said Mr Wang. "We found that in our field when we were plowing our field. What do we do now?" "I believe that we should notify the local museum about the discovery."

In the following week, a team of palaeontologists arrived at the village. They were surprised to find more bones buried in the soil.' They worked tirelessly to uncover the rains of what they believed was a previously unknown species of dinosaurs.

Weeks turned into months, the paleontologist published their findings on news and articles. The news of the found dinosaur bone spread throughout the village. People were interested in seeing it. And since then, Peter and Mary had become local heroes. They were invited to give a speech at schools and community events, sharing their stories and inspiring children to learn about dinosaurs and the natural world.

The village even organised a festival to celebrate the discovery, featuring games, food and educational exhibits about dinosaurs.

China's Black Predator

St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Wu, Yat Sum – 13 I have never expected this to happen.

I gasped at the onyx relic cupped between my hands. It was an ancient fossil. The skull of an unidentified creature, no bigger than my palm.

I lived as an ordinary gardener for years, having a passion for tending to herbs and flowers. Living in a cottage in the lush hills of Sichuan, my garden flourished with colorful blooms of fragrant flowers which decorated the garden into a picturesque place. I water the plants daily, till the soils for columns of flowerbeds, plant seeds, and tend them with care. My life was ordinary, peaceful, and far away from the bustling streets of the urban areas, which wasn't as exciting as living in cities nowadays, but it was life I enjoyed, life I adored.

Just as I was tilling the soil in the back corner of my garden, the rake struck something hard. It piqued my curiosity and I knelt down and began to clear away the soil, wondering what was buried in it. To my astonishment, it revealed a rock—heavy, jet-black in color. The rock, which was shaped into a skull, interested me. As I washed away the remains of soil and mud, I wondered what it was doing here in my garden. It was a fossil of a skull, of some sort of creature I have never laid eyes on. The fossil skull was about the size of my palm, possessing large, rounded hollow eye sockets that faced forward, with bared sheep teeth no doubt an advantage to hunting. Mostly preserved, it allowed me to observe the dips and curves and every angle, feeling the rough edges and rugged surfaces of the fossil skull.

An idea popped into my head: If the skull of the unknown creature was buried beneath the ground here, would the rest of the body be hidden at this spot as well?

I started my search, digging through the mud and soil, and just as I thought, the fossilized bones of the dead creature were found. I immediately contacted an archaeologist in Sichuan, and she made her journey here with some assistants.

“Call me Abby,” she said, shaking my hand, her gaze drifting to the fossils that laid on the table which I had previously moved to. Her eyes practically glowed with delight and awe, showing her interest in the topic. “I have found them while tending to my plants. The skull was approximately half a metre under the soil, and the rest were around two metres underground,” I informed her, recalling the events that happened.

“Interesting,” Abby answered, examining the fossilized bones, “It's a creature we've never encountered before, and by the sight of it, it seems like an unidentified dinosaur to me. Of course, verifications will be needed, so I have to bring it back to our laboratories.” I happily obliged, and she promised to update me on details regarding the fossils.

Months passed by and I waited for any further information on the fossils. Abby upheld her promise and sent word. The fossils that I have discovered belonged to a new specimen of dinosaur. The archaeologists decided to name it Onyxilla, after its stunning, dark bones that resembled onyx. Researchers found out that Onyxilla was at the approximated size of 4 feet tall, with coal-black skin. Its sharp pointy teeth showed that it was an omnivorous dinosaur, and they were alive during the mid-Jurassic period in the Mesozoic Era, which was around 175 years ago. Onyxilla has sharp long claws, also useful for hunting prey. With its sharp claws and teeth, it earned a nickname – The Black Predator, the dinosaur who roamed the lands of Sichuan, who called itself King and hunted for prey; who moved silently and swiftly at night, like a shadow; who tracked down the targeted animals, camouflaged in the darkness with its dark skin.

The archaeologists evacuated the land where it was found and searched for more signs of the dinosaur fossils which were hidden beneath the Earth. Onyxilla was just the start. Professionals have found more fossils along the

Sichuan province and lands beyond, creating new tales of China's mysterious dinosaurs. As more and more secrets of the Mesozoic Era are uncovered, it brings the world a closer look to the ancient world, broadening their horizons to the past centuries of Earth.

The Lost Dinosaur of Liao Province

St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Yu, Yu – 14

In a small village in Liao Province, China, there lived a boy named Jack. Jack was like most kids his age—he liked to play with his friends, ride his bike, and eat ice cream. But there was one thing that set him apart: he was absolutely obsessed with dinosaurs. While his friends were busy with video games and social media, Jack spent hours reading books about dinosaurs and dreaming about being a paleontologist.

One rainy afternoon, while searching for something new to read in his school library, Jack stumbled upon an old, dusty book titled “The Secrets of the Ancient World”. The cover was faded, but it looked interesting. As he opened it, he discovered a chapter about a legendary dinosaur called the “Liaoning Dragon.” It was said to have bright feathers and could glide gracefully through the trees. Jack’s heart raced as he read about how fossils of this dinosaur had been found nearby, but the exact location had been lost over time.

“I have to find this dinosaur!” Jack exclaimed to himself. He dreamed of uncovering a real dinosaur fossil and becoming famous. But he knew it wouldn’t be easy. He decided to gather supplies for an adventure. He packed a backpack with snacks, a notebook, a flashlight, and a map of the area. “This is going to be the best day ever!” he thought.

The next morning, Jack woke up early. The sun was shining, and he could hear birds chirping outside his window. After breakfast, he slipped on his favorite dinosaur T-shirt and set out on his quest. His parents waved goodbye, and Jack felt a surge of excitement as he headed toward the forest.

The forest was huge, filled with tall trees and winding paths. Jack followed the trail, his heart racing as he imagined what it would be like to find a dinosaur fossil. After walking for a while, he stopped to take a sip of water and check his map. “According to this, I should be getting close,” he said to himself.

As he ventured deeper into the woods, Jack suddenly heard a rustling noise coming from the bushes. His heart skipped a beat. Could it be a dinosaur? He tiptoed closer, peeking through the leaves. To his surprise, he saw a small, feathered creature. It was no bigger than his dog, and it had bright green feathers with hints of blue.

“Wow! A baby dinosaur!” Jack whispered in awe. The little creature looked curious and seemed to be watching him. “I’ll call you Lia!” he said with a grin. Lia waddled closer, chirping softly as if to say hello.

Jack felt a connection with Lia and realized they were going to be friends. “Let’s find your family!” he declared, determined to help his new companion. They set off together, following the winding path deeper into the forest.

As they walked, Jack took notes in his notebook. He wrote about the trees, the flowers, and, of course, Lia. “This is going to be the best adventure ever!” he thought. They climbed over fallen logs and crossed a small stream, laughing as they splashed water on each other.

After what felt like hours of exploring, Jack and Lia came to a clearing. In the center was a large rock formation that looked like a dinosaur skeleton! Jack gasped in excitement. “This must be it! This has to be a dinosaur!” He rushed over to examine the rocks closely.

As he studied the formation, he noticed something shiny sticking out from the dirt. “What’s this?” Jack wondered, digging carefully around it. To his amazement, he uncovered a small, sparkling fossil. It was beautiful! “I can’t believe I found this!” he shouted, holding it up for Lia to see.

But while Jack was busy examining his fossil, he heard a loud noise behind him. Startled, he turned around to see a group of people approaching. His heart sank—what if they were going to take his fossil away? But as they got closer, he recognized one of them: it was Dr. Wang, a famous paleontologist he had read about in books!

“We’ve been searching for this site for years!” Dr. Wang exclaimed, looking at the skeleton in awe. “And you’ve discovered a fossil! This is incredible!” Jack felt a rush of pride as he explained his adventure and how he had found Lia. Dr. Wang listened intently, impressed by his enthusiasm and determination.

“You have a real talent for this, Jack,” Dr. Wang said with a smile. “Would you like to help us with the excavation?” Jack could hardly believe his ears. This was a dream come true!

Over the next few days, Jack worked alongside Dr. Wang and his team. They carefully dug around the skeleton, uncovering more bones and fossils. Each day was filled with excitement as they made new discoveries. Lia stayed by Jack’s side, happily hopping around as they worked.

Soon, word about the discovery spread throughout the scientific community. Scientists from all over the world came to study the site. Jack felt like a real paleontologist, and he loved every minute of it. He learned how to identify fossils and even how to properly excavate them. Every evening, he would go home and write in his notebook about the day’s adventures.

After weeks of hard work, the excavation was finally complete. The Liaoning Dragon skeleton was carefully transported to a museum, where it would be displayed for everyone to see. Jack was invited to speak at the unveiling ceremony. He stood in front of a crowd, his heart pounding with excitement and nerves.

“Thank you all for being here,” Jack began, his voice shaking a little. “I want to share my story about how I found this amazing dinosaur. It all started with a book and a little feathered friend named Lia.” The crowd listened intently as he recounted his adventure, and when he finished, they erupted in applause.

After the ceremony, Jack received praise from scientists and even some kids who wanted to be paleontologists too. He felt proud and happy, knowing that his adventure had inspired others.

As the years went by, Jack continued his studies. He traveled around the world, uncovering more dinosaur fossils and sharing his knowledge with others. But he always remembered his first adventure in Liao Province, the day he found Lia and the excitement of discovering the Liaoning Dragon.

One sunny afternoon, many years later, Jack returned to the forest where it all began. He wanted to revisit his favorite place and see if he could find Lia again. As he walked through the familiar trees, memories flooded back. Suddenly, he spotted a flash of green in the bushes. His heart raced. Could it really be?

As he approached the bushes, he saw Lia, now a bit larger but still with the same bright eyes. “Lia!” Jack cried, kneeling down. The little creature chirped happily and rushed to Jack, nuzzling against him.

Their reunion was magical. Jack realized that their adventure was not just about finding fossils; it was about friendship and following his dreams. Together, they explored the forest, reliving old memories and making new ones.

From that day on, Jack knew that his love for dinosaurs and his friendship with Lia would last forever. They would continue to explore the wonders of nature, uncovering secrets that had been hidden for millions of years. And every time Jack looked at the fossil he had found, he would remember the incredible adventure that started it all.

The Titanosaur of Jiangxi

St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Yuen, Cheuk Lam – 14

In the peaceful hills of Jiangxi province, excitement filled the air after the discovery of a new species of titanosaur. The village that had once been quiet was now bustling with paleontologists and curious visitors. Dr. Chan led the excavation team that unearthed the massive bones of the titanosaur, which was named “Paralititan”.

As the sun rose on another day, Dr. Chan and her team began to examine the colossal skeleton they had carefully reconstructed. “Today, we will explore the surrounding area for more fossils,” she announced, eager to uncover more hidden secrets of the ancient world. She split her team into groups and each carried tools and a sense of adventure. Dr. Chan, along with Tom—the farmer who discovered Paralititan, climbed a nearby hillside. As they explored, they spotted a strange rock.

“That looks interesting,” Tom pointed at it and said. Dr. Chan nodded, looked carefully and said “Fossils could be hidden inside.” They began to dig, carefully brushing away the dirt. Soon, they revealed a cluster of bones, a mix of sizes and shapes.

“This could be another dinosaur,” Tom said with excitement in his voice. Dr. Chan shared his enthusiasm. “Let’s see what we can find.” They continued digging, uncovering both herbivorous and carnivorous remains. They twirled around in delight.

As the news of their discoveries spread, more people arrived in the village. Students from local schools were so curious that they came to learn about paleontology. The village transformed into a lively place filled with energy and curiosity.

One day, Dr. Chan received a visit from Dr. Lam, a well-known paleontologist from Beijing. He had heard about their findings and expressed interest in collaborating. “I believe there are even more significant discoveries waiting for us nearby,” he said. Dr. Chan was thrilled after receiving the letter. Together, they explored the area further, leading to the unearthing of even more fossils, including ancient plants and traces of predators. Each new find painted a clearer picture of the life that once thrived in Jiangxi.

Their hard work culminated in a grand exhibition at the National Museum of China. The exhibit featured Paralititan and the other fossils, drawing crowds eager to learn about the ancient past. Dr. Chan stood proudly beside Dr. Lam, who praised her efforts in leading the research. During the exhibition, a young girl approached Dr. Chan. Her eyes were shining with wonder. “Can I become a paleontologist like you?” she asked. Dr. Chan smiled and nodded. “Of course! Science is for everyone. Just stay curious.”

In the following months, the excitement around Jiangxi only grew. New fossils were discovered, and the region became a central hub for paleontological research. Reflecting on their journey, Dr. Chan realized that the story of the titanosaur was just the beginning. Each fossil unearthed was a step toward understanding the past and inspiring future generations.

In the heart of Jiangxi, the whispers of ancient creatures continued to echo, promising more remarkable tales waiting to be discovered.

The Legend of Xianglong

St. Mary's Canossian College, Fong, Hei Tung Natalie – 12

The shining scales of the ancient guardian dragon, Xianglong, reflected the dazzling colors of the forest. The legends spoke of his wisdom and power, his commitment being far beyond mere self-preservation; he pledged to protect the quintessence of his native land. However, the scene that had just flashed before his eyes was different from everything he had ever faced.

In an instant, this haunting vision reappeared. Xianglong fell on the ground, withering in pain. The dragon had just seen the future: tumbling mountains and an earthquake that would remove the very blood of the Chinese tribe and culture, with no one even whispering a word afterward.

No, this will not happen, Xianglong told himself. Though it will be billions of years later, it is still my home. I must protect the future Chinese people!

With utter determination, Xianglong unfolded his wings, and soared into the sky. The canopies of ancient forests faded into blurs as it climbed higher and higher over the majestic mountains of Jiangxi. Xianglong knew he needed the strength of others, and there was only one place where he could find that strength — the holy valley where bones from ancient monsters littered the landscape, awaiting the right moment when they would tell their stories.

As the dragon dove down into the valley, he saw, faintly, under the layers of rocks and time, the remains of the titanosaur he had heard whispers about — a new species, just peeking out of the depths of history. Xianglong landed onto the leftovers in majesty, and as he did so, echoes of the past started to murmur.

“Awaken, dinosaurs !” he bellowed across the valley, his voice echoing through. “The time has come! Future Chinese people are in danger, and I need your strength to help save them.”

Slowly, the bones began to rattle and shift, animated by a force only the dragon could summon. From the dust and pieces of rock emerged the titanosaurs, their long necks extending towards the sky. “We hear you, Xianglong,” they said, their voices deep and resonant. “What is this danger you speak of?”

“A catastrophic earthquake is imminent,” Xianglong explained urgently. “It will destroy our land and erase the culture of the future. We must unite our powers to prevent it.”

The titanosaur nodded gravely, its eyes reflecting the wisdom of ages. “We will help you, but we aren’t powerful enough. We will need the strength of the earth itself.”

Xianglong understood. “Then we must awaken the spirits of the land — the ancient guardians who once roamed freely. Together, we can create a shield to protect the future from this disaster.”

With a loud cry, Xianglong called out to the ancient spirits of the dinosaurs, and they emerged, one by one, from the mists of history. Above them flew the Pterosaurs, their graceful wings casting great, long shadows down in the valley below. Quick, crafty Velociraptors came to their feet, and the huge Brachiosaurus entered the view of those around him, its weight shaking the ground.

“Together, we can create a barrier,” exclaimed Xianglong to the ancient beings. “We shall channel the energies of the earth and sky to shape an invisible shield destined to absorb the tremors of the quake that will strike the future land!”

The dragons nodded in agreement, sensing the urgency in his powerful voice and responding to their ancient instincts. They formed a circle as their energy pulsed with life, connecting their spirits. A ball of swirling, colorful energy crackled in the air around them, and the earth rumbled beneath their feet in response.

As they funneled their combined energy, a searing light shot up from the centre of their circle and lit up the entire valley. Xianglong flew overhead, overlooking the majestic circle of dragons and pushing their energy upwards, the energy bursting like a comet across the sky, it shot into the skies, creating a protective barrier that shimmered like a veil over the land.

“Now we wait,” said Xianglong, alighting with dignity among his friends as they all turned invisible. “What is to be will be, but this is all we can do to protect what is to come.”

Days passed, and weeks turned into months, which became years. All creatures in the valley waited with bated breath, their spirits knitted in one strong tapestry of strength and unity. They could feel the earth stir beneath them, tense with every new day, knowing the earthquake's approach.

Finally, a few billion years later, the day finally arrived. The skies turned dark, and a deep rumble resounded through the valley, shaking the core of the earth. Lightning flashed across the sky, but as the tremors grew stronger, the barrier created by Xianglong and the ancient dinosaurs held on firmly. The light shimmered and throbbed, taking in the power of the earthquake and turning them into soft vibrations that rippled harmlessly through the land.

As the earthquake finally came, billions of years later from when Xianglong had predicted it, the titanosaur cried, “Look!”, pointing with its enormous neck. “The people are safe!”

As the quake subsided and the dust began to clear, Xianglong felt a surge of relief. The valley still stood, and the spirits of the ancient dinosaurs shone with a new vigor with their mission accomplished.

Xianglong turned to look at the titanosaur. “We have done well today, but our work is not done. Future generations must know of this day, the strength of their heritage, and the importance of protecting their home.”

With that, the dragon called upon the forces of the earth to carve stories into the very stones of the valley stories of courage, harmony, and the melding of past and future. Each stone became a testament to their journey and a reminder that the spirits of the ancients would always look over the land.

The sun began to set and cast its golden rays upon the valley as Xianglong and his companions stood together, realizing a legacy had been set, lasting for ages to come. They had not only saved their home but also ensured that for China, the future would indeed be bright, secured in the wisdom of its past.

And so, the story of Xianglong and the ancient titans would be heard throughout the ages, guiding generations to come, to cherish their heritage and care for the world around them. In the heart of China, the legacy of its dragon and dinosaurs would march on.

Cretaceous Elegy

St. Paul's Co-Educational College, Cai, Jiajun – 14

It was an ordinary day in the late Cretaceous on the tip of Laurasia, which is now called “China”.

Sunbathing, a giant dinosaur tore the snake he had found and enjoyed its fresh flesh. Meanwhile, the ants in the formicary were signaled and swarmed, ready to have a hearty meal. They climbed upon the green scale mound, ate the flesh hidden between the dinosaur's teeth, and returned. The acquaintance marked the first dino-formican interaction.

As time passed, sixty thousand years went by.

The dino-formican symbiosis has persisted to now. They had walked past the Paleolithic, the Bronze Age, till now – the Information Age. Dinosaurs burnt coal to support their computers, skyscrapers, and satellites, while ants used wind for precise tasks like running dino-formican hospitals.

The Earth was split into three countries – the People's Republic of Laurasia and the United States of Gondwana, and the Formican Empire which governed all the ant tribes. Within them, ant strikes erupted, protesting dinosaurs' nuclear threats. Tensions simmered, unbeknownst to many.

The General Secretary of Laurasia groaned, “Are there really no ants in hospitals? My throat is sore! I can't rely on antibiotics alone!”

The State Councilor replied, “Yes. But it's the same for the Gondwanan.”

“If so, tell them to learn! Tell the doctors to learn!”

“But there's always something impossible for us dinosaurs.”

“Do you mean those of us who survived harsh winters and wars are incapable? If we practice, our hands are dexterous too.”

The Councilor took out two electrodes and asked him to wire up, “Our children learn the theory behind in secondary schools. It is simple.”

The Secretary twisted and struggled, yet every time the wires would slide from his clumsy fingernails. He sighed and left.

“Raze 5 formican cities to warn those defiant ants.” He ordered.

Three days later, the Formican Emperor roused a speech, read:

“Comrades! The reptiles destroyed our cities and demanded surrender. Yet they don't want to stop and relinquish nuclear weapons. Though we can't bear more losses and should resume our duties, we mustn't forget what the giant reptiles did without a moral baseline! Now, there're only two options: either we vanquish the reptiles or perish gloriously together!”

“Annihilation of the toxins of the heavy industries or death under nuclear weapons,” agreed the senator, Karl, “unless – fight against the reptiles until the end!”

“Calm!” shouted Dr. Geschwind, the Minister of Science. “Time has proven our enduring friendship of 30000-year Dino-formican symbiosis has formed the bedrock of civilization. If we hastily rupture, we will lose not just their delicacy but also our curiosity and imagination. It's curiosity that promotes—”

“Enough, academician. Instead of symposiums that make no sense, let me introduce Blitz that crafted by us independently,” interjected General Schmidt, “the tiny bombs will detonate a month later, after they are placed in

the wires of the substations, beneath the longest bridges and infrastructure, into every corner of the giant carnivores! Wiping out their infrastructure and their pride before they realize, we'll decimate all their creations."

"Magnificent!" cheered the crowd, "Splendid!"

"It might be unexpected..."

"Stop talking, Geschwind. It's also as magnificent as killing the heads. We'll order the doctors to target the elite few with Blitzes in their bodies, causing fatal cerebrovascular hemorrhages in an instant," continued Schmidt, "Their death will mark the downfall of the two republics and also our revenge!"

"Spectacular!" echoed the flock, "Impressive!"

"Destruction of the complex system of the dinosaurs might..."

"Hush, Dr. Pedant. No need to show you're not mute with nonsense," teased Schmidt, "Do follow me, all! I lead the Empire to victory."

As the final batch of Blitzes had been deployed and detonated secretly, they praised General Schmidt for his acclaimed victory. Dr. Geschwind, however, worried about the Formican Empire's future. "Just in case," he advised, "send someone to the Gondwanan Snow House and the Laurasia Mid-southern Sea, the two governmental buildings of the two republics."

The recording reached the Formican Emperor a week later.

"... We States uphold democracy and justice; I don't understand why Laurasia resisted nuclear disarmament," eavesdropped in Gondwana by an ant.

"If Laurasia persists its wild ambition to conquer the world through *Plan Yin-yang*, we must then continue *Plan Cordial*."

"... Mr. President, yes, I fully support your stance. Ultimately, it's Laurasia who first triggered their dying seconds."

Pausing the recording, he inquired impatiently, "What is Yin-yang? Cordial? And what does 'dying second' mean?"

Dr. Geschwind responded, "Your Majesty, regardless, it's evident that this poses a menace to the entire planet."

"Absurd. How could the awkward reptiles have such devastating arms without our aid or even knowledge? As a destructive weapon it must be grand."

"What if, Your Majesty, it's a subtle one?" pressing the "Start" button, Geschwind proposed.

The Gondwana President exclaimed, "I've never imagined Laurasia could convert Gypsum into missiles using the energy-mass equation; we must find any island useful for the *Leistungsstarkemaschine* as soon as possible."

Pressing the "Stop" button, the emperor asked, "*Leistungsstarkemaschine*... a machine to transform stones into renewable energy, which we ants are always fond of. I've roughly figured out what they want to do."

Geschwind sighed, "Yes, Your Majesty, you're correct. The lunatic dinosaurs want to weaponize sulfur in gypsum for destruction, according to our agent's report. Laurasia had selected Port Island for its sediment-rich soil, making Gondwana jealous. Both nations looked for world domination, and Gondwanan has figured out a way to find another *Leistungsstarkemaschine*."

He continued, "From our surveillance, the countdown was an encrypted and non-dismissible timer. Without a signal of relief (Yin) in a certain period, the immovable reddish stones stored inside the machine will all be converted into energy. The reptiles altered the machine so that without the signal, the machine would unleash catastrophic energy (Yang) from a rather simple equation to destroy the whole earth."

Silent, the emperor asked in a hushed tone, "... How much?"

“Approximately one quintillion joules if 90% of the stones in Port Island are used. It could raze everything to the ground.”

“So why does it matter?”

“Because they couldn’t send signals anymore.”

“Why?”

“The Blitzes destroyed all the critical wires.”

Silent. Again, the emperor asked, “... So, they are non-dismissible after the reptiles’ modifications?”

“Yes.”

“One last question: how much time is left?”

“Let me calculate, Your Majesty... about 3 days, i.e. 64 hours.”

Two hours later, the commander instructed the entire army to head to Port Island at once. The journey lasted a day, and upon reaching the control station, they were astonished.

Port Island was indeed remote. There were only two guards standing at the entrance, an engineer was desperately repairing the chaotic wires caused by the Blitzes alone, and no more: as the Gondwanan cared more about the station than the locals.

“Hasn’t fixed yet?” the guards asked impatiently.

“The ants wrecked them!”

“Aren’t them – they’re coming.” Shouted one of the guards.

Several divisions of the Formican Royal Army rushed to the control station and helped in repairing through a Dino-formican translator.

“Crazy! You’ve managed to destroy these machines, and you want to help me now. What do you want?” he exclaimed, pouring the concentrated sulfuric acid from the Leistungsstrakemaschine onto the ground. Million ants were dead.

Suddenly, the power supply was cut out, in line with the States’ *Plan Cordial*. Clearly, it was also triggered by the Blitzes. The three dinosaurs cried out in despair: no hope of halting the machine from destroying the Earth.

“You! Madman! Lunatic! Insane!” Yelling, more acid was poured as if it were the only way to vent the resentments of all dinosaurs.

Fifteen minutes left.

“Sir, I could sail to the nearby village; I’ll return in half an hour.”

“Go, go wherever you must go,” sighed the engineer, “I’ve made my last and gravest error in protecting the station – as well as the Earth.”

It’s time. “Aren’t them – they’re coming.” One of the guards remarked calmly.

A beam of white light evolved and reached the area now known as “Tai Po,” the white light was expanding in a circle and melted everywhere it touched: the east coast known as “Hong Kong,” the plains known as “China”, ... In a sudden, two suns blazed upon Earth, wiped out everything that every life treasured on Earth.

This was the last day of the dinosaurs.

For three millennia, the icy days endured. One day, two ants probed from the formicary.

Sam gestured towards the engineer's fossil, introducing, "Heard this was a creature called dinosaur."

"We've been with them – did you hear our chief's story yesterday? It's a golden age... We didn't need to serve the Queen; we could learn and write..."

"Why they're all gone; weren't they mighty?"

"Because they needed too much. They fought and destroyed everything."

"So, larger didn't ensure better."

"Who might succeed them then?"

"He should have a creative yet rational brain, shouldn't be too large or small; and his body should be erected and dexterous."

"Would this idealistic animal ever emerge?"

"I don't know. Time will reveal everything."

"Hopefully."

Fossils of Love

St. Paul's Co-Educational College, Chow, Wing Cheung – 15

“Each footprint beholds a wish for love, that is the legacy of Shen Niao,” the gravelly voice of the weathered elder echoed across the cavern, his voice barely louder than the crackling of the kindle between us. His spindly arm reached across the flames, slender fingers closing around the pebble next to me. He gazed intently into the blaze, the golden aurora twirling and convoluting, the auburn peaks rising and falling like currents of the resentful sea.

My gaze settled upon his weathered face, shadows prancing across his wizened features, caverns on his forehead narrowing and flattening, eyes ablaze with brilliant radiance as he murmured, “Alas, our world resents too much and loves too little.”

We set off the next day, backpacks pulling at the muscles on our shoulders, each step extraordinarily heavy as the metal of our tools clanged against each other. The sun’s radiance set our bodies ablaze, droplets slithering from our napes to our backs. The vast expanse of the desert filled me with a bizarre and sudden fear—as if the world would crumble beneath me if I dared to jump. Our boots scraped across the gravel and rocks under our feet, and we trudged along for seemingly forever until the ground beneath us started to darken, changing from a bland sepia to a slate grey. This was the infamous mark of Shen Niao, a “divine bird” in China—a colossal grey palm print in the middle of a desert, so large you had to use a drone to view it completely. Complete with knuckles, calluses and palm lines, the palm print was embedded on the surface of the desert, so ginormous it could only be made by a god. The heart line on the palm was completely unbroken—I am no expert palm reader, but I know enough to realise it signifies happiness and success. We are here in pursuit of the fossils of the Yunnanosaurus—specifically bits of the tailbone that had not been found before. To be exact, it’s just the old man and his team who’s doing the actual archaeology. I am here to write—my new novel is going to be based on China’s dinosaurs.

As the team skipped along, every footstep bursting with elation, prattling on and on about the Yunnanosaurus, the Sichuan Plateaus and the Szechuanosaurus, I reached for the mini notebook in my jeans, its spine straining against my tight pocket. I had scrawled a mind map on dinosaurs and their symbolism in the world on the first page, but it was just some simple research on the Yunnanosaurus and its tailbone, the lines stretching out of the circled dinosaur aiming towards space, resembling the few sole bare trees I saw on the journey here, spears pointing up to the listless, monotonous sky. I watched as miles of ashen dirt rolled past beneath my feet, the desolation of the desert creeping up along my back, pounding an unsettling rhythm into my veins. The world was so huge for us, but dinosaurs could shadow a whole continent with the raise of a talon, cover planets with a brandish—such magnificent creatures were now buried deep in the ground, nothing but dust and ash. Finally, the harsh sound of rubber against gravel ceased, and it was replaced with the thump of backpacks against rock.

“Poke around if you like—we’ll start digging in a minute!” one of the archeologists called, and I settled on a boulder nearby, the searing heat on my bottom nearly sending me toppling off the rock. I watched as they scrambled to nail tarpaulin onto the rubble, picking up toolboxes and unfastening equipment their holders, their movements synchronized even under the sun’s blistering force. I yanked my pen from my back pocket, index finger tapping against its rubber tube. Fossils...symbolism.... Static droned on and on in my mind as I wrinkled my brow and pondered long and hard about what themes my book was going to be about. I stared into space, watching the people down below shifting in and out of focus, little automobiles zooming in and out of my field of view. The old leader was hollering instructions, doing his best to drown out the clanking of the trowels and brushes. My mind kept wandering in circles, his voice astray in the sea of thoughts in my head, and I heard a persistent and forceful sound resonate, “Alas, our world resents too much and loves too little.” The guttural, rasping voice sounded clear as day, and that was all I needed to start writing away.

The body of a creature will decompose into ash and dust, but the fossils will always remain, just like how love will pass down even when a person passes away. Love never really dies, it just stays buried like fossils, eternal and unfading, so you just need to do a little digging to find it. Moons will rise and set, tides will ebb and flow, but love remains. And when the veneer of humanity fades away, when all that remains is the bare essence of who we are, we all have the same human nature, the same ability to love, the same ability to be kind, and just like dinosaurs, people

may seem unapproachable or brutal, but we are made of the same substances, we share the same roots, and in the end, humans and dinosaurs are still the same warm-blooded creatures that possess the ability to love. Even the idiom “love someone to their bones” shows our deep-rooted connection between love and the enduring nature of fossils. Just as fossils preserve the essence of ancient life, love encapsulates the essence of who we are, transcending time and space. Fossils are scattered all over the world, and the remnants of the same dinosaur can be found all across the

continent, but if you have the patience to uncover them and piece them together, a complete body structure can be formed. Kindness can shine through in moments in our lives, both mundane and special, and if we piece these moments together, the entity of love is formed. Yes, we need to meticulously brush away dust and sediment to see love in our daily lives, but if you slow down and appreciate the beauty of life, it is easy to notice how everyone boils down to the same essence—love. To quote Ed Sheeran, “A life with love is a life that's been lived”, the dinosaurs that had once walked the earth lie buried underground, but their fossils live on, symbolising the eternal and unwavering nature of love.

“Oi! Daniel! We found caudal vertebra number 57! First in the world!” I leapt up with a start, tearing towards the sky blue tarpaulin. The rounded, pearly white edges of the bone shone under the brilliant sun, perfectly well and undamaged. I picked up the fossil, a remnant of a life with love millions of years ago. The cool bone turned around in my palm, and I murmured under my breath, “The myth of Shen Niao is correct—love does exist here.” I tucked the fossil away in an archaeologist’s plastic bag, pulled out my spiral notebook, flipped to a new page and scratched with my ballpoint pen, “New tales of China’s Dinosaurs—love is....”

New Tales of China's Dinosaurs

St. Paul's Co-Educational College, Wong, Sze Nga – 12

A few months of hard work finally paid off as the archaeologists carefully unearthed a piece of fossil. They erupted in cheers of excitement, then immediately set to work again, brushing the ancient relic clear of dirt and grime. It seemed impossible that such a fossil, something reminiscent of a fantasy story from childhood, could actually be part of a dinosaur that roamed the Earth millions of years ago. But each of the fossils told a unique story...

It was deep winter when the baby Confuciusornis had its first glimpse of the world. Its tiny eyes peeked out from the eggshell, taking in the dim light. The mother swooned at how beautiful and perfect her son was, her heart swelling with love and pride.

The father gave a concerned squawk. It was already the middle of winter, and all their relatives had already migrated to the warm south. A gust of cold, freezing wind sent a shiver down their bones. They had to move fast before they froze and starved to death.

With the baby Confuciusornis nestled close to its mother for warmth, the family hastily made a plan. They decided to fly south, following the faint traces of their relatives' migration paths etched in the ancient skies. Their survival and the future of their child depended on the journey, no matter how arduous it might be.

The father took the lead, spreading his magnificent wings and taking to the air. The mother followed closely, carrying the baby gently in her beak. Each beat of their wings was a struggle against the biting cold wind that threatened to sap their strength. But at the sound of their child's soft squawk, they both fought against the cold and managed to stay strong.

Days turned into nights, and the family pressed on, guided by the instinctual pull of the south. The baby Confuciusornis, though tiny and fragile, showed remarkable resilience. Its parents' determination fueled their journey, each beat of their wings bringing them closer to the promise of warmth and safety.

But as they neared the halfway point of their migration, a terrible storm rolled in, darkening the skies and unleashing torrents of freezing rain. The strong winds tossed them about, making it almost impossible to stay on course. The family was forced to take shelter under a large rock in a dense forest, hoping the storm would pass quickly.

As they huddled together for warmth, the baby Confuciusornis shivered uncontrollably. The parents knew they couldn't stay long; they had to find food and continue their journey. But the forest was unfamiliar and filled with potential dangers. The dark shadows of the swaying trees towered over them, with the invisible winds howling by their ears.

The baby was starting to feel the hunger of the journey. At the sound of its pitiful shrill cries, the father ventured out to find food, leaving the mother and baby behind. Hours passed, and worry gnawed at the mother. She knew the storm made the journey perilous, but they couldn't survive without nourishment.

Just as she was about to set out in search of the father, a shadowy figure emerged from the trees. It was a large predator, a Sinraptor, drawn by the scent of fresh meat. The mother spread her wings wide, shielding her baby and hoping to scare off the intruder. The baby Confuciusornis let out a fearful chirp, its tiny frame trembling with fear.

At that crucial moment, the father returned, clutching a small bundle of berries in his beak. He sensed that something was wrong and charged at the predator with all his might. With their care for their young, the father and mother fought bravely to protect their chick. The predator, taken by surprise and clearly underestimating the family, eventually retreated into the shadows, leaving the family shaken but unharmed.

With the immediate danger passed, the family regrouped and shared the scant food the father had brought. The storm began to subside, and the winds eased. The parents knew they had to continue their journey, despite their exhaustion.

Gathering their strength, they took to the skies once more. The bond between them had been tested and proven unbreakable. As they flew south, the baby Confuciusornis, nestled securely between its parents, was comforted by their unwavering presence.

After many days of arduous travel, they finally reached the lush, warm valleys of the south. The family was greeted with joyous squawks and chirps from their relatives. They had made it through the harsh winter and the terrifying storm, united by their courage and love.

The archaeologists marveled at the fossils they had uncovered, realizing that each bone and feather told a story of survival, bravery, and the unbreakable bonds of family. As they pieced together the ancient remains, they felt a connection to the creatures of the past, whose struggles and triumphs echoed through the ages.

Breaking News – A New Tale of China Dinosaurs

St. Paul's Co-Educational College, Yeung, Sin – 14

“TONIGHT, THE NEW YEAR STARTS OFF WITH STORM, RAIN AND POSSIBLE BLIZZARD; NEXT UP THE CONTROVERSIAL MAMENCHISAURUS IS PLANNED TO BE SENT BACK TO BEIJING MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY AFTER UP TO FIVE MONTHS OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE CHINESE OFFICIALS...” the booming voice from the screen trailed off into a distance and as if something clicked, Goddess Fortuna started spinning her Wheel of Fate.

Squeak...squeak...” That was the first thing I heard when I regained consciousness. Light. I was showered in blinding lights. Such a strange feeling. I was buried deep underground for as long as I can remember. Now, I am in this huge hall, experiencing freezing temperatures and watching these two tiny two-legged creatures standing below me, making airy noises. Noises I learned to be called language and that they were speaking Japanese.

“Naze seifu wa Kong kyōryū o Chūgoku ni okurikaesu koto in dōinshita no ka?” (How did the government decide to send this dinosaur back to China?) a stoutly creature asked. He looked like the alpha of his order.

“Izure ni shite mo, kono kyōryū no kokkaku wa akiraka ni furuku, osokare hayakare barabara ni natte shimaudarou.” (Anyways, this dinosaur skeleton is clearly old and will fall apart sooner or later.) a stick-thin creature replied.

“Squeak...squeak...” I was clearly distracted by this irritating sound again and was drawn away from their conversation. Unbeknownst to me, the gears of my fate was already turning. My confusion was deepened by my mind repeatedly asking “Where am I?”, “Why am I here?”. “Squeak...squeak...” It’s the same sound over and over again. Every time the sound arose, an uneasy surfaced as if something was trying to be freed. I wanted to escape, alas it was futile effort. I was screwed down onto steel rods and plates like all the ancient specimens in this place called a museum.

“Let me out!” I cried deafeningly but I was locked in a vacuum space. No sound nor vibration escaped. I wanted to go home – a little off-tracked site of the Junggar basin or what this era named it – Xinjiang province, China. I reminisce when I overlooked the different peaks of the snowcap Tianshan mountain range where it joined with the sky beyond vision. I yearned for my family but we have yet to be reunited.

As a mamenchisaurus born and raised in Xinjiang, my family and I loved spices. We preferred the assortment of plants and leaves that were abundantly available. Our remarkably long necks allowed us to access all kinds of vegetation and spices are our favourite food. The spices were the tastiest when it danced its way down our throats. At first, it itched a little then a little more. Then a gush of heat radiated from our stomach and traveled to the rest of our body. It kept us warm as we were in a cold region. For a good period of time, we were happy.

Things took a turn for the worse when we were awoken by shaking earth. Cries and roars were heard from all corners of the Basin. Within half a day, thick smoke billowed and dark clouds blanketed the area. Choking, we tried to maneuver through the suffocating thick fog to find safety. We stepped over many of our kin and other kinds that laid cold and seemingly perished from the unspeakable disaster.

After an arduous migration, we found ourselves collapsing due to exhaustion and hunger. The fog never cleared away and it was for the better anyway. The rotting stench of corpses whirled tightly around my flaring nostrils. I kept my keen eyes scanning the surroundings and I noticed a big bush of bright red plants. Without hesitation I loomed forward and tore into the plants. I waited in expectation but the ticklish feeling did not surge up my throat. I closed my eyes in regret because I was doomed. I was befuddled by the fog and aftershock that I had mistakenly consumed a highly toxic plant. My clumsy body swayed and hit the ground.

That was how I met my demise and I thought that was how my mark on this planet would disappear. However, due to the arid weather in the Junggar Basin, my body was kept mostly intact. My flesh fell away as other organisms took over but my bones were preserved well. I also thought I would be devoured by eternal darkness yet some of my senses were reawakened when the two-legged creatures who call themselves humans excavated my remains and exhibited me in the museum.

I groggily flowed with the time until one day, a young girl happened to appear in front of me. Her eyes darted around before she snuck out a plastic wrapping. My phantom nostrils flared as it was the same familiar scent of spice. I was uncontrollably attracted to the smell and the colour. My mind went blank for a moment and almost the same time, a loud “crack” hit the floor. I was shocked and amused because I jokingly thought that what the little girl had must have been jaw-droppingly delicious for me to lose my jaw bone...

It seems people in the same exhibit hall were equally alarmed by the commotion and chaos ensued. Museum goers were ushered out hurriedly and security tape was circled around me. A group of white suits rushed in, talking excitedly and examining my condition. Cranes and machineries moved in and out of the hall, and not long after a canopy of white covered me up as my thoughts wandered over yonder.

“Squeak...squeak...” the mysterious sound hit my nerves again. I realised my jaw bone was reattached but why was there still that unsettling feeling. I tried to calm my nerves by looking at the plate that introduced me – *Mamenchisaurus sinocanadorum*. I had a good chuckle as the scientists labelled us “tilted neck” dinosaurs. How funny. It is afterall my advantage as I had a good view of the museum even though my view was covered by the white cloth

I am feeling very wearier and wearier these days. Recently, these people in white overalls fanned around me for long hours. I could feel and see my body being unscrewed from the poles and hooks. The serious looking humans carefully labelled my parts; left mandible; right dentary, vomer, right pterygoid and the list went on. Soon, I was loaded into a wood-like box. There was a lot of chatter and flashing lights that I could see through the slits in the slats. My heart is pumped with joy and enthusiasm as I actually understood that I was to be sent back Home.

“Squeak...squeak...” The uninviting sound started. I guess I will have to live with this irritation. The journey back home was bumpy and strenuous. Fortunately, I finally heard the screeching doors to the cargo box dragged open. There was a loud thud and someone banged on my crate, “Ready to lift!” Overjoyed, I felt my heart skip though I do not technically have a heart. Just as I was about to heave a sigh of relief. “Squeak...squeak...” Again. “Squeak...squeak...” And again. It got louder and a plume of dust! Then there was nothing. Ashes to ashes, dust to dust. At least before my consciousness started to fade into obscurity, I found the answer to those mysterious squeaks.

“TODAY WITH GREAT SADNESS, THE ONE AND ONLY WELL-PRESERVED MAMENCHISAURUS WAS FOUND TO HAVE BEEN GNAWED BY RATS, CAUSING IT IRREVERSIBLE DAMAGES. INVESTIGATIONS ARE STILL BEING CARRIED OUT TO IDENTIFY IF IT HAPPENED DURING TRANSPORTATION BACK TO ITS HOMELAND – CHINA OR WHETHER IT WAS A MISHANDLING FROM THE MUSEUM.”

Whispering Spirtis

St. Paul's College, Yiu, Tsz Lok – 12

I never regarded my ability to communicate with animals something that could save my life. Yes, I am an ‘animal whisperer’, but I have only used this power a few times with my cousin’s dog which left my brother’s jaw dropped. That was until last month, during the most delightful time of the year – the summer holidays.

It was a week after the exams and my family decided to embark on a flight to Changji, a city in the vast lands of the Xinjiang province. We planned to visit the Changji Dinosaur Museum, where we had the opportunity to witness the fossilized remains of the prehistoric beasts that once roamed the world. I stood before a stunning piece of architecture, and mountains with peculiar, twisted shapes standing in the background. As I made my way into the crowded entrance, I was astonished by the grand appearance of its interior, and marveled at its unique design.

It was unlike anything I’d seen before.

I was enjoying myself in the room where the fossils of carnivorous dinosaurs were displayed when I heard a soft whisper. At first, I decided to ignore it as I saw nobody when I glanced around. However, the whispers grew louder, then to an extent that I cannot hold it much longer...

I woke up with a start.

I found myself laying on a grassy land, water dripping onto my swollen forehead. Drip. Drip. Drip. Was it from a tree? I didn’t remember bumping into anything to cause such a severe injury, yet my forehead was in pain, terrible pain, pain that nobody could imagine. That was the least of my problems. I seemed to be the only one there, with nothing but a tree or two in sight. I happened to be under a large one that looked as if it had just taken a shower.

Then it came to me that I was in the museum a few moments ago, and I had the faintest memory of falling over, bumping on the glass of the container where a few dinosaur teeth were displayed, just before becoming unconscious. I hadn’t the foggiest idea what had happened afterwards and why I was here, wherever I was.

And then I remembered it. The whispers. The whispers that were louder than ever, the whispers that were unavoidable...

I lost my train of thought instantly and I felt my heart skip a beat – A giant lizard crawling around the horizon.

I looked around and discovered that I wasn’t alone. There were many of what seemed like giant lizards! Then I noticed they weren’t crawling, they were standing! Stuck in this giant plain without knowing where I was and surrounded by standing lizards! How could things get any more bizarre? I pinched myself to ensure I wasn’t in a dream, and I really hoped this was just some kind of hallucination, but then I felt the pain after pinching myself and all my hopes were lost.

I stood up shakily, both hands firmly grasping the nearby tree to make sure I wasn’t going to fall over and make a fool of myself, not that anyone was here to laugh at me if I did. Then I looked at the standing lizards again, and it came to me that they were dinosaurs. I had seen dinosaurs in films before, but this was something else, because they were real. Alive, walking and breathing. I looked around, utterly bewildered. That was when I saw mountains with peculiar, twisted shapes that reminded me of something I had seen before. Then it struck me that I was standing on where I was when I fainted, in the Changji Dinosaur Museum, but only about 68 million years ago when dinosaurs roamed the world.

I was unable to move, not sure what to do. The sun shone brightly, and I was standing on a blanket of grass that danced gracefully with the wind. This peaceful environment would be ideal if I weren’t surrounded by dinosaurs. I took a step closer to the dinosaurs, and that was when I heard talking.

How could that be possible?

I looked around and confirmed I was alone, but then I saw two dinosaurs quarreling with each other. That was when I remembered I could hear and talk to animals. Then the idea of seeking assistance from a dinosaur popped into my head. At first, I thought it was insane. Then I realized it was the only way, so with slight hesitation, I embraced the challenge and quietly approached what seemed to be a friendly herbivore, with a small head and front legs but large hind legs.

“Hi, what’s your name?”

The herbivore looked startled, probably since nobody apart from its own family ever bothered to talk to it. It replied in a very low voice that caught me by surprise, “You can call me whatever you want.” I uttered, “You must belong to a species—” I stopped, realising they wouldn’t know the name of their species, as the names are made up by humans who lived a lot later than they did.

I instantly changed the subject. “So, I’ll call you Spotty.” It came to mind as it was the name of my cousin’s dog. “I am a human from several million years in the future, and I just appeared all of a sudden while visiting a museum. How do you think I can return to my time?” I added.

Spotty muttered, “Can’t be sure, but I’ll think of a way. Was there anything abnormal before you time-travelled?”

“Yeah,” I replied. “I heard loud whispers.”

“Whispers?” exclaimed Spotty, “would the room you were in happen to be full of bones?” My eyes glistened with hope and said, “Yes! Do you know why?” Spotty trotted away and signalled me to tag along. I suddenly remembered my family: how much I missed them, how they probably would turn the museum over to find me...

Shortly after, we arrived at his territory. I heard whispers, like those I heard in the museum, and it seemed to be originating from a dead dinosaur on the floor. Spotty explained, “Once dinosaurs die, whispers surround it. My mother used to say that these whispers are what’s left of the dead dinosaur’s spirits. We like to keep our dead companion’s body, so others cannot eat or damage it and their spirits will last forever.”

I chuckled. Religious beliefs among dinosaurs! It would be a groundbreaking discovery if humans found out.

Stomp!

I felt the ground rumble. Spotty fled. I was confused but did the same. But then I tripped, yelled in pain and turned around, only to see a giant tarbosaurus. I might not have recognized Spotty’s species but I had read about tarbosauruses before. They were ferocious predators, something you wouldn’t want to encounter in your entire life. I stood up frantically, but my knee hurt so badly I couldn’t move. I shed a tear and waited hopelessly for the giant beast’s jaw to bite me...

I waited for what seemed like an eternity, but I never felt anything. Befuddled, I opened my eyes, and in front of me laid a severely injured creature. I gasped when I recognized it was Spotty, who suffered the bite for me. He mumbled, “I’ve got a fracture on my backbone, and other than that, I’m fine. I scratched that monster’s eye and it ran away in agony.”

I was lost in words, so I only muttered, “Thank you. I owe you one.” Spotty said, “You seem like a nice person. I am protective of those who are kind to me, so don’t be so baffled about why I helped you. Now, you can return to my home, listen to the whispers, and eventually you’ll become unconscious and return to the exact time you left, or at least I hope you will.”

My curiosity got the better of me and I asked, “Won’t you faint while listening to these whispers?” He answered, “No, dinosaurs are accustomed to them.”

He got up and trotted back to his territory.

I followed him and listened to the whispers upon arriving at his home. This time, they worked like a charm. I wouldn’t say I fainted. I’d describe it as falling into a deep sleep. Then I woke up in a crowded museum, and instantly went to find my family and gave them a hug.

They looked at me, bewildered, because to them, I was probably gone for a second and they didn't even notice. There were still whispers, but since I learnt how to accept them, they weren't of any disturbance.

Shortly afterwards, I stumbled upon a fossil display of a dinosaur with small front legs and head but large hind legs in the museum, called a bactrosaurus, along with a fracture on its backbone.

When I noticed that, I gave a small smirk.

The Feathered Dream

St. Paul's Convent School, Hui, Leanne – 14

'Dig me... dig me out!' A mysterious feathered creature shrieked and roared in despair in Liang Shi Kuan's peaceful farm. Cold sweat dripped down the farmer's forehead as he battled with his severe nightmare. His heart was pounding hard as he jumped up from his bed. Catching his breath, he began to gain consciousness as he went back to reality.

Trying to ignore it as any other nightmare, Liang Shi Kuan went back to sleep. To his dismay, the nightmare just got more intense and recurring, forcing him to wake up frantically with a heavy heart.

'Should I go out to investigate?' the farmer murmured to himself. Dragging himself out of bed into his peaceful farm at 3 am, he noticed his golden retriever, Xiao Bai, barking nonstop next to the apple tree. He then noticed a huge footprint— it didn't match his dog's nor his. Feeling puzzled, Shi Kuan went to his wife for a discussion.

'You're just hallucinating, go back to sleep, you psycho.' His wife, Meng Yu said, half-awake and frustrated as her frantic husband was ruining her beauty sleep. To her surprise, moments later, she dreamt of the same monstrous creature that her husband had been paranoid about, screaming the phrase "Dig me... dig me out!"

Meng Yu finally began to believe the farmer's words. It was true! She dragged her feet out of bed and went to the living room, where she spotted Shi Kuan's head in his hands. "We need to dig this thing out. I can't have these dreams like you do every night..." she said, on the verge of tears.

"We need to devise a plan." the farmer said sternly.

The next morning, Shi Kuan and his wife sat together, trying to remember the features of the monster they saw in their dreams. It was brownish, and ginormous, with huge red feathers. It was nothing like any animal they'd seen before, so they didn't even know where to start looking. Just as Shi Kuan was going to get back to his work on the farm, he noticed his son Shi Quan coming into the living room with his books and toys.

Before he could say anything, Meng Yu quickly asked, "Shi Quan, you know a lot about dinosaurs. Does this sound like one to you?" Shi Quan giggled at his parents— they obviously didn't know what dinosaurs looked like the way he did.

"Impossible, Mom. No dinosaur has feathers. I think you and Dad need to have nicer dreams..." their son replied as he flipped through the pages of his book.

As the months, then years went by, the family slowly forgot about the monstrous nightmare that plagued them. As Shi Quan got bigger and bigger, Shi Kuan and his wife had other things to worry about.

Years went by and soon enough, the Liang family forgot about the dreams that tormented the family. Right as they were ready to put it all behind them, Shi Quan was stopped by some villagers on his way back from school. "We've all had the same dream as your dad many years ago, Shi Quan, about some strange creature...have we all become lunatics now?" one of the villagers cried.

Dream...Creature...? Shi Quan felt surprised as the weeks of his father's nightmares came

back to him as a flash. He sped past the villagers back home, bursting to tell his father about what he'd just heard.

Meng Yu dropped her cup of water upon hearing what her son had just told her husband. Panicking, she said, "What dreams? What creatures? I am not going back to those terrible days!" Shi Kuan looked at both his wife and son and sighed. Shi Quan had a real future, he simply can't be around these crazy people in the village!

Every night of the following week, the villagers complained of the endless nightmares. This strange creature from years ago was taunting them. Oddly enough, the Liang family were the only ones who peacefully slept through the week without a single nightmare coming out of the household.

"You cannot live here, Shi Quan, we've had enough!" the farmer exclaimed, glancing quickly at his wife. "You need to focus on your studies, and we believe we should send you to study in the city as soon as possible." Shi Quan looked down at the ground. He loved his village, but everyone was being paranoid now and it was hard to focus on school.

"Okay dad. I'll go..." Shi Quan said, rushing to hug his parents. After finishing high school in the big city, Shi Quan went on to university there and graduated— ironically— to become one of the country's most well-known palaeontologists.

One night, Shi Quan's colleague at the lab they worked at came running to him with a pile of papers in his arms. "Shi Quan! Shi Quan! A feathered dinosaur was found! Look at where we found it!"

Shi Quan gulped and took the papers from his colleague. His eyes widened in surprise and disbelief. It couldn't be... his old hometown! He jumped up with joy, hugging his colleague, excited that he was going back to his village. He hadn't seen his parents in years!

As soon as the bus came to a halt, Shi Quan rushed to the venue and found the fossil laying right at his parents' farm in the village. He slowed down to carefully take a better look.

Mom and Dad were right all along!

In the distance, he could see a flurry of reporters and his aging parents receiving a reward of \$100,000. They were gleefully doing an interview stating how they successfully dug it up and how the whole village helped out. As soon as the interview ended, they spotted their son and immediately rushed to hug him with happy tears in their eyes. "Oh Shi Quan, the village can finally peacefully sleep without any nightmares, all thanks to you!" cried his mother. His father Shi Kuan looked at him with proud eyes, "We can finally put this behind us, son. And retire with this money too!" They all laughed.

Days of peace passed by, then months, then years, until Shi Quan started his own family. His bright son, all of a sudden after breakfast, innocently beamed, "Daddy, did you know last night I dreamt of a gigantic dinosaur saying 'thank you' to me? Was I...a dinosaur in my past life?"

Shi Quan was shocked but smiled, "It just means you are a polite boy, keep up with that!" he said, ruffling his son's hair. He looked out the window and up to the sky with a huge grin on his face. He closed his eyes and tried to imagine the dream his son just had and almost teared up.

That feathered dinosaur completely changed his life.

Your Wings

St. Paul's Convent School, Lau, Hoi Yan Cynthia – 14

I am under the moon. I hate this scrawny, bony life, screwed as a fallen feather. They said one would soar in their own field — but who am I kidding, Chinese literature is for nerds who failed at science, those who got left behind by modern evolution. If I were a bird, I'd be a chicken. Stupid, and tied tightly to the ground. Vaguely in the distance I could hear my Chinese literature teacher introduce our new topic “dinosaurs”. Of course there's nothing *new* about dinosaurs, after all I know you far too well. Stuck in history, too slow to run from fate.....

‘Right class, so in the mid-1990s a golden age of fossil discovery began in the Liaoning province. These fossils date from 120–160 million years, but everything began because of one very specific discovery. That fateful day on a little hillside in Sihetun, a farmer stumbled upon a fossil of the *Sinosauropteryx*, which translates to “the China dragon bird”. Bird here is symbolic as this dinosaur marks the first of many feathered reptile discoveries—’

I didn't know dinosaurs had wings.

130,000,000 BC, China

The China dragon bird hovered above heavy clouds, revelling in her own strength as she leapt and spun under the symphony of the tempest and the torrents. She was fast, so fast she could purge every corner until crimson imprints linger. She never let them know, though. She liked to lay low, allowing them to think that she was slow and stupid, all but for one reason. She was a proud Chinese dinosaur, and she believed in the virtue of humility. She never minded being the bird with feathers but no flight, or the dragon with power but no fight. She vowed that she would remain tender on their behalf.

Yet her effort was in vain as they cared little about virtue. In the sprawling tapestry of time, her whispers faded into echoes. She watched while the world turned, indifferent to her plight, a mere footnote in the annals of history. Not once did they look up, and so she remained a dormant creature till the end of her days.

“Now remember class, that a fossil is not just the end of an animal. It is not the bones of the animal, either. It is the stone's memory of the bones of the animal.”

Hearing this the China dragon bird groans. No, she does not regret her life of simplicity, rather she burns in agony seeing what she left of the world. She had miscalculated, thinking their failure would be provisional. Now her cheeks are aflame with anguish, she seethes at all the injustice and corruption and sadness alike, an unyielding torment that gnaws at her soul. She wishes desperately to return to her former glory. For ever since her death they blew smoke rings around her story, clouding to fumes of dust, nobody notices. Nobody sees clearly enough to mourn, a remake of her quiet life. Because if she were to unleash her strength just once you would be able to look from above, you would feel how raw and wondrous her wings beat against your eardrums, and maybe then you'd understand. She has always been docile, it is all the more pitiful that today she is tamed by memory. Don't you understand?

I know what I have to do. You cannot be stuck in history, I must give New Tales to China's dinosaurs. Aren't birds just dinosaurs who shrugged off a couple apocalypses? I will fly in memory of you.

I will outswim fish in the sea, I will defy gravity. I will harness your wings onto my back, I am over the moon — show me what kind of galaxy you hide, bring me above the Liaoning skies and beneath the Jiangxi earth, know that I will endure for I am born from your stone, that Chinese Literature is prominent now more than ever. My lips will read your name as I show them all that you are, and I will be safe because we are one, so however far I soar I can always find my way back to you.

New Tales of China's Dinosaurs

St. Paul's Convent School, Shi, Yutong Clare – 14

Victor's Perspective

Victor buried his head in his hands, looking very worried. Recently, he had a lot of problems. His son had secretly racked up a huge gambling debt, and the "Liaoning Paleobiology Restart Project" he was in charge of was getting worse. Every day, he had to be careful at work to keep his reputation.

Feeling stressed in his office, he decided to go to the research center in the park. When he entered the lab, he saw a young researcher staring blankly at a small dinosaur in a glass container. Victor quickly walked over, tapped the young man on the head, and shouted, "What are you doing? Stop slacking off! Get to work!" The young researcher looked confused and went back to his station. Victor thought: If they could develop a drug to make the dinosaurs obedient and use them for stunt shows, the park's profits would increase, and he could pay off his debts.

Nicolas's Perspective

Nicolas studied paleobiology in college but had little work experience, so he applied for a job at the Liaoning Dinosaur Research Center. At first, he was excited, but when he entered the park, he found the exhibits dull and empty, and the occasional dinosaur cries were unsettling.

After some time working there, Nicolas understood the true goal of the research. The dinosaur parks in China were all similar, and the Liaoning park had nothing special to attract visitors. The project leader focused on developing a drug to make the dinosaurs obedient, so they could perform tricks to attract more visitors. However, Nicolas knew this was cruel; many dinosaurs lost their natural behavior and became mere performing machines, and some suffered from pain after receiving the drug.

One day, he was lost in thought about the dinosaurs' suffering when someone called his name. He looked up and saw a Microraptor using brainwaves to ask for help from him. Nicolas leaned in closer and realized the dinosaurs were being subjected to harsh experiments, filling him with sympathy. Just then, Victor entered and scolded Nicolas, who returned to his work feeling wronged.

As he was leaving work that evening, Nicolas saw a girl wearing a mask outside the research center. He had to stop her according to the rules, and she left disappointed, but her eyes stayed fixed on the center's building.

Aria's Perspective

"Wow, the Liaoning Dinosaur Park is opening soon! I can visit it often!" Aria exclaimed excitedly at her computer screen. Her room was filled with dinosaur items; her computer's wallpaper was from "Jurassic Park," her desk was cluttered with dinosaur models, and her walls were covered in dinosaur posters. As a huge dinosaur fan, she was eagerly looking forward to the park's opening.

On the first weekend after the opening, Aria rushed to the park to see the dinosaur exhibits. However, the dinosaurs were locked behind glass, and the exhibition area lacked a natural environment, making everything look shabby. The sky was overcast that day, and there were few visitors, with the occasional dinosaur cries unsettling her.

She walked toward the research center, hearing strange sounds coming from inside. Just as she hesitated about going in, a young man chased her away, increasing her suspicion about the secrets within. After several days of thinking, Aria decided to uncover the truth.

A week later, Aria returned to the research center and sneakily entered while the security guard was napping. She didn't see anyone as she made her way to the third floor, where she found a small dinosaur curled up in a glass container, moaning in pain. Her heart ached, and she wanted to help the poor dinosaur.

At that moment, security rushed in with a group of people, trying to catch Aria. She panicked and ran but accidentally pressed a button in a dead end, causing alarms to blare throughout the building, and all the glass containers opened at once, letting the dinosaurs escape.

The next events became a blur; Aria only remembered being so scared that she fainted. When she woke up, she found herself in a detention center, being questioned and told she would be held for two weeks. After days filled with fear, she was visited by a middle-aged man. He told her he was Victor, the head of the Liaoning Dinosaur Research Center, and his account of what happened relieved Aria. However, Victor then said, "All the dinosaurs vanished overnight yesterday, and only you can be blamed."

Aria was shocked and tried to argue, "When I was there, the lab was closed! You must have caught them all! I couldn't have left the detention center yesterday!" But Victor calmly replied, "Facts can be changed." She finally understood the complexities and unfairness of society. In court, she chose to remain silent and was found guilty, charged with leaking state secrets, even though she didn't understand why her love for dinosaurs led to her punishment.

Microraptor Nico's Perspective

Nico discovered that its glass container wasn't as hard as it seemed. Taking advantage of the quiet night, it spent hours using its beak to create a small hole. When it finally got out, it was covered in wounds. It found a button, released its friends, and used brainwaves to tell them to stay quiet as they escaped the building together.

After what felt like a long time flying, they finally settled in a forest and snowy area. The local people were kind and often brought them food. Hearing that this was the Greater Khingan Range, Nico felt a sense of warmth, finally able to live its own life. In this vast land, they roamed freely, enjoying each day and rediscovering the meaning of life.

The Transfomration

St. Stephen's College, Chan, Anka – 14

Whoosh, whoosh. The wind blew fiercely against the glass windows of the Manor. William Brown, a wealthy middle-aged archaeologist, stood by the Manor's door. With a lit cigar in his hand, he leaned against the wide door frame as he watched the heavy downpour awakening the night. As thunder struck a nearby tree, a large truck pulled into the gateway, pulling to a halt in front of the man.

The driver hopped off the large vehicle and walked up to the now straightened Mr Brown by the front door.

"Mr Brown, it is a pleasure to see you." The driver greeted Mr Brown with a warm smile.

"3 million, all in cash. Exactly what you asked for."

A man walked up behind Mr Brown with a black leather briefcase in each hand as the words slipped out of Mr Brown's mouth.

"Yes yes." The driver's voice was calm, but the glow in his eyes when he saw the two briefcases gave him away.

"Once the piece enters these doors, the money's all yours." A

mischievous grin spread across Mr Brown's face. "Right away!"

The driver rushed back to the truck and with the help of two other men they moved a large piece of what seemed to be a rock through the large doors of the manor before leaving with the two brief cases.

The large piece as big as a horse glittered under the dimly lit chandelier in the foyer. Under the light, the lines of the rock finally came into sight. The rock had a pattern along the side of it, the pattern resembled a sort of dinosaur, a dinosaur made out of bones.

"A Brachiosarus sir, many museums are very interested in this piece and are willing to give a spot to it. Would you like to donate it to any particular museum?" The man who brought out the two briefcases was now standing next to Mr Brown with a folder in his hand.

"Donate?!? Some pieces are meant for collecting. I am not donating this masterpiece to a museum just for some lousy child to look at. Now, you may leave Chester. I'd like to admire this extraordinary artefact alone. "

Mr Brown nodded gently towards the man, sending him off towards the east wing of the manor.

Mr Brown felt the cold hard stone underneath his fingertips, inspecting the delicate fragment of the dinosaur. It clearly missed its tail and an arm, but the long neck and large body made the fossil clear to a toddler, it was sure enough a dinosaur. The perfect piece to add to Mr Brown's priceless collection.

He walked around the fossil, the fall of rain playing like music in the background. As he was trying to decide between placing this exquisite piece beside the ancient Roman ware jar from ancient Egypt or the late 18th century framed painting from Ming Dynasty of China, a thud interrupted his thoughts.

Thud Thud Thud. This time it was clear that the thud's weren't a hallucination. Except it wasn't coming from outside, but inside the manor. Mr Brown stared back at the large stone.

"Chester." Mr Brown's eyes widened. "CHESTER!" His voice grew loud. Then all of a sudden, his vision became pitch black.

Waking up, Mr Brown found himself on the hard cold floor of a cave. The sunlight shone through the entrance of the cave. Mr brown tried pushing himself upright, but failed miserably and tumbled over. Before he could try again, the sight of his feet stopped him. They were no longer human feet, instead they became large lumps of flesh, his hands too, they became identical to the feet. With a few more tries, Mr Brown finally got on all fours and slowly

made his way to the entrance of the cave. He couldn't help but notice the scenery beyond him. In front was a pond, behind was an endless field of grass with mountains over shadowing the land. Rays of sunlight sprayed across the field.

Thud, Thud, Thud. Dinosaurs of different shapes and sizes were spread across the field. Some having long necks, some with a large mouth and some tiny ones running across the landscape. It was breathtaking. Never in his wildest dreams would he had every dreamt of this.

Mr Brown wobbled his way down to the pond, his reflection staring back at him. He was no longer the clean and slick Mr Brown, but a rough skinned Brachiosaurus. He had a long neck that reached for the sky, four large feet that stomped with each step he took, and lastly a tail that wagged with every motion he made. He was a dinosaur.

Wow. Mr Brown thought to himself, this was too realistic to be a dream. The smell of earth lingered in the warm air, pteranodons soaring high above the sky. With every crunch of his paw, the wind blew against his scaled skin. He was eager for a taste of freedom, away from the manor and work, somewhere where the sun shined, where grass was green, where the sky was blue, where freedom was true.

He didn't know what he was feeling, but all he wanted to do was jump around and smell the grass. It was perfect here. The thought of being a dinosaur had settled in a blink of an eye. Roars of dinosaurs caught his attention stopping him. Far across the field was a large T-Rex roaring into the sky. The roar was so loud it sent the ground trembling, except that wasn't the only thing causing the ground to shake. The sound of stomps became audible to Mr Brown, he saw a large group of T-Rexes of different sizes stampeding towards him. He had to run.

As the sound became closer, Mr Brown quickened into a run, fleeing the stampede of dinosaurs behind him. He ran and he ran, through outgrowing crops and flower beds. For the first time since he was a child, he felt his mouth slide into a wild smile. He finally halted to a stop by a running river. Dinosaurs of all kinds were gathered there, taking sips of water from the flowing river. He found a spot next to a velociraptor, its small claws were on the side of its body as it bent down to take sips of water. Mr Brown bent his long neck down and sipped the running water just like the rest, his heart still pumping from the run.

Before Mr Brown crossed the river, he realised a large Dinosaur on the other side, one that looked identical to him, except it was larger, as if its neck alone was as long a full-grown eucalyptus tree. Its huge head gave a nod towards Mr Brown, which Mr Brown returned. It was what he had always wanted.

Suddenly the sound of explosion came crashing down. The sky was now filled with large rocks on fire, crashing down onto earth. The dinosaurs scattered towards different directions, some smaller ones sticking close to larger ones. Mr Brown was petrified. He ran and he ran, except this time with fear running through his veins.

Each rock that fell made a large boom onto the ground, Mr Brown ran with every ounce of energy left inside of him, pushing himself to the limits, but before he could run any further. He stopped. Staring down at a small pteranodon laying on the ground, its tiny wings twitched, its eyelids fluttering. Its frail body was no longer lively. Slowly a large shadow covered the trembling body of the pteranodon. Mr Brown stared up to the sky and saw a large asteroid headed right into his direction. He yelled, and then it all went black.

"Mr Brown!" Chester spoke as Mr Brown woke up. He was now in a hospital bed with machines attached to him.

"I- where am I Chester?"

"The hospital Sir, you fell unconscious a while after your latest purchase, you've been unconscious for 7 hours now." Chester handed him a glass of water which he rejected.

"That piece, which museums are interested in it?" Mr Brown said sternly.

"Well there's the local museum of course. Why? I thought you wanted to keep it for yourself sir." Confusion plastered across Chester's face.

"It was once free." Mr Brown's words were stutters, tears trickled down his cheek.

“Sir!” But before Chester could do anything Mr Brown raised his hand to stop him.

“Donate it to the local museum, let’s show the world what happiness truly is shall we?” Mr Brown gave a gleeful smile at Chester who was now puzzled and shocked.

“I– Okay Sir if that’s what you want, I’m glad that you’re fine now.”

This was probably the first time Chester has seen Mr Brown smile ever since he started working for him. As they both stared intently at one another, Mr Brown couldn’t hold back a small laugh as more tears slid down his cheek.

Fear Destruction Beauty

St. Stephen's College, Cheng, Zing Ethan – 12

Sand rubs my cheek raw.
Heat burns my back.
Sweat drips into my eyes, rendering it useless.

Four whole weeks our team have been searching, four whole weeks with nothing more than the shirts on our backs and the spirit in our hearts, four whole weeks have we been searching for our ticket out of here to show itself. And now I am sitting on a mountain of bones, the only one left to see such which has never been seen by mortal eyes.

Just a month ago, we had been sitting in the boss's office, like game ready to be shot, air conditioning blowing down onto heads forcing us to now slightly. I had found something amazing, extraordinary, magnificent that could destroy nations if in the wrong hands. When prey comes across, no predator lets it slip. The boss, a successful oil seller from the little village I was from, ordered me to find it for him. I refused, and he had my family killed in retaliation. My father, who fought valiantly to the end to save the children, was whipped till his bones snapped and his body crumpled. They took everything from me, sent me to the desert with some other prisoners of his to die.

The angel and the devil started talking when i was thrown into the desert, they chattered along as i stumbled half dead across the dunes.

Why are we working for him?

We arent, hes forced us.

But he doesnt have anything to hold against us anymore, we should fight back!

This is what we wanted though, only in a different way.

He killed our family, arent you mad?

If we stop now, thier lives would be in vain.

Thier lives are now meaningless! their gone! Save yourself!

No, they entrusted the meanings of their life and the reasons for their deaths to us, we can mak thier lives meaningful.

He thinks I cannot do anything, since he has taken my everything and more, he thinks my soul is shattered, broken. He is right, but what is more dangerous than a man with nothing more to lose?

I managed to convince the men with me to search. Alike, we decided to string our hopes together and walk this barren land as one. Four weeks in the desert with limited water we fell like flies, until only I was left. I don't remember how it's was and it doesn't matter anymore.

This morning, or night, I'm not sure. I fell through a hole and broke both of my legs. I woke after an hour or a day, I'm not sure. I woke because I felt coolness from afar, and started crawling there, in the dark, in pain, all alone.

Now I sit, before a pool of water in a cavern lit by glow worms. I have drunk my fill and rested already. I sit in front of the pool, with my broken legs stretched in front of me, afraid to breathe as if breathing would break the magnificent sight in front of me. Glowing crystals illuminate the dark part of the cave, in it forever embedded the fossils of the greatest discovery in history made.

The curves of it strike deep in me, the cracked joints and strange shapes that never should be. Before me stands perfectly preserved crystallised fossils of an ancient human—dinosaur settlement that lived millions of years ago. Dinosaurs who evolved into half—humans had roamed the earth once. Created settlements and tamed the land. They gathered in one group, lived as one so that they would be hidden from all others. They lived like that, apparently, a disease felled them all. With one blow, Mother Nature had fixed her mistake overnight.

There was dust caked on the fossils in the crystal, like a layer of death it stuck to the bones over millions of years. How sad it was, to die and freeze for millions of years. How painful it was to come into this world, only to die. How painful it was, to see people die for you.

What if killers, power-hungry “kings” like the boss had this information? The dinosaurs are bound to have a genetic bond with humans, what they could do with the disease is unthinkable, unspeakable. No one would be safe if this biological weapon of the deceased fell into the like of his hands.

I look down at the item in my hand, smooth and cool, rubbing against my raw palm. A bomb, it is, the smallest yet most powerful bomb in the history of bombs. Funny, how a thing so small can save so many. Yet the destruction of this amazing crystal wouldnt be enough to break that devil of a boss’s soul. I want to do what he did to me, two him along with his family in a meat grinder and wipp their bloody remains until.....no, im letting dark thoughts flood me. I cant be holding grudges as i die can I? Even though seeing the boss squished into a meat grinder and hear his bones breaking as metal crushes the man who broke me like glass, I must remember the world as it is, the beautiful place that makes beautiful things.

I close my eyes, the motion of it feels like rubbing sandpaper on my eyes. I lean back and let my head hit the cold stone wall behind me. I think of my family, my friends, my village, my comrade in arms who gave their lives for this cause, everyone who has help me get to this point.....

This point.....was it greed that took me here? Or selfishness? Not wanting others to have this power? Or the selfless thought of saving others? Am i a martyr or a spiteful fool? Am i greedy or good-willed? Maybe even none of those, maybe it was the fear of myself and others with such power, the fear of the actions that might have and the consequences that followed. Fear. Such a horrible thing that drives us all. It leads to destruction and does nothing but destroy.

I should stop there, stop with these resentful thoughts, but i cant. I peek over destruction, and see.....beauty?

Beauty after destruction! What a funny thought! I must be delirious. Before i can laugh, though, pain settles over me and i am brought back to reality. I stop my thoughts and throw away my consciousness.

Calmness settles over me, I feel peace coming towards me. My dear father, I will see you soon, I will see you as whole, not the unrecognisable piece of bloody meat i saw. In heaven I will see all of you. As I breathe my last breath and let the reaper do its job I press the small button on the bomb. A quote from someone old comes into my mind. These words can describe the world, can change and shape it.

Beauty comes only after destruction, which comes from fear.

Nice conflict! – working for the ruthless boss. I’m thinking perhaps you could highlight the internal struggle? Any other background info that could be added to create a starker contrast to your characters?

Massacre

St. Stephen's College, Chiu, Ayden – 14

On the five hour drive to the village near the fossil bed, Li Cheng blabbered about his love for dinosaurs.

“The area I lived in was a hot bed for fossil excavation, “ he exclaimed, “ I always tried to find fossils in my backyard and often sneaked around fossil sites, one time, I managed to take a peek at the fossils myself.”

“That moment changed me forever, the remains of ancient behemoths I read from in books just beyond my reach! Even though I was shooed away, I vowed to one day touch a fossil myself, that’s why I became a palaeontologist.”

The young man’s admiration for the bones of those ancient titans was remarkable, he never ceased talking about it for the duration of the drive.

“Take a look outside, the view from here is excellent,” said my young companion.

“We’re almost there now, it’ll only take 15 minutes.”

I smiled. “I am going to enjoy working here,” I thought.

How wrong I was.

In the largest tent, a man hunched over several papers.

“Ah, my old friend! Did you enjoy the trip?” said Jonah. “ I haven’t seen you in a while now, haven’t I ?”

“You’ll be commanding excavation team number 2, but we’ll start work tomorrow as it’s getting late now,” said Jonah.”

“ Li will show you to your temporary home. I hope you’ll wake up early to start work because time is money and I don’t want to lose any more money, I’ve already spent enough hiring workers.”

Jonah hasn’t changed a bit.

The place I was to be staying at was an old house at the edge of the village, there were barely any electrical appliances inside, the walls were flaking off plaster and the roof looked like it was close to crumbling. Worse of all, there was no hot water. Classic Jonah, putting price over safety and renting a house that’s one nudge from falling apart because it was “cheap”.

But that was still not the worst part of this trip.

Excavation team number 2 was composed of local workers who had years of experience working with fossil excavation due to the high number of excavation work available in the area. They were friendly and hard-working, and immediately got to work. Li Cheng was my assistant and interpreter and with his help, excavation work progressed smoothly and efficiently. Gradually, pieces of the titanosaur began to be unearthed. When I moved closer, I saw that the man was carving the wood into the shape of the skull of a titanosaur.

“That man is Old Chen, the woodcarver. He often sells his works at Main Street but he absolutely hates palaeontologists.”

“ He must have recognised you as you’ve walked between the site and the village for a while. You’re certainly no local and you definitely don’t look like a worker.”

“Why does he hate palaeontologists anyway?” I asked.

“In the 90s there was a local fossil boom and dozens of palaeontologists came here to excavate fossils.”

“However a local Taoist sect that worshipped dragons came to see them as grave robbers. The fossils were seen as remains of dragons and as such, the excavations were seen as a crime.”

“The five families of priests and practitioners, the Jiangs, the Tangs, the Zhaos, the Zhongs and the Lins launched a brutal massacre against the palaeontologists and the excavation workers.”

“The authorities came and arrested the murderers and declared the sect illegal, the murderers later were executed by firing squad.”

“But by then it was too late, the death toll had reached the hundred mark. And Old Chen’s only son, a worker was among the dead.”

“He blamed the palaeontologists and never forgave them for disturbing the fossils and earning them and his son the wrath of the cult.”

“And he considers all palaeontologists the same, as bringers of misfortune.”

I did not know what to say, I had heard of the infamous “Jiangxi Dragon Cult Massacre of 1992” but I did not know the details about the incident, who knew the town was the site of such a tragedy?

This should be a clear indicator that taking this job was a mistake, but foolish as I was, I opted to continue.

The contents were written in English, it wrote:

“During ancient times, far beyond the reign of the Yellow Emperor, far beyond the creation of humans by the goddess Nuwa, was a time of obscurity.

“It was a time of gods, giants, strange beasts and monsters that none alive would be able to imagine and many, many more.”

“It was also the time of the Loong, fantastical creatures reminiscent of reptiles.”

“They dived beneath the seas, soared above the clouds and their footsteps caused the earth to tremble.”

“They are now called dinosaurs, but known to the Chinese people as the Loong.”

The package had no indication of the identity of the sender, I thought the note was strange but dismissed it as a prank. It was obviously not. How I hadn’t figured out the connection between the note to the Jiangxi Loong Cult was unknown to me.

It was Li Cheng that discovered him. The blood had dried and wild dogs had eaten a portion of his back, but the most striking thing about the scene was that.....

“Some sick bastard had took it! Somebody took Mr Cheng’s head!”

The police were called immediately, the village was locked down, the excavation project was suspended immediately and anyone involved was to be questioned. I was questioned too but my comments were declared “not to be of use”.

I went back to my hostel, nervously turning my head around every time I heard a noise, thinking that it might be the murderer, but I didn't see anyone suspicious until I reached the doorstep of my house.

A hooded figure stood there, dressed in what looked like a dark robe with a golden, swirling Chinese dragon print, they had their back to me and were kneeling. A brown package was in the threshold, inside was another note with the same cryptic language as the previous.

"Years passed and the earth is now under the reign of a new master, mankind."

"The earth had been shattered, flooded, burned and frozen in an everlasting cycle ever since the end of the time of the gods."

"Thousands of species were wiped out but the Loong lived on."

"After a massive calamity that caused the stars to fall onto the earth, the Loong were forced to migrate to the East, into a land called China."

"The Loong became plentiful and there were more Loong than grains of sand on a beach."

"For centuries, they were undisturbed, until from the north, from the south and from the west, arrived men."

"The Loong befriended the people who migrated to the land and the two sides coexisted for a number of years."

"The years before the reign of the Yellow Emperor were of immense turmoil, tribes contested for control of the land and the Loong were captured by the men and were tamed to be used as weapons and pawns in the conflict."

I learned that among the dead, Old Chen the woodcarver who was shot with a crossbow and Jonah, who was found with a wood axe stuck to his face. Jonah suffered the worst among the dead, he was apparently beaten with the blunt end of the axe, then had the word "CAPITALIST" carved on his back before having the axe being flung to his face. Needless to say I was terrified.

"Li Chen?"

"Correct. But you should call me Grand Master Li Chen."
I couldn't believe it.

"But how? I thought you were a palaeontologist, the ideals of the cultists should be in conflict with your occupation!"

"That was a cover, I technically am a palaeontologist, but I use my identity to spy on the grave robbers and their efforts to disturb the graves of the Loong. Exactly what I did with your friend Jonah."

"I thought your cult was eradicated in 1992! How are you all still around?" I said.

"I was secretly a friend to a senior member of the Society and an advocate for their cause, I escaped the arrests in 1992 by feigning innocence. For some reason that worked!"

"I decided to carry on their legacy and protect the graves of the Loong from raiders like you."

"But I thought you loved dinosaurs so that's why you became a palaeontologist!"

"I do love them unlike you grave robber, their remains should remain buried and not to be disturbed by fake "lovers" like you!"

“But...”

I nodded.

“Good now get out of here. As for the rest of you.....”

Outside my apartment was a brown package, I froze, then gingerly picked it up and tore it open, I gulped for I knew what was going to be inside and the consequences for not following the instructions.

New Tales of China's Dinosaurs

St. Stephen's College, Hai, Milton – 12

Miners Li and Chan were on a hike in a lush hill in China, when suddenly, the sky darkened and it started raining cats and dogs. As they were seeking shelter, they found a cave nearby. They went inside the deep, dark cave, which was when they heard some rocks fall down.

"Did you hear that?" asked Li. Chan replied, "Yeah. It felt like some kind of rock fell down." Li said, "Come on, let's go check it out." And they started exploring the cave.

"This cave is actually pretty deep," said Li as they were walking. Suddenly, Chan exclaimed, "Hey! What are those in front of us?" Li and Chan rushed forward and found out that there was a rock with a lined organic pattern. They examined the rock and then, Chan asked, "Wait, is this aDINOSAUR FOSSIL?" Li said, "Actually, I think so. Let's take this back to the laboratory for examination. But Chan replied, "One fossil won't be enough to determine the species of the dinosaur it belonged to, let's search the cave for some more fossils first, and then we'll return to the laboratory." Li agreed and they set off to find more fossils.

Li and Chan had been searching for a long time, but still hadn't gained any fossils. As they were about to give up, they encountered a sandstone wall. Chan said, "Since fossils are commonly found in sandstone, let's try our chances and mine through the wall." They did as Chan suggested, and started mining through the hard rock wall.

After around twenty minutes of restless mining, they discovered a brown, hard rock sticking out on the surface of the sandstone wall. They quickly started mining around the brown rock and they were relieved to find a fossil. Overjoyed, they instantly started mining like there was no tomorrow. At last, they were very satisfied to see the amount of the fossils they had found, which was twelve, to be exact. They may have been delighted at the moment, but they weren't ready for what was going to happen next.

Just as they were about to leave the cave, all of a sudden, a rumbling sound boomed out from the path they had just walked. As they dashed towards the path, they were horrified to see that their path had been blocked by a huge pile of boulders.

As the boulders were too hard to mine, Li tried to contact the police and call for help, but unfortunately, there wasn't any signal. Trembling, she cried, "What are we supposed to do now?" After Chan thought and observed the area for a while, he said, "Wait, there's a path leading to somewhere behind us. It might lead us to an exit." They left the fossils behind, only brought their phones in case they were able to contact people and started following the path. Soon after, they encountered an intersecting path. After a short discussion, they chose to go to the path on the right side and kept walking, hopeful that they would find an exit.

Sometime later, they ran into something really unexpected, a huge dinosaur skeleton! They were ecstatic to discover something new again, but they knew they had something more important to do, which was to find an exit to the cave. They made their way back to the intersecting path and went to the other path. And after a long time of walking, they were lucky enough to discover that the other path led them to an exit. They were then able to contact the police and were soon rescued, while the fossils and skeleton were brought back to the laboratory and were examined.

A few months later, the fossils and skeleton turned out to belong to a new kind of dinosaur. As Li and Chan were the ones that had discovered the fossil and skeleton of the dinosaur, it was named Lichanisaur. In a recent interview, Li and Chan met up again to share their adventurous experience. "I still can't believe that we found a new species of dinosaur," Li exclaimed. They both agreed that, without each other they wouldn't have been able to overcome this challenge. They were very proud of themselves as they had remarkably helped China make history again!

New Tales of China's Dinosaurs

St. Stephen's College, Lai, On Kiu – 12

Recently, China has been the globally epicenter of fossil-hunting. There, scientists have discovered the titanosaur, a new species. But what is the story that lies behind it? Meanwhile, Jamie, an inspired boy, was following his paleontologist father in Jiangxi while he spotted a book—a book like nothing he had ever seen. It looked so old and antique. Flipping it open, he steps into the unraveled mystery, looking into millenniums ago.....

“It’s so humid and hot here!” Sarah exclaimed, looking around. She was a curious traveler, aspiring for new adventures. She had been scavenging around for days, driven by the motivation to contribute to dinosaur discoveries in every corner of China, a less explored place for fossils. However, the extreme heat and fatigue has overwhelmed her, draining the last bit of her energy. ‘Perhaps a shot of insulin would help.’ She thought to herself. What she didn’t know was, a most unexpected turn would take place. While she was injecting it into her skin, a feeling of dizziness entered her as she fell on the floor, unconscious.

When she woke up, her eyes laid on a most peculiar sight—mixes of vibrant colors, distinct calls of birds and other animals, and fresh smells of nature flowed into the air. “Where am I?” She wondered. As a foreigner, she had never approached the greeny part of China, the noise-filled, busy city was her only impression. It was like a real-life painting of her imaginary dreams and tales, like how grandma used to tell her as a child. Slowly, she rose up, touching the dew-drop grass and bunch of flowers. “This looks like the start of an amazing adventure!” She thought optimistically. But what has led her here, and why? This is the mystery Sarah is yet to discover.

Suddenly, an animal popped out, surprising clueless Sarah out of the blue, and she almost jumped. “Hello! I’m Gray the titanosaur. Nice to meet you!” In front of her was a massive, greyish creature, a genuine smile etched on his face. Guess he was named after his appearance. Lost for words, Sarah nodded and stared at it inquisitively. “But aren’t dinosaurs extinct?” She replied. “Ah, you must be new here. This is Lardiose Island in the depths of China, the paradise of the dinosaurs which have miraculously survived the meteorite, with the rarest plants to the most extraordinary animals. Don’t worry, we’re all very friendly here. Come, I’ll lead you to our watering hole, the body of Lardiose.”

Indeed, the watering hole was magnificent, holding the lives of many, embracing the core of nature. Dipping into the cool water, Sarah refreshed herself from the long journey, meeting all the animals, which warmly showed her around, listening to delightful splashing sounds and feeling the lively atmosphere, while enjoying the moments together. “This is life!” She thought to herself. “If only the cities could be like this. Away from electronic devices, stress and worries!” “Come on! It’s time for your next destination!” Gray called.

Next, he showed her to the most vivid part of the rainforest—a plant garden with all sorts of amazing delicacies, from tropical punch with the most unique fruits to desserts made with the finest ingredients of nature. Her mouth watered greedily, staring at the fine dishes, unable to wait any longer. “Be our guest and dig in!” Sarah wolfed down every ravenously, filling her empty stomach to the brim. Not only was the appetizing food melting in her mouth like ice on lava, her wore out body was instantly struck with bolts of energy and strength. Could this get any better?

While Sarah was living her life to the fullest, she spotted a bone next to her that has appeared out of nowhere. It looked so familiar, it somewhat reminded her of... “Oh no! I forgot about my mission! Time has slipped within my hands!” Panicking, she nervously looked around, trying to find an exit. Instead, her eyes laid on a comparatively darker corner of the island, contrasting the spiritedness of the rest. Thinking it was the exit, she secretly snuck towards it, when Gray instantly appeared in front. “Where are you going?” It asked, now in a less amiable tone. Horrified, Sarah stuttered, “I...I’m just looking around. This has been such a pleasant experience, but I’m kind of homesick. Can I go home now?” A fake smile replaced its beam, “Is it not enough here? You have all the food and entertainment, just relax and have fun.” But Sarah couldn’t relax. Curiosity was driving her ambitious soul towards the truth. While nobody was looking, she tiptoed into the darkness ahead.

Peering in, she trembled as she felt the icy breath of air on her face. Walking deeper in, she heard echos from all directions, “Don’t come in...fate is near...” This gave her goosebumps but she kept on going. At last, she came to the end of the cave and a horrific sight appeared in front of her. Countless humans had their limbs torn and hung up, along with animal skeletons and a blazing fire roaring within the shadows of them. Sarah, traumatized, shivered out the words, “What? I thought Lardoise Island was a living paradise. What is this madness?” One of the prisoners, with his last breath, revealed the dark truth: the humans were causing critical destruction to the planet, which the Gods thought the dinosaurs were responsible. They demanded sacrifices each month for their “doings” and so, their population dropped drastically. To solve this issue, they planned on abducting a human sacrifice to stay for the year with ravishments, until when the slaughtering is done. This was the place for the sacrifice.

Sarah, horrified, tried to escape, but tripped, unfortunately landing right onto Gray, the titanosaur from earlier. “So you have discovered our secret and entered the forbidden, huh? Well, fate will serve you well. Hang her up!” Tearing streaming down like a waterfall, Sarah shivered, “Please...I don’t want to die. I’m just a curious palentologist looking for fossils. I know how to solve this issue.” Gray’s eyes widened when he heard this. Hesitantly, it lowered her down and went to negotiate in a quieter area. According to her Chinese grandma, she had heard about the Chinese Gods when she was young. Remembering her wise words, they had to summon them by enforcing peace between humans and dinosaurs. It was a wild plan, but it was worth trying. Afterwards, Gray led Sarah back to the village to inform the others.

Back in her hometown, Sarah spread the news all around the country about the whole situation, and what has to be done. They were very cooperative, discussed and arrived at the area in less than a month. “Ready?” Asked Gray. Together, they formed a circle, chanting, “Gods of the Sky, we summon you to us for judgement and harmony.” After a while, a powerful mist appeared, and massive shadows lay in front of them. Quickly, they bowed down and Sarah began. “Honoured Gods, we’re informed about the destructions us humans are responsible for, while the dinosaurs were never involved. It is my deepest concern to resolve the issue, with all our hands on the job. We kindly request our hard work on fixing the environment together to replace the dinosaur’s monthly sacrifice, which were never at fault.” The gods thought for a while, realising the humans’ change of heart, they came with a final decision: Top drop the sacrifice and give three decades time to clean up the mess. “Thirty years for the whole Earth’s mess? Is that even possible?” Sarah exclaimed, losing hope. “Don’t worry! We’ll be glad to help you.” A stegosaurus named Rick replied. “Thank you so much! Let’s help save the Earth together!”

Over the next few years, they started with simple steps like reusing and recycling, then continued with cleaning up huge amounts of rubbish and pollution. It was a challenging task, but “united they stand, divided they fall.”, they cleared up most of their country within 5 years. Then, they continued on worldwide, promoting the message and loved by everyone, widely-known as the “Nature ambassadors”. By the end of the decade, more than half the population had joined in their mission, helping building a better environment for each other. Eventually, their teamwork and resilience has led to a greener Earth without pollution, filled with the motivated spirits, all lift up by Sarah’s leadership towards their success.

Reading the last page, a mix of emotions gushed inside Jamie. Of all the books he had read, never had he had approached such a meaningful yet mesmerizing story. He felt as if he was in the story himself, giving a next level of inspiration to chase his dreams and to never give up despite all the difficulties on the way, just like Sarah, the dinosaurs and everyone else. Closing the book, he set his first pursue—to show this amazing tale to the world, sharing all the wonders he has never felt before in life.

Echoes of the Past

St. Stephen's College, Leung, Katie – 13

January, 2000

“Mom, do you think they’ll remember us?” Lyra asked, her voice trembling as she held the small, intricately carved dinosaur bone pendant close to her heart.

Her mother lay in bed, her face devoid of any colour. “Of course they will,” she replied with a weak smile, her voice barely above a whisper. “Every fossil we uncover tells a story, and those stories are remembered for millions of years.”

Suddenly, a violent cough wracked her mother’s frail body. Reaching for tissues, her weak body trembled as drops of red stained its pristine white surface.

“Mom! Are you okay?” Shaking, Lyra reached for her mother’s arm, hoping to steady her. Her mother’s skin felt cold and clammy, reminding her of her numbered days.

“I—I’m f—fine, Lyra. Don’t w—worry about me.” She coughed into her arm, her entire body shaking.

“Please don’t leave me,” Lyra pleaded desperately. “I don’t want you to be forgotten. I want you—us—to be remembered forever.”

“Lyra, baby,” her mother replied, “we’ll never be forgotten. Our work as paleontologists is proof of that.”

“But what if...what if we never discover anything important? What if our work doesn’t matter?”

Her mother’s expression grew serious. “Every discovery, no matter how small, adds to our understanding of the past. Like putting together a giant puzzle, each piece is crucial, and without any one of them, the picture isn’t complete.”

Her Mum opened Lyra’s palm and took the pendant, holding it between them. “And besides, if we still remember the dinosaurs,” she said softly, “we’ll be remembered too.”

January, 2025

Those words echoed in Lyra’s mind as she stood at the edge of a remote dig site in Guangdong. The sun was just beginning to rise, casting a golden hue across the rocky terrain. When she became a paleontologist after her mother’s death, she swore she would treasure every excavation experience.

“You can do this,” she murmured as she squeezed the pendant in her palm.

Kneeling on the grimy dirt, Lyra carefully began digging away in her steady, practiced movements. After several hours, a distinct bone began to emerge. It felt cool and solid beneath her fingertips, a stark contrast to the gritty dirt surrounding it. Her forehead was covered in her own sweat, slowly dripping down to her eyes and blurring her vision. Yet she knelt there, exhausted and motionless.

“It’s the most remarkable discovery we’ve made since—well, forever.” Dr Carter, head of the research department, announced.

“Paleontologists have not made any fossil discoveries in this part of China, and the bones—we’ve never seen anything like it. Its unique structure hints at the possibility that it is an evolutionary link to modern birds. In other words, we could be on the brink of a groundbreaking discovery ...”

Lyra’s heart began racing with excitement. She stepped forward to gaze at the sketch laid on the table. Tracing the lines that were carefully drawn, she stared at her very own discovery.

Taking out the dinosaur pendant from her coat, she hugged it to her chest. She remembered how much her mother loved telling her stories of dinosaurs when she was young. While everyone her age had bedtime stories read from a storybook, her mother would tell her whatever interesting fact they had learned about dinosaurs in the lab that day. *And by continuing her work, her spirit would live on.*

Clutching the pendant in her hand, she decided to head to bed. Tomorrow, she would continue uncovering the buried mysteries within the fossil. But for now, she thought, she would rest. Yes, she would rest.

Everything was shrouded in a thick haze. Lyra could barely discern anything through the fog, only catching glimpses of greens and blues from the surrounding scenery. The air was damp and cool, with an earthy scent of rain and soil.

Gradually, the fog began to lift. Suddenly, she felt as if something immense was weighing her down. She spun around to look at her back.

A pair of wings, large and magnificent, adorned her open back. Her skin was covered in scales, reminiscent of a dinosaur’s hide. They felt rough and cool to touch, each one a tiny shield of armor.

Her mind flashed back to what Dr Carter had mentioned in the lab—the fossil they discovered had...wings. Had she somehow transformed into an entirely different species?

In the distance, she heard a powerful roar. Somehow, even without turning her head, she could tell it came from the mother of her pack.

Wait...pack? What am I talking about?

As if on cue, a group of dinosaurs emerged from the dense foliage. They were massive, their scales glistening in the sunlight. The most impressive of all were the large wings, casting enormous shadows on the ground. At the head of the group was a majestic winged dinosaur, who steadily approached Lyra.

Her gaze was gentle yet commanding.

Lyra followed the pack as they moved through the forest, navigating through the dark woods. She learned how to find food, using her neck to reach the highest of trees. Her neck muscles stretched painfully, aching as she tried to mimic the mother dinosaur’s graceful movements. Unsuccessful, she felt a pang of embarrassment.

“Don’t be discouraged, little one. You’ll face challenges in life, but I’ll always be here to guide you.” The mother dinosaur smiled warmly. “Follow me,” she whispered, guiding Lyra under her wing.

Feeling the warmth radiating from the mother dinosaur’s body, Lyra felt her vision blurring slightly.

They came across a wide river. The pack paused, assessing the best way to cross. The mother dinosaur stepped forward with confidence, her wings unfurling with a powerful sweep. With a strong display of strength and coordination, she took to the air, gliding gracefully across the river.

Lyra hesitated for a moment, unsure of what to do.

“You can do this,” the mother dinosaur nudged Lyra, flying back from the other side of the bank, “you can do *anything*.”

Feeling reassured, Lyra closed her eyes as she took to the sky. The sensation of flight was exhilarating, the wind rushing past her scales.

Suddenly, a massive predator, its eyes gleaming with hunger, emerged from the shadows. Its low growl reverberated through the forest. Lyra shivered as she noticed the glint of its teeth, sharp and menacing.

The pack tensed. Lyra’s heart pounded in her chest, and she felt her wings waver as the predator drew closer.

“Stay close,” the mother dinosaur instructed, her voice calm yet commanding.

The pack moved as one, their combined strength overwhelming the threat and towering over the predator in size. She could hear the synchronized beating of their wings, a powerful rhythm that echoed across the forest.

The predator hesitated, its eyes darting frantically between the unified pack members. Still, it would not retreat easily. Growling, it launched itself towards the pack.

Despite this, the pack remained unified. Lyra could feel the heat radiating from the bodies, she could hear the steady thrum of their collective heartbeat. The mother dinosaur let out a long and powerful roar.

Finally, the predator took a step back and retreated into the shadows.

In the aftermath of their victory, the mother dinosaur turned towards Lyra. “Years from now, our bones will tell this very story. The story of how we defeated our enemies, how we crossed the landscapes and traveled to places far and wide.”

Smiling, she continued, “Therefore, we will be remembered, forever entwined in the passage of history.”

Then, Lyra watched as the mother dinosaur took flight across the sky, her wings cutting through the air with effortless grace. The sun set behind her—a testament to the enduring legacy of the creatures that once roamed the Earth, and their many adventures.

Lyra awoke with a start. The pendant was still tightly clutched in her hand, and the vivid dream lingered in her mind. The dream had felt so real. The emotions she felt had been so intense, it took her a moment to fully return to the present.

Her mind drifted back to the adventures and challenges she had faced. The dream was more than a fantastical journey; it had been a revelation.

The fossils she had discovered were not just remnants of the past—no, they were stories waiting to be told. Stories of countless adventures and challenges faced. Stories of the past, buried within the very bones of the creatures who had experienced it.

Her thoughts flew back to the fossil of the winged dinosaur they had discovered. It was not only a scientific find—it was a window into a world long gone. Feeling a renewed sense of purpose, Lyra smiled as she realised that yesterday, she had done much more than discover ancient bones. She had uncovered a story.

Standing up with a tearful smile and a new sense of purpose,

Lyra closed her eyes.

Holding the pendant close to her heart, she whispered, “*Yes, Mom, they’ll remember us.*”

New Tales of China's Dinosaurs

St. Stephen's College, Li, Yat Ham – 12

Beneath the towering canopy of the jungle, shadows danced as the sun filtered through the leaves, casting a mosaic of light on the forest floor. Mike can't catch up his breath, his heart is beating as fast as a leopard, a wild hungry tiger is chasing him nonstop, Mike is wishing the tiger would change the target to something else, but the tiger is like being lured by something, which can't be thrown away.

Suddenly He found out that there is no way to go, except a dangerous cliff which is 100 metres up the sea! Mike gulped and decided to give it a try, so he took a deep breath, then he jumped off the cliff with his eyes shut. He only heard that the tiger growled angrily. Then he blacked out.

When he woke up, he was washed up on the shore. As he explores, he finds a dragon with ginger fur in yellow stripes, sleeping on a flat rock. The dragon looked weak and got several cuts and bruises on its back. Suddenly, the dragon's stomach started rumbling, Mike immediately knew that the dragon was hungry. So he fed him his last sandwich. The dragon eyes brightened, fire blasted through his mouth and all the cuts on its back were cured. The fire dragon said "Hi, thank you for saving me from hunger, you can call me Yoru if you want." But suddenly his eyes turned red, he growled against the cliff that Mike fell, then he grabbed him and flew towards the opposite direction.

Mike shouted "Where are you going and why are you so frustrated to run right now?" "The fire dragon did not flinch and continued flying. Mike sneezed and shivered at the next second and he heard something behind him—a breezing ice ball flying towards them. Yoru tried to outrun it, but it was just like it had eyes and kept chasing them. Unfortunately, Yoru can't take it then screamed in pain and got stroked down into a temple.

Mike coughed through the smoke, he found out that he was fine as usual but not Yoru, whose body is covered with ice and blood. He suddenly felt something cold was behind him, then he was grasped by a large black claw. It's a dragon in white with red dots, whose breath is icy cold. It chuckled like a demon "Finally, I got you, brother! And it is time to finish your little pet!" Yoru said in surprise "I thought that you were still stuck at the temple, Sekikatsu!" As he blasts a blast through his mouth which frees Mike from him "RUN! You still have the chance to survive!" And he rushed to the Sekikatsu with no fear. As Mike watches their fight, his tears fall into his bag, then he finds something shining in his bag. It's the gem that his father gifted him before his death. As Yoru saw the gem, it shouted "Throw it to me!" When Mike threw the gem and Yoru gulped it into his stomach. His wings expanded and his flame on its tail turned non-luminous. He roared fiercely and shot a fire blast, which made Sekikatsu deal massive damage. As the Sekikatsu was ready to faint, he said "Sorry brother, can you please forgive me again?" Yoru chuckled sadly "Sorry, you did too many unbelievable things, I can't." As he ends, he ends his life with a final blast. As they walked out the temple. Mike asked, "What is the real story of you and that ice dragon?"

10 years ago.

"So, the story ends here!" Mom said relaxly, baby Alex asked "Mom? What is the meaning of this story?" "You should be grateful for this world, like the fire dragon saved his world from the evil ice dragon. Who granted us peace from the Japanese army, our China army!"

Imminent Truths

St. Stephen's College, Ng, Isis – 14

Present—Beijing, 2024

Frigid air wafted over, contrasting the humid sauna being Beijing's summer. With my palaeontologist parents, I traipsed into the National Natural History Museum of China.

Mom flashed an ebullient grin, knowing I'd witnessed everything here.

"We assisted in organising a new exhibition. It's worth observing."

Bypassing the prolonged queues, we halted before an exhibition hall titled *New Tales of China's Dinosaurs* in elevated golden letters. Entering, the crowning jewel of the display greeted us: a siltstone slab atop a pedestal.

Inspecting the specimen, I noted its unusually lengthy tail and stubbly arms, determining it was a theropod. It had structures resembling feathers, which was intriguing, as I'd never seen a non-avian dinosaur with feathers.

"The sinosauropteryx's first fossil specimen was unearthed in August 1996 by a farmer in Liaoning Province—"

Dad ceased Mom's tangent before she started ranting.

"The filaments preserved were proved to be primitive feathers instead of collagen fibres. The palaeontologist who certified this fact is someone we're immensely close with."

"We even named you after her." Mom chimed.

They must truly respect that palaeontologist.

I'm exceptionally versed in dinosaurs for someone related to palaeontologists, but there's a wealth of information I'm not privy to. Being named after a pioneer of Chinese dinosaurs... can I live up to her legacy? Do I even deserve her name?

Past—Beijing, 1997

I slumped against my desk, groaning from sore muscles. This new discovery was running me ragged. Being a palaeontologist and researcher of the National Geological Museum, sleep was elusive lately.

We'd received a fossil specimen of an undiscovered dinosaur last year, and controversies had already sprung up. We interpreted filaments arising from its skin as primitive feathers, though an American palaeontologist stated the structures were merely frills.

We're convinced of our hypothesis, though it'd be challenging to disprove other theories, especially since China was young blood within the dinosaur community.

I'd suggested the structures being feathers first, so if I can't prove it... it signifies I'm in over my head, undeserving of my title. The responsibility's on my shoulders, but the stress is a wave threatening to drown me, the pressure seizing my air. I craved the oblivion of sleep, but...

I couldn't rest.

My arms unconsciously formed a makeshift pillow. *But at this rate, I can't fire from all cylinders. Maybe a hasty nap...*

★

“Ms, wake up!” I jolted awake. *I’m up... what?* I was dangling over an obsidian void, surrounded by darkness without any other presence.

“Ms?”

I wasn’t alone. A teenage girl hovered beside me, eyes full of undisguised concern, holding the identical knowledgeable gleam I documented in my colleagues. *The characteristic of a dinosaur enthusiast.*

“You’ll be sent back in time to discover certain truths, and be returned to your times afterwards. Observe and learn. Do not waste this opportunity.” An imposing, dignified voice echoed.

“Wait! Why’s this happening to us—” The girl called.

Suddenly, the chasm erupted into white light, the sheer radiance blinding. I screamed, and—

Past—Early Cretaceous Period, around 125 million years ago

A breeze ruffled my hair. Rough objects dug into my limbs; my head being cushioned by—a *rock?*

Propelling myself upward, I was greeted with a wholly diverse environment. We were next to a structure of volcanic rocks like basalt accompanied by extensive conifer forests. An insect crawled on my arm, and I resisted the urge to flick it aside.

Meanwhile, the girl had woken. “Where are we?”

I hummed musingly. “According to my geographical knowledge, we’re in the Yixian Formation in the Early Cretaceous Period, known for its abundance in exquisitely preserved fossils. A few dinosaur fossils were discovered here recently.”

“Just to clarify... what’s *recently?*”

“1996.”

Astonished, she scrambled back. “*My* present is 2024!”

“So that’s why the voice used ‘times’. We’re from different time periods.” I deduced.

The girl stood up, brushing away dirt. “You mentioned dinosaur fossils. Are you a palaeontologist?”

I nodded, following suit. “I’ve been unearthing evidence for a dinosaur specimen from this period in this area. Maybe that’s what the voice meant about locating truths. I’m here to prove my team’s hypothesis true.”

“L—Let me assist!” She stuttered, hurrying after me. “My parents are palaeontologists. I study it myself. Maybe I can help!”

How would a teenager possess the knowledge required for this ‘expedition’? I thought slightly disdainfully. *Nonetheless, she can tag along.*

“Alright.”

★~★

I trailed after the palaeontologist, heading towards the forests. It was humid, sweat welling up on my face.

Eyeing my surroundings, I noticed a diverse amount of beings, including gastropods, climbing mammals and lizards, corresponding to the bare bones of my knowledge on Yixian Formation.

She hastened her pace, bee-lined towards a miniature dinosaur near a ginkgo tree.

“Isn’t that a sinosauropteryx? It’s the first feathered non-avian dinosaur species discovered.”

I exclaimed, eager to demonstrate my knowledge. I recognised the alternating coloured bands on its tail, a notable attribute.

She shot me a stupefied expression—oddly, resembling Mom’s—which speedily dissolved into indifference.

“Yes... it is...”

★~★

She knew the dinosaur I’m researching has feathers? My mind whirled overtime. That means somehow—we succeed in our proof.

Scrutinising the dinosaur, I regarded its lack of frills, discerning a coat of pliable filament-like feathers. Besides, the dinosaur clearly had colouring on feathered places, and I recalled the fossil specimen having interspersed bands along the tail, which I now saw were ginger and white. I could identify its bands as remnants of its colouration pattern instead of artefacts of the specimen splitting as assumed. Collagen didn’t contain pigment, proving feathers existed.

“Its colouring proves the specimen has feathers,” I mused. “But how do I disprove the frills theory?”

“I’ve studied the sinosauropteryx specimen. A paper in 2017 determined the collagen frill was misidentified sediment.” The girl popped up.

“The collagen hypothesis has unstable claims anyways, since it asserted the integument included beaded structures similar to decaying collagen structures of modern sea mammals. That allegation is ludicrous. It’s non-avian but resembles birds more than mammals.”

She’s right. Visualising the slab, it’s infeasible for the supposed frills to form. From my future, she was cognisant of additional information, but her knowledge was almost impeccable amongst my generation.

“You’re quite insightful on dinosaurs. Your parents would be proud.” The formerly waning spark in her eyes reignited.

Suddenly, the homogeneous white light enveloped the background, inching closer every second.

“Seems it’s time to leave,” I commented, offering a hand. She clasped and shook it.

★~★

“So... this is goodbye. Hope we’ll meet again someday.” I told the palaeontologist. She echoed the sentiment.

The light was increasingly within reach, luminosity overly brilliant.

“You know, Ms, I never caught your name,” I said before the light consumed us.

She glanced back, smiling. “It’s Jinghui.”

Jinghui. “That’s my name too.”

The light tendrils swathed around her, and she disappeared. *Wait! She—must be...!*

Past—Beijing, 1997

Li Jinghui fell off her chair at her office, landing with a thump. She winced, standing and grabbing a pen. Plopping back down, she started writing feverishly, detailing all the proof she inferred from the live dinosaur. She could now equate the oddities, once baffling, to cohere to her hypothesis.

Her mind flashed back to her companion and her intelligence. She truly learnt a lesson in not underestimating children. *That girl was quite knowledgeable. Maybe I’d see her in the field someday.*

A week later...

“Your findings are impressive, Ms. Li.” The director laced his fingers together. “This completely refutes other theories about the structures’ nature, which can only be feathers due to pigmentation cells.”

After finishing my paper proving my hypothesis, I’d submitted it to the museum director, who summoned me to his office today.

“We’ll publish this paper and credit you as the one verifying the fact.” My heart swelled in triumph as my efforts and midnight oil burning bear fruit.

“Congratulations, you’ve made palaeontology history.”

Present—Beijing, 2024

Chen Jinghui awoke in her bed. Memories of her journey zoomed before her eyes: the woman, the Cretaceous Period, the *sinosauroptryx*...

She’d comprehended numerous truths, but there’s one she required affirmation.

Plodding to the kitchen, her dad was blearily squinting at a newspaper while sipping his coffee.

“Hey Dad,” she said. “Who’s the woman you named me after?”

A nostalgic expression manifesting, he smiled. “Your mother’s cousin Li Jinghui. She inspired your mother to be a palaeontologist.”

Her mind ground to a halt. *That woman—isn’t just a namesake, but a relative?*

“Have I ever met her?”

“A few times as a baby.” He gulped down his coffee. “Though we’re having a family gathering soon and she’s finally coming. Married to her work.”

My words would be true. I’d meet her again.

1 month later...

I perceived her instantaneously while the gathering went on. She’s 30 years older, while I seemed the same to her.

She grinned. “Your words were true.”

“We meet again.”

My journey spanned time periods, where truths were finally ascertained. All due to a sinosauropteryx.

Rebirth

St. Stephen's College, Wan, Yunhan – 12

“Look! I have found something!” It was not a rock nor a piece of hard soil, but a bone.

A group of artists stopped looking at some special paintings on the wall of a newly found cave. They used their palette knives to dig down the soft cloth of sand. Small bones, long bones, appeared soon. Some people exclaimed they were going to faint. Some were really excited to see such a rare scene. Even the calmest person among them couldn't control his emotion anymore.

Among the visitors to this artistic cave was a young man who had worked at the museum before. He identified the worth of the history they told.

News spread as fast as a tornado. All the scientists of the Academy of Science were excited. Paleontologists dug out the group of bones like they had found gold. After collecting all the pieces and examining them metre by metre, the scientists gladly announced that they belonged to a *Dinocephalosaurus orientalis*.

“What is more exciting, is that nowadays technology can allow us to bring this incredible creature back to life!” The audience cheered because they knew this kind of dinosaur had had a glorious history.

Months had passed, the DNA of the dinosaur had been extracted and he was reborn! People saw the dinosaur stuck its head out of the laboratory's window curiously, like a dragon that twirled above the city. What surprised everyone, was the dinosaur enjoyed eating meat stuffed dumplings instead of pure meats.

“Maybe we should prepare more such dumplings from all over China if this is the case.” people came to a conclusion.

The dinosaur, however, loved to explore the laboratory. He often unlocked his cage and sneaked into the lab. A shiny, clock-like, well-protected machine soon attracted him. He could not hear the hurried footsteps outside or see anything else apart from the diamond that glowed in his eyes. The uncontrollable paw moved inches by inches and finally placed on the machine. A flash of light, a sound of a broken glass, he lost his direction.

What was this place? It was not the lab, not the nowadays city, not a dream. Yes, it was the Earth, but during a different time — the Triassic period! It seemed to be both familiar and strange to this young dinosaur. There was no more cages nor cameras. The dinosaur was free now. Suddenly, the ground started shaking violently. A *Herrerasaurus* ran towards the *Dinocephalosaurus orientalis*, who had never seen a *Herrerasaurus* before.

The long neck left a shadow on the ground, so did the sharp teeth. The teeth opened large, the neck shivered a bit, as it knew something bad was going to happen. The neck blocked the sunlight when the teeth bit down on it. A terrible scream, gushing blood, the *Dinocephalosaurus orientalis* lied in a pool of red. Gasping, struggling. He watched the attacker chasing behind another bigger prey. Although he had escaped from the cage in the lab, he felt that an unseen cage was built around him. This was a new world with new rules. Feeling lonely and unsafe, he managed to drag his bleeding body into a hidden cave. His sight started blurring.....

Without warning, four strong feet stood in the middle of the light. Above a long neck, which was even longer than the *Dinocephalosaurus orientalis*'s, was a friendly face.

“Oh my,” the unfamiliar dinosaur was deep concern, “don't worry, I am a *Tanystropheus*, I won't hurt you.”

Since that day, the *Tanystropheus* came to take care of the hurt *Dinocephalosaurus orientalis* constantly. In the morning, he would bring food. On the first day, he brought some plants. After seeing the embarrassed and disgusted expression on the *Dinocephalosaurus orientalis*'s face, he started to bring fish to him afterwards. At night, the *Tanystropheus* would cover the dinosaur with large leaves and kept company with him till the sun rose. Under the good caring, the hurt *Dinocephalosaurus orientalis* recovered soon. To thank the *Tanystropheus*, the healed dinosaur tried to catch some fish, but he failed miserably. His companion could not stop laughing when watching so many

hilarious scenes. He taught the *Dinocephalosaurus orientalis* the skills of how to catch fish in shallow water, the latter learning them quickly and catching fish for his good-hearted teacher regularly.

However, the *Herrerasaurus* attacked them regularly too. He seemed to be unwilling to not kill a single prey. There were times that he hid behind a tree or a rock and suddenly jumped out to try to smash the two dinosaurs into pieces. There were times that he lurked underwater when they were fishing and abruptly broke out of the water surface.

That night, the *Dinocephalosaurus* that was so excited to go 'fishing' again did not know that a murder was going on presumptuously. When he woke up early, the sun was so red, just like the blood of his poor, tender-hearted fellow who was lying on the sand, lifeless. At that moment, the *Dinocephalosaurus orientalis* felt an unusual fire was burning inside him. He was ready, not for fishing, but for facing his prodigious enemy.

The battle took place at the beach where the *Tanystropheus* was killed. The immense, proud shadow covered the small, firm one. The trees around them were shaking violently. The rocks on a small mountain shuddered easily. The tremendous shadow attacked first, the small-scale one dodged fast. The first shadow was gigantic, but not slow. It crushed on to its prey again, the mouth forming an obtuse angle. The broken sound of flesh was followed by a sharp scream. The tiny warrior did not give up, but still standing there with two insistent eyes opened as large as the ocean nearby. He would lose within a few minutes like this. How short and long a minute was! He needed to win, because this was the rule of this world...He thought of the lab, the shiny machine, the first attack, the dying *Tanystropheus*. He came here because it was where he belonged.

"I have to live on, I will not die like this."

The fire was not burning inside his heart now, it was burning on his face, in his throat, his stomach and his tail. He turned and ran into the forest. Ignoring his opponent's arrogant laugh, he got some branches, a big leaf and some hard long grass. He tied the branches into a quadrilateral shape with a cross in the middle and attached the leaf on one side. He then twisted the remaining grass and fastened them between the 'aircraft' and himself. He heard the heavy steps of the huge creature and immediately kicked the ground. He looked down in the air—he was flying! He had been afraid but now he couldn't think of anything. His enemy followed the little 'kite' at its heel. The *Dinocephalosaurus orientalis* flew above the rock mountain. The *Herrerasaurus* hardly saw anything but enormous rocks running down from the mountain before it screamed and ran for life. The rock rushed down like a water fall madly and pulverized the huge monster, leaving an area of dark red paint behind. The invisible sun instantaneously burst from the horizon. The unseen cage was destroyed. The victory went into the right paws.

The winning *Dinocephalosaurus orientalis* found the *Tanystropheus*'s family. To commemorate this good-natured dinosaur, they decided to paint his deeds in a cave. They went far far away, to the desert. They climbed on high mountains and excavated uncountable caves. Colourful stones, which were found by the *Dinocephalosaurus orientalis*'s keen eyes while spotting shiny objects, were ground into powder and the dinosaurs used it to paint for months and months. Those paintings were fantastic. They told the story of how the *Dinocephalosaurus orientalis* had been pounced by the *Herrerasaurus*, how the warm-hearted *Tanystropheus* had saved the *Dinocephalosaurus orientalis* who was at death's door, how the teacher and his student had spent a lovely time in the water, how the *Tanystropheus* sacrificed under the merciless teeth and how the *Dinocephalosaurus orientalis* had bravely wiped the "teeth" out of the Earth. Even now, people were still singing the praises of the history, the courage, the wisdom, the faith and the noble spirit of these paintings, of these extraordinary dinosaurs.

When the dinosaurs had just finished their paintings and were hugging each other, rocks and sand raced to run down the mountain. The *Tanystropheus*'s family managed to get out of the cave. Unfortunately, just like the nature was mad at him, the *Dinocephalosaurus* lost his chance to get out of the beautiful cave. The sunlight from the entrance was cut and a shield was formed as to defend the paintings and the dinosaur. He squeezed in front of the paintings, forming another shield of protection. He wasn't scared. To him, it was just a new beginning. It was the final freedom. He went peacefully into the embrace of the land below him.

Million of years had passed, we heard some familiar sounds.

"Look! I have found something!"

New Tales of China's dinosaurs

St. Stephen's College, Wang, Chi Yuen – 12

Another boring, sweltering, ordinary day, I thought as I was walking back to my dig site in Dashanpu Quarry. Little did I know, that day was anything but ordinary. Little did I know, I would find a dinosaur on that day.

Wait. Let me rewind a bit.

Picture this: July 1979. The world was on the hunt for dinosaurs. Two had been discovered in China the previous year, so the Chinese were motivated to find more (besides, the discovery of the *Deinonychus* got everyone hyped up about dinosaurs anyway, and the *Sinosauropteryx* that was discovered a decade ago was one of the most significant discoveries of recent times, so the Chinese had lots of motivation). That is what I have been doing for the past three years—finding dinosaurs, and if you allow me to be totally arrogant, I was pretty good for a thirty-two-year-old! Three years ago, in 1976, I helped to uncover the *Zigongosaurus* and subsequently went to Mongolia and lent a big hand towards the discovery of the *Saichania* genus. In 1978 I stayed in Mongolia and did some pretty significant stuff, but in 1979 I returned to China and stayed there until 1985.

Even though I played a role in uncovering the *Zigongosaurus*, I dreamt of one day uncovering a dinosaur of my own. Although in my long years of paleontology, I only claimed two dinosaurs as my own. That would be the *Huayangosaurus* and the *Yimenosaurus*.

A few weeks before the find, my second-in-hand James told me that he and his team had found what looked like dinosaur bones and told me to take a look. I was extremely excited because many people on his team were new recruits and I really wanted them to have their first find be special. At first glance, it looked like they had found a real dinosaur bone. But upon closer inspection, it was a clever forgery, probably planted by a nearby clan. Understandably, I and the rest were really disappointed and angry. But as I went to continue my dig, something stopped me in my tracks.

A streak of white. Muddy and covered in dirt, yes, but white.

I decided to take a good look at it. My heart stopped. A femur bone that closely resembled a stegosaurus. But this was impossible, I thought to myself! *Stegosaurus* is a common dinosaur in the USA, not China. That had to be a cheap forgery, I confirmed in my mind, confident that I was right, riddled with unwanted self-confidence. Just then, my mind found option B.

“That was both lucky and smart,” James said. “You just discovered a new dinosaur! Congratulations!” “That’s just lucky!”, I replied. Turns out, my true guts, although late, were true (although earlier I neglected the obvious fact that who in their right minds would make a *Stegosaurus* forgery and put it in Asia)! That streak of white was not a fake, but a real, fossilized dinosaur bone that as a bonus, was a new species that was similar to a *Stegosaurus*. Similar to a *Stegosaurus*, it was an ornithischian, had scales on its back, and two pairs of long spikes extending horizontally towards its tail. Like its famous cousin, the *Huayangosaurus* had a spiked tail for self-defense, like its spiky plates and lived around 170–163 million years ago during the Middle Jurassic. It was also one of the smallest known stegosaurus ever found, ranking at only four meters long, while the *Stegosaurus* is around seven meters long.

If you could not tell already, I was ecstatic as I had discovered a dinosaur of my own, even if I do not have the naming rights for it. I was originally going to name it “*dashanpuosaurus*”, but that would be too long and doesn’t sound good anyway. The current name, “*huayangosaurus*”, is based on the word “*huayang*”, an ancient name for Sichuan, where it was found. Its scientific name is *huayangosaurus taibaii*, where “*taibaii*” is a reference to famous poet Li Bai.

The next year, the *microhadrosaurus* and *nanshiungosaurus* were discovered. Over the course of the next decade, more than forty dinosaurs were discovered, including the interestingly named *Gasosaurus* in 1985 and the kind of famous *Yimenosaurus* in 1990, among others.

I opted to stay in China for the rest of my career and soon knew major dino-rich places like the back of my hand. Despite this, it still took me five years to find my second. It happened in 1990.

Another boring, sweltering, ordinary day, I thought as I was walking back to my dig site in Yunnan. Little did I know, that day was anything but ordinary. Little did I know, I would find a dinosaur on that day.

Wait. Let me rewind a bit.

I dug for hours every day under the boiling hot sun. Obviously, heatstroke and sleep deprivation has taken its toll on me, as sometimes I was required to work through the night non-stop until our team captain told us that we could rest. I didn't even register the white that appeared in the yellow, the swan among ducks. "Guys, I found something", I yelled warily. At that moment, I did not think much of it as I had found too many forgeries those days. After uncovering more of the fossil, I decided to go back to the tent and write a report about it: saurischian, around nine meters long. That's when I heard the news.

"Wow, a new species! Good job, and because of this, I've decided to promote you to my second-in-hand!", my team captain said. "Thanks! This is why I stayed here anyway", I replied. It was a saurischian, about nine meters long, and later named the *Yimenosaurus*, a tribute towards Yang Zhongjian, who was considered as the father of Chinese paleontology.

In the early 2000s the *Microraptor* was discovered in China, which was one of the most important discoveries of modern times. In just fifty-or-so years, China's dinosaur collections have increased exponentially. Nowadays, China is a worldwide landmark for dinosaurs. People from all over the world come here to find dinosaurs, to be famous. Times have changed so much.

The Living Fossils

St. Stephen's College, Wong, Tyler – 13

Longhu Mountain, Jiangxi, China

2030

Longhu mountain is known for its beautiful rivers and cliffs. It is home to many Taoist temples, but recently, it has also been known to be the home to many dinosaur fossils. Due to its riverbanks full of rich mud and sand, it allows for some of the world's finest fossil preservation, instantly making it one of the world's best palaeontology sites.

Recently, a group of palaeontologists have been working on the northwestern bank of the Luxi River. In just a year, they've uncovered a total of 8 complete fossils, an impressive feat in modern palaeontology.

"Let's start moving the fossils to the museum tonight for examination." Said the lead palaeontologist. He withdrew a checklist on his clipboard. "Let's see... two Monolophosauruses, one Gasosaurus, three Microraptors, and the two Jiangxititans." He smiled. "Finally, all our work, tonight, will all come to fruition."

Just then, a small, balding man in his 40s walked into the camp. Behind him trailed two sinewy men. Each had a long object at their back.

"Greetings! My name is Mr. Crassus. It has come to my attention that this area of Longhu mountain has been turned into a palaeontology site. I would like to buy this piece of land off of you." Said the small man. The lead palaeontologist strode up to meet him. "No. We are on the verge of a breakthrough in palaeontology. You may not have this land." Mr. Crassus snapped his fingers. At once, the two other men drew their weapons from their back, pointing a silenced assault rifle each at the palaeontologists. "I wasn't offering." Said Crassus. "Leave this piece of land immediately. Anyone who says a word of this incident to anyone will have a little accident within a day or two. At least, that's what the death certificate will say. You have half an hour to take your belongings and leave."

Within two hours, the entire palaeontology site was in an uproar. The palaeontologists were nowhere to be seen. Crassus had hired a group of builders, and they had already started on their plans to build a resort on the site. Crassus wanted to utilise Longhu Mountain's magnificent natural landscape to build a luxury resort for the wealthiest and create one of the world's finest hotels. For his own benefit, of course. The only problem? The palaeontologists had gotten there first. So, he hired two bounty hunters in order to drive out the palaeontologists.

"Aye, boss." A builder walked up to Crassus. "What're we gonna do with em' skeletons? They're lodged into the ground. Moving them is gonna take at least a week." He pointed to one of the Jiangxititan fossils. "Look at the size o' that thang."

"How much explosives do we have?"

"A lot, boss."

"Destroy them all."

The builder walked over to one of the shipping containers. He opened a large crate and retrieved some dynamite and placed next to the fossil of the Jiangxititan. He took out a lighter from his pocket and lit the dynamite.

The dynamite burst into flames with a *bang* that shook Crassus' eardrums. He shoved two long fingers into his ears. Smoke filled the air.

Crassus knew something was wrong even before the smoke cleared. The explosion shouldn't have been *that* large. It was only a few sticks of dynamite. He squinted through the smoke. Two large shapes were walking through it.

Crassus knew when something was wrong. Even if the two shapes were imaginary, it was safer to hide first. He dashed to the palaeontologists' former sleeping quarters (it was more of a tent than a living space). A few other workers joined him.

As the smoke dispersed, Crassus gazed in horror and awe at the two 'shapes' that he had seen. Two large, dark-green creatures were standing erect on four stubby legs. Blubber hung from their body, like a walrus. They were at least forty metres long and thirty tall. They had an immensely large rectangular neck, almost half its length. He knew he had seen them before, that they looked familiar. His mind jumped to the fossils. Could it be...?

"Oi! Get away, ya filthy animals!" One of the builders lit a stick of dynamite and hurled it at the two Jiangxititans. Another loud *bang* was heard. The dinosaurs stood up on their hind legs and bellowed in fright. They stomped their legs and braced forward as they got ready to charge. "You've made it mad, you—*arghhhh!*" The two dinosaurs rammed through flesh and steel, crushing the builders underfoot and tearing through machinery. One of the bounty hunters tried to shoot it, but he failed as he met the same fate of the builders around him.

Crassus thought of his options to escape this godforsaken mountain. The trucks and cars had been trampled to scrap metal, and he definitely couldn't swim across the river—the *river*. There was a boat near the river, he had saw it when he had come to the mountain. "Move!" He yelled as he pushed his way through the gathering crowd of builders hiding in the tent.

All of a sudden, with a screech that sent shivers down Crassus' spine, two Monolophosauruses tore through the opening of the tent. They were a maroon colour, and the large crest on their head shone a bright red colour under the sunlight. Their claws and talons were short and blunt, but their teeth curved inwards, locking onto prey.

The two wreaked havoc in the tent, their teeth finding their mark. Crassus crawled behind a desk. To his right was a large fire extinguisher. He grabbed it as a weapon. One of the Monolophosauruses saw him behind the desk. With a screech, it leapt towards him. Crassus aimed his 'weapon' and swung it hard over his head. The Monolophosaurus sprawled on the floor as Crassus dashed towards the exit, running as fast as he could towards the river.

He ducked through the canopy as he approached the place where the boat had been. He looked around for traces of his only escape route. In the middle of the river was the boat, and in it was one of his bounty hunters. "So long, Crassus! Your task was doomed to fail. May we meet again, on earth or in hell!" With that, he took off.

Crassus gazed in horror at the departing boat. He refused to admit defeat to these...dinosaurs. He racked his mind for possible ways to escape the dinosaurs that had suddenly appeared. He quickly realised that his best option was to go back to the site and hope there was still some vehicles left unscathed. He turned around. His blood froze.

Standing in front of him was a medium-sized dinosaur, around four metres in length, and it sported a fiery orange colour. But perhaps the strangest thing of all was its teeth. Unlike typical sharp teeth for ripping other dinosaurs its size had, this one had square, flat teeth for grinding tough objects.

The Gasosaurus opened its mouth. Crassus braced. Instead, words came out of its mouth. "Hello, Crassus. I was hoping I'd be the one to kill you. You know, I should thank you for our temporary rebirth. Gets boring down there sometimes." Crassus had no words. The Gasosaurus continued. "Next time, don't try to destroy fossils. They should be respected and are just as much a part of history and scientific research. You shouldn't be using it for commercial purposes, either. Nature should not be destroyed for the sake of human's insignificant little needs."

Crassus looked backwards, towards the lake. Three microraptors were attacking his bounty hunter, clawing at his limbs. One of them bit down on his neck. Crassus winced. He looked at the impending doom before him. The Gasosaurus opened its mouth. He heard a faint hissing sound, like the sound of someone exhaling. "Goodbye,

Crassus. Think before you mess with nature in the next life.” Crassus noticed both the roof of his mouth and his tongue were rock-hard, like flint.

The Gasosaurus flicked its tongue, creating sparks. The methane gas around Crassus from the Gasosaurus ignited into a burst of flame. A loud *bang* was heard, like dynamite.

The Name

St. Stephen's College, Wu, Gwyneth – 13

It's a great day for me. I had just gotten a beautiful nap under the sun without a neck cramp, I woke up and managed to find a tree full of my favorite leaves to eat and I wasn't chased by any stupid, meat-eating, good for nothing T-rexes. Seriously, how those guys tolerate the stench of blood I will never understand. The thought that any dinosaur, no, any living being would want to eat meat, eugh. I shake my head slightly, why think about such horrid things on such a splendid day like this? The air is fresh, the grass is waving beneath my feet, the trees are dancing in the wind and the sky is as blue as can be. Nothing can ever go wrong on such a great day like this. Nothing.

...What is that glowing orb in the sky? Why is it so bright? Is it going to land where I am? Oh thank goodness it disappeared. Phew, that was a fright... I'll just take a nap... no harm in that.

Why's the ground shaking just as I wake up? What is happening? Why's everyone running? Wha-? Why's there more of that bright orb in the sky from before my nap? Are they falling-? Ow ow ow, one of those red balls only grazed my tail, but it hurts so bad already! I need to run away! Oh! It's another long-neck dinosaur, just like me! Perhaps I can follow them to safety! They look like they know where to go! Why's he so quick? The ground's shaking again! Where's Mom when you need her? Where did the other long-neck go again? Eek another one just landed right next to my head. Hey is that tree about to fall on me-

Did I get hit on the head? It really hurts... of all places why did I have to get hit on the head. Everything's spinning around me. Ouch it hurts to get up, you're a mighty dinosaur for goodness sake, it's just a little pain. Oh everything's dancing again and I want to barf so badly. Ugh... the air smells really bad, like burnt leaves and huge corpse flowers at night and everything's grey and- hey it's snowing! Let me catch one on my tongue- blergh! It's disgusting. Wait is that my friend over there? Oh he's still sleeping somehow, I'll just go and wake him up.

"Hello? Hey, wake up!"

He's not moving still. What a sleepyhead he is, I'll just sit and wait for him. The sky's getting really dark now and there's a sick smell in the air, like burning flesh and wilted flowers. How is it night already? Or is it day? I don't know honestly. There's still fires burning here and there from the fireballs that fell from the sky. I wonder what those were. I still can't make sense of what happened, there was a glowing orb in the sky, the ground shook for a bit, then everything was fine! Why did more smaller glowing orbs come and why was the ground shaking so much again? Now the sky's all black and it's getting colder and colder except for the few fires remaining.

Hey is my friend ever going to wake up? It's been a long time now. He hasn't even moved an inch. Not even the rising and sinking of his chest as he breathes. Weird. I mean, he is a still sleeper, but he still needs to breathe. I'm honestly really hungry. I can't find any of those plants I love. I can't find any plants at all actually. All the ones I've eaten tasted like the 'snow' from before, and it crumbled the moment I bit it. I have to go further if I want to get myself some food, but I can't just leave my friend here... it's just food. I'll get some for him when he wakes up too. I won't go too far.

I've been walking for so long now... it's so cold. The sun is gone now. The plants are all wilted and brown and terrible tasting. It's still 'snowing' but the snow is dull and grey like the sky, the ground and the look in so many dinosaurs' eyes. There's a lot of dinosaurs sleeping. But a lot of them slept with their eyes open and even if I shake them with all my might, there's still a dull haze in their eyes that never leaves. They don't move either. They're all cold to the touch too. I want to take a little nap with them. My eyes are so heavy, and so is my tail and my limbs and my body itself. They all scream for rest and a break, but I need to get food for me and my friend. Just carry on, you can do it... you can do it... just a little nap won't hurt would it? Just a small nap... just a small nap...

"Dig him up boys. Be careful with it too. Can't have such a wonderful fossil be broken now can we? Especially with all the hubbub about it being a new species. The higher-ups will kill me if it's damaged." YangTian babbled with excitement and stress. He's going to get a huge promotion after this, so how could he not be excited? And... the higher-ups he spoke of were right behind him. Scientists with either calculating or sharp looks in their eyes, piercing into the back of his skull, as if trying to bore a message into his head: don't mess this up. He gulped, he'll be fine. These are the best men he had to offer. They dug up what remained of the titanosaur. A few scientists stepped forward and started comparing the bones to another species of titanosaur.

“Yup, it’s a new species. And here I thought we wouldn’t find any.” One scientist confirmed. “Hard to believe considering how terrible the soil here is for preserving bones.”

“What should we name it though?” A younger scientist piped up.

“Gandititan Cavocaudatus.” The oldest there immediately said to the groans of multiple people.

“Why can’t we name it something fun like McNuggetsaur for once?”

“Science.”

The Truth Beneath

St. Stephen's College, Xiong, Sherry – 14

Some people say in this world, dinosaurs never became extinct, they just hid themselves somewhere that we couldn't find them, somewhere humans have never discovered. I never believed that until I finally became a palaeontologist myself.

My mentor assigned me a task a few months ago to study a new species of titanosaur in Jiangxi. My mentor told me that a guide named Lee will be there to teach me, as this was my first official mission. I was pumped, the second week after the task was distributed, I had already flown to Jiangxi. When I finally arrived, I was astonished. The area had thousands of researchers who were excavating there.

The staff led me to a camp, I'll be living there until my research is done. While I was unpacking my things, someone came up towards me.

"Hello Dr Hill, I am Lee, I will be your guide during your time here."

Lee was a short man, with beard scum on his chin and thick eyebrows. I greeted him with a handshake. "What are the current discoveries?" I asked.

He hesitated for a second. "Well, you see, the discoveries were... really strange." This hooked my interest.

"Oh? How?"

"The fossils... didn't make sense..."

"How come? Nobody can fake fossils." I wondered as I raised an eyebrow.

"The researchers found a species called the Sinosauropteryx, it is the only dinosaur found with well-preserved feathers in the world. Now this is where it starts to get peculiar. The Sinosauropteryx is estimated to live in the Cretaceous period, but their feathers wouldn't possibly be preserved till present day if they really lived in that period. That's why some paleontology specialists doubt the existence of it. However, the fossils of it really are true, it just so happened that the fossils dated back to a few hundred years ago ..."

I thought that we wouldn't get closer to the truth about these strange cases only through conversation, so I told Lee we should go down to the site tomorrow to examine the fossils.

The next day, Lee and I went down the site to do some carbon dating. Before that, he showed me a few specimens of the fossils. Indeed, as he said, they were very new. If this discovery was confirmed to be true, then it means that the dinosaurs have survived through the meteor and existed until the Modern Era. This theory would completely overthrow all the evolution as we've known!

I still cannot believe it!

"This area has already been occupied by other researchers, perhaps we should go to somewhere less crowded?" Lee suggested as he walked beside me. I observed the whole site and found the perfect spot, a small area that's covered with rubles and dried out soil. And most importantly, no one was there.

"Why not go there?" I pointed.

"Ah, the detectors didn't respond to that area, there isn't a high chance anything can be found there." Lee replied.

“Let’s still give it a try, shall we?” I insisted.

“But...but...ok...” Lee reluctantly agreed.

We walked over to that area. It’s a tiny space, the most eye-catching part there were just some shrivelled-up roots sprawled across the ground. Like Lee said, there’s barely anything there.

“What’s this?” I pointed to some dried-up vines and gravel on a side of the area.

“Oh, probably just a bit of scrap left by the excavator.” Lee responded.

I gently touched the gravel wall. I knocked and it sounded hollow. I hypothesised that there might be space inside. So, I grabbed a stone from the ground and plunged it into the wall.

“What do you think you are doing?!” Lee shrieked.

I ignored him and continued to shatter the wall. After the gravel and vines were cleared out, a hole appeared.

“Do you want to go in and examine it?” I turned to Lee.

“What you did was totally inappropriate!” Lee exclaimed, “Hmm, but we can still go give a try.”

The hole was small, the both of us had to squeeze in by curling our bodies. When we arrived at the bottom, there was a cave. The walls of the cave had ancient writings and symbols on it, this would be a huge finding.

“And who said that there’s nothing here?” I teased.

We walked further in the cave, the symbols on the walls became clearer and clearer, as if they were brand new. I observed them closely, there were people dancing with.... dinosaurs? We followed the symbols on the wall, leading us to a massive altar.

The altar was breathtaking, it was humongous. It was odd that it wasn’t detected by the detector, as if some sort of power was protecting it.

-
Lee pointed at some burnt sticks on the ground. “We are not alone.”

“Who art thou? What dost thou seek here?!” A person in black cloak appeared at the top of the altar.

“What are you doing here? This is a site that doesn’t allow trespassing! Get out of here before there’s trouble!” Lee shouted back.

“Thou art the ones who tread upon this hallowed ground.” The figure said as it uncovered the hood of the cloak.

I was stunned. The figure, although it still appeared like human, instead of human skin, it had yellowish green scales like... reptiles... like dinosaurs. Its eyes were compound and big like insects. Its mouth was filled with sharp mandibles, ready to rip things apart. It didn’t have hair either, it had two antenna that was weakly glowing on its head.

“Who... what are you..?” I mumbled.

“I beareth the Keeper, the warden of soil and of all epochs and eternities.” It replied.

“So have you seen dinosaurs?” Lee asked with fear.

“They art not beasts, they art the first offspring of this realm, and still, they walk amongst thee. Even I am a creation of the eons of their ages.”

“So technically you’re a dinosaur?” I blurted without thinking twice.

The person...or the creature nodded. “We are one kind, all children of this realm” it said as it kneeled down to the altar and started chanting. My heart pounded as I watched it chant.

After a flash of light, a... a live dinosaur appeared before us! It was magical, it was unscientific, it was enological.

“This...! This is real....!” Lee exclaimed.

“This is thee ancestor’s companion.” the Keeper said. The dinosaur was small, I recognized it , it was the Sinosauropteryx , its beautiful feathers flustered. “Yet its generation is declining...”

“Is it because of the huge meteor?” I asked.

The Keeper shook its head, and with a snap, the altar projected images as if it was a movie theatre. It showed that when the dinosaurs faced the meteors, a mysterious figure who looked like humans, led them to an underground barrier.

“This is the first generation of thou’s kind. There was peace between your kind and them” She continued as she stroked the Sinosauropteryx

“They never disappeared but they just hid underneath, untouched by humans”

I was shocked, so that explains why there were so many pictures of human and dinosaurs on the walls!

“They once did get in touch with thee’s kind a few hundred years ago, however because art thou kind’s greed. Thou’s kind whipped and caned, and they became livestock and property. So, they fled again.” It went on.

“So, this is why... the feathers and fossils were so new...” Lee whispered.

“The first children of earth still lie underground. It was best that thou tell no man. I desire not the tragedy that which befell before to curse us anew. Please begone from this hallowed ground and speak not to any soul, or it would break balance between surface and underground.”

A part of me wanted to stay, a part of me wanted to flee and wake up from this absurd dream. A mixed emotion ran through me, the deep secret of earth danced in my head.

“Let’s go.” I said to Lee who seemed like he wanted to stay.

“But... if we stayed longer, this may benefit humanity!”

“It will break the balance, and the world will become chaos then. Did you not hear what the Keeper say?” Lee nodded blankly and the two of us went back.

After we went back above. Lee collapsed onto the ground, gasping for breath.

"We can't tell anyone." I said.

"No one would believe us anyway." He added.

“Dr Hill! Did you find anything today?” A worker asked me after I went back to my camp.

“No...” I replied as I stared at the site from afar.

I knew deep down that I couldn't keep this to myself. The truth was too important. The dinosaurs were still out there, hidden beneath the earth, living in secret.

And though I had been warned not to return, I knew that this discovery would haunt me for the rest of my life.

Somewhere, deep beneath our feet, the dinosaurs still lived.

And they were watching.

Scansoriopterygidae

St. Stephen's College, Yung, Gail – 14

The Beginning of Time

“Today we will travel back 160 000 000 million years to investigate how our planet Earth was once a realm dominated by giants. We find out how dinosaurs' habitat profoundly influenced their evolution...” an informative narrative echoed in the vast hall. It was a quiet afternoon in the museum. A smartly dressed gentleman wandered around haphazardly and paid little attention to the documentary. He came to stand in front of an artefact and took a double take at the skeletal fossil inside the casing as he read the identification label: –

Yi: genus of [scansoriopterygidae dinosaur](#)

Period: [Late Jurassic](#)

Origin: Tiaojishan Formation, Hebei, China.

He was deep in thought as wrinkles crawled across his forehead and then a voice interrupted him.

“Good afternoon, Professor Yung. I knew I would find you in this hall. It’s our pleasure to have you, would you like to follow me to the laboratory?” A well-mannered curator spoke to the gentleman in fluent Mandarin.

While the curator was leading the professor away, he stopped and retraced his steps back to the glass casing. He seemed to notice something unusual about Yi Qi’s wings. His hands kept tracing along the wing bone.

Yi Qi’s Perspective

I stood alone at the edge of the vast lands. The thick swirling clouds were interwoven tightly with the skyward stretching mountains. The first light was fighting to tear them apart at the seams, but it rarely won.

I am ancient. I could not remember how life started for us and even if I tried, I could not remember how it ended. Yet, I remembered vividly the suffering towards the end of our existence. At the beginning, my clan was happy that the towering, more vicious predators perished mysteriously. They collapsed all over the terrain. With our competition gone, we had more food sources, but little did we know, our demise also came not long after. A new evolution was to change the planet while we faded into obscurity.

The Awakening

“Old Wang, over here!” shouted a young man excitedly, “we found a wing-ed dragon!”

Old Wang was a respected farmer in the village of *Mutoudeng*. He was a local celebrity. A few years back, he found the first ‘dragon’ in the village quarry and sold it to the Shandong Tianyu Museum. .

“Aigh, don’t be such excitable young fools! These are likely *konglong* NOT the mythical ‘*long*’, alright! “Old Wang said after he spat out the sugar cane fibres he was chewing on. Languidly, Old Wang followed the animated villager to the location.

Yi Qi’s Perspective

My consciousness and a few of my senses came back to me little by little. How could this be possible? First it was my olfaction, then gradually my vision and I had very limited tactile sensation. I had to figure out who these two-legged aliens were. They were swarming around me, but it was a muted world. I am sure they found me fascinating as I found them equally delightful. There was such a buzz around me, making me quite delirious but there was nothing I could do as I was pinned down sideways in layers of soil that bolted me down. Another realization dawned on me, the skies were finally torn open. The light. The light. It seemed to emanate from a warm orange globe from a distant place. I could feel the aridity in the air and that made me quite drowsy.

I also noticed that my tactile senses increased over time. However, my world was still muted. I was filled to the brim with curiosity. These two-legged aliens would open their contraptions and the gap would open and close in quick succession. I wonder what sounds came out of them. In a faraway past, the sounds I heard were only terrifying. I observed them openly, but no one noticed that I was somewhat conscious. These strange creatures also waved around their limbs plentifully and one of them came to prod my head and felt the tips of my wings while making a tongue-clicking ‘tsk tsk tsk’. Not long after, I felt my body loosened from the grips of the earth and a white canopy surrounded me and I lost consciousness.

The White Room

“Professor Yung, this is the lab technician Ms Ding. She will be preparing Specimen STM 31–2 for the Computed Axial Tomographic (CAT) scan.”

“It’s my honour to have this opportunity to assist you in your studies, Professor.” a bespectacled lady in protective gear gave a curt nod and walked towards the examination table.

The gentleman now in a lab coat nodded and rounded to the other side of the table, paying close attention to the partial skeletal remains and counter plate. An iridescent flash made him squint. He swiftly brought over a stereo microscope and examined the wing structure which was heavily covered in what looked like feathers. The light from the microscope amplified the opaque structure. The feathers were more like paintbrush bristles with thin wiry filaments. As he zoomed in to inspect the filaments, his heartbeat skipped. Maybe, just maybe his experiment would prevail.

Yi Qi’s Perspective

It was then a monotonous flow of time and my eyes drooped. My nostrils were the first thing to be assaulted and my entire body flared in response. I was frantic as my binocular vision tried to adapt to this white space.

Since fleeing was not an option, I settled down and paid attention to my surroundings. I could hear a low growl coming from a tunnel-like device. As I was pushed closer, the growling grew. It was alarming but why could I not sense danger? The smell of danger was absent, only rhythmic beats which made my mind feel heavy and I fell into slumber once again.

The Resurrection

Papers were being flipped furiously as the professor’s glasses reflected the DNA sequencing code of Specimen STM 31–2 was on the computer screen. He kept tapping his fingers on the table while his mind seemed to be doing mental calculations of the upstream and downstream read of the Gs (guanine), As (adenine), Ts (thymine) and Cs (cytosine) chains.

Two weeks ago, the lab technicians were able to extract a soft tissue sample from the wing bone. It was an arduous process, every step was meticulously carried out to avoid any risk in damaging the precious sampling. Professor Yung was elated when the Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) machine managed to break down the sample into DNA strands.

The professor’s eyes widened with surprise. It was his ‘Eureka’ moment. The Yi Qi specimen had a genome sequence with its closest modern relative – *columba livia*. He ran to the storage and carefully scanned for the test tube he needed desperately. He cleared away his lab bench and started to set up his experiment. What was unbeknownst to the public was that Professor Yung was not only a paleontologist, his secret hobby was genome editing. His biggest vision was to resurrect dinosaurs like how he saw it in a movie – Jurassic Park. Would he succeed?

Yi Qi’s Perspective

“Coo...coo...Coo...coo” the cacophony roused me from my slumber. It took me some time to recollect why I was among these new feathery mates. I am now a pigeon. My beak was sharp and curved, unlike my previous short and blunt snout. My once flamboyant quill-like tail transformed into a fan-shaped tail. The stiff feathers on my entire body had been reduced to soft wispy tipped mink feathers. I could now soar gracefully in the skies untethered. Under the same orange orb – the Sun, the brilliant iridescent hues on my wings bedazzled.

I am no longer a relic of the past, nor the bridge to a time long gone. I am now part of the modern world. The flora and fauna I had been used to my whole life had been replaced with blocks of what they called skyscrapers, the streets were full of the two-legged humans. I know I am different, a testimonial of the Jurassic era hiding among evolved relatives. The only difference was only known to me as I could glide and that made flying efficiently easy for me.

Once in a while, I fly back to a certain site where I knew a certain someone who would be waiting for me. I would glide downwards, land on his palm and rub my head on his callus hands – my maker, Professor Yung.

How To Tame a Dinosaur

St. Stephen's Girls' College, Debolt, Abby Thea – 12

JiuJiu was terrified. Her aunt Josie had no idea what was going on—only that the young girl was clutching at her leg while pointing to a large, rusted pipe that jutted out from the ground near the construction site. Josie noticed older kids nearby were laughing and pointing in JiuJiu's direction and began to suspect where the trouble might have come from. She approached the tallest boy and asked if he knew what had happened. He laughed loudly as he mumbled something about a 'dinosaur in the tunnel.' One girl in the group chuckled, making growling sounds while holding her hands in the shape of claws.

Tears clung to JiuJiu's cheeks as the older kids continued laughing among themselves. Josie immediately decoded the situation.

"JiuJiu, did you trip? Is that why those meanies are laughing at you?"

JiuJiu nodded, then shook her head.

"They pushed me over when I asked if they knew about dinosaurs. One of my biggest fears is dinosaurs. I went up to them because I thought that if I heard why other people liked dinosaurs, I wouldn't be so afraid of them anymore."

Josie nodded. "Did anything else happen?"

JiuJiu thought for a moment, then pointed at the pipe.

"They kept saying all these scary things, like how dinosaurs weren't extinct and walk around hurting people. I was going to walk away, but I heard a growling sound and when I turned around, I thought I saw a dinosaur in that pipe! I screamed so that's why they laughed at me."

Josie looked at JiuJiu, concerned. "They pushed you over, and you got that cut?"

JiuJiu nodded, trying her best to seem like it didn't hurt as she stumbled in an attempt to walk properly. Josie immediately offered a helping hand.

"How about we go back inside, clean that wound, and while we're at it, you can tell me why you're so scared of dinosaurs. JiuJiu nodded and, by the time they got home, it was already dusk.

"JiuJiu, why don't you go upstairs and tidy up? It's nearly bedtime," Josie suggested as she hung her coat by the door. "I'll grab disinfectant for your leg."

JiuJiu lay snugly on the bed as Josie sat beside her, cleaning her cut.

"So tell me, what do you think is so scary about dinosaurs?" Josie asked patiently.

"They're scary—they have big claws and sharp teeth!" JiuJiu exclaimed, bolting upright. "Sometimes, they appear in my nightmares and try to eat me!"

Josie chuckled. "Well, if any dinosaur tries to eat you, you can tell it that it will have to get past me first! "I wrestled with dinosaurs in my dreams when I was a kid, so I know how to beat them."

"How do you do that?"

"It's easy; you just make them laugh!"

"Dinosaurs laugh? How do you do that?"

“Oh yes! It just takes a bit of practice, but a good joke always does the trick. Like this one—what do you call twin dinosaurs?”

“I don’t know,” said JiuJiu.

“Pair-o-dactyls,” replied Josie.

JiuJiu giggled as she pictured the idea of that happening.

“Alright, sleep tight, JiuJiu. Remember what I said,” Josie whispered as she turned off the lights and silently shut the door.

The next morning, JiuJiu rose bright and early, ready for the day ahead with Josie’s words in mind. She rushed down to the kitchen as soon as she smelled Josie’s signature pillow pancakes. Little did she know, Josie had a surprise in store for her.

“JiuJiu, guess what?”

“Yah?” JiuJiu replied, her mouth full.

“I got us tickets to the Beijing Museum of Natural History! They have all sorts of Chinese dinosaurs there—including the very first dinosaur fossils discovered in China! I was thinking about your fear of dinosaurs and thought that if we visited the museum, you’d be able to see what beautiful, amazing creatures they actually were!” Josie exclaimed. “But we have to leave immediately! The bus is in 15 minutes.”

JiuJiu’s eyes shimmered with a mix of excitement and fear. As beautiful as dinosaurs might be, she wasn’t sure she’d be able to handle seeing them up close.

They arrived at the museum just before lunch. As soon as they stepped inside, JiuJiu was in awe. The museum was filled with a range of dinosaur skeletons and vibrant wall murals that depicted prehistoric landscapes. There were even a few interactive touchscreens.

“Wow! Aunt Josie, this place is amazing!” JiuJiu said after they had walked around for a while. “But I’m not sure it changes the way I feel about dinosaurs.”

“Let’s walk around some more! We haven’t finished exploring yet. It’s too early to judge!” Josie insisted.

At one of the exhibitions, JiuJiu noticed a paleontologist hosting a talk about dinosaurs and decided to join the growing crowd listening to her.

“My name is Ms. Lo and I have spent my career studying and searching for dinosaurs like this 85-foot-long sauropod—it has a difficult-to-pronounce name (almost as long as its neck), but we call it Mamen for short.” JiuJiu listened in rapt attention. She heard how many dinosaurs ate plants and moved in groups. Josie pointed to a bench on one side of the room, noting that she would wait there while JiuJiu listened.

Ms. Lo and the group slowly moved around the enormous room from station to station. At one point, JiuJiu peeked into a room that held the bones of smaller dinosaurs, as well as an exhibit allowing visitors to move sand to uncover bones like real archeologists. JiuJiu couldn’t resist. She moved closer, picked up a brush, and started gently sweeping as she looked for hidden treasure.

After a while, JiuJiu realized she could no longer hear Ms. Lo and the group, so thought it best to find Josie. Suddenly, the lights flickered. JiuJiu looked around. There was no one else in this room—just her and the small

dinosaur skeletons. She heard what sounded like thunder outside, and then the lights went out! JiuJiu froze. From what she could make out in the dark, the doors were shut and an eerie silence lingered.

After a moment, a lone spotlight in one corner flicked on from the ceiling. It caused long shadows to dance across the floor. JiuJiu thought she saw movement out of the corner of her eye, but she knew the only thing there was the skeleton . Her heart began to race.

Closing her eyes, she breathed deeply and thought of what Aunt Josie told her. To beat a dinosaur, she just needed to make it laugh. She thought for a moment and then shouted aloud: “What do you call a dinosaur car accident? ... A tyrannosaurus wreck!”

She heard a lone giggle nearby. It worked! She had made a dinosaur laugh!

Just then, the lights came on, and JiuJiu saw Josie approaching. JiuJiu ran and hugged her, exclaiming, “I did it, I did it! I saw the dinosaur move when the lights went out and told it a joke.”

Josie replied, “Well, I am very proud of you for thinking on your feet and mastering your fears. Your joke made me giggle. There was just a bit of thunder, and the doors closed automatically when the power flickered. I dashed over as soon as it started. I believe we have had enough excitement for one day. Why don’t we go home?”

JiuJiu held Josie’s hand. “I don’t think I will have any more problems with dinosaurs in my dreams, but I’d better start thinking of some new jokes.”

An Unconventional Adoption

St. Stephen's Girls' College, Po, Ally – 12

Now, dinosaurs, what do you know about them?

“They’re extinct”?

Well, in actual fact you’re wrong because dinosaurs have been brought back to life through advanced genetic engineering! It turns out their genes are intertwined with ancient energy forces, which makes them pretty magical and that’s why they can summon rain, lightning and even manipulate lakes and rivers. Pretty wild, right?

As the dinosaurs in this story are Chinese, they have strict Asian parents and have to do the dishes along with a lot of other housework. Just kidding! For some reason, Chinese dinosaurs are linked with Yang energy—the masculine energy that represents heat, light and action. Our dinosaurs like to live in a flock as they’re linked with Yang energy so need to stay together. When they get lonely, they lose their Yang energy and start, well, disappearing! It's like how you get skinnier when you don't eat. They use Yang energy daily just by living; that's why they need to stay together or at least close to other creatures (talk about being needy!).

That's why, when I got dumped by my flock, I was pretty shocked to say the least. Yeah, I might've gotten into a few fights – but hey, who doesn't? An exile pretty much means they’re leaving you to die. Sad, right? That's when I had a genius idea. Humans have progressed and now even domesticate animals. Especially ones without powers or Qi. I don't think it's fair, to be honest – us dinosaurs are much cuter. We don't poop our pants! We have a human form! We can change our size however we want! So why can't I just find a human to adopt me and feed off his Qi?

That’s why I’m on the hunt for a human with powerful Qi. I’ve been morphing into a human and wandering through the village, checking out all my options. I think I’ve found the perfect candidate: Cheng A Jin. In terms of power, she has a great Yang force; in terms of status, she’s the village chief; and in terms of attractiveness, well... just look at her and see for yourself. She has almond-shaped eyes the color of dark chocolate that melt your heart when (once in a blue moon) they crinkle, and her beautiful smile lights up a room. Her sun-kissed nose is straight and defined. Her lips are shaped like a Cupid's bow with prominent arches adding a slight elegance to her face. She stands tall with a sculpted, muscular physique, her broad shoulders tapering to a defined waist. Chiseled abs and powerful arms complement her confident stance, attracting you to her like a magnet.

So I do what every creepy stalker would do: track her down and ring the doorbell. Obviously, I am not there in my natural form. I show up as a tiny little dinosaur baby. After all, a 20-meter tall dinosaur would scare away my prey, and that would be very sad—for me. I’m secretly praying in my mind that this girl does not own any dogs (I’m so terrified of them I scream and cry just hearing them bark).

"Hey, cutie, what are you doing here?" My monologue is interrupted by my owner-to-be’s voice. "God, it’s getting cold outside, huh? Why don't you come inside and have some hot chocolate with me?"

My heart flutters. The most popular girl in the village wants to hang out with me? It's like fifth grade all over again. Oh, wait, never mind....she just means as a pet. Wait! Why is that part exactly like fifth grade too?

Cheng A Jin (aka Jin Jin) picks me up, pats off the dust on my scales and takes a good look at me.

"Wow, you’re pretty cute. Why don't I give you a shower, huh?"

A crimson blush spreads across my face. She thinks I’m cute and wants to give me a shower? My inner five-year-old boy starts giggling. I quickly nod.

"Okay cutie, let's go." And with that, she lets me into her home.

"Well, this is my place," A-Jin explains. "It's not much, but it's home."

And she's right. The whole place gives off a cozy feel that makes you want to curl up in one of the large beds and sleep until you become a vegetable. It's like someone's (my) Pinterest dream home. Oh, and look! No dogs in sight. I heave a sigh of relief.

"Come on, you should take a bath. You're kinda filthy...", she laughs. It's one of the most melodic sounds I've ever heard, like a symphony of harps playing right into my heart. It makes me feel nothing but happy warmth.

My new owner picks me up as if I weigh nothing (which is not true, as I'm 10 kg even in my smallest form) and carries me to the tub. She's even running a bubble bath for me! I've never felt so pampered in my life. None of my dino kin ever cared for me like this. I'm about to gush with happiness when I hear Jin Jin say, "What should I name you, princess?"

I'm shocked that my owner still doesn't know I'm male. Like, hello? Do I look like a cute little girl? No! That's because I'm a full-grown dinosaur! I can't get pregnant! I don't have a uterus! I don't like pink!

But I'm feeling playful, so using my magical powers, I decide to turn into a human girl.

"Whoa! Who are you? And what did you do to the dinosaur I was bathing?"

"I'm the dinosaur, silly!" I reply slyly.

"What? You can't just... you can't just change like that. It defies the law of, well, everything!"

"Laws are meant to be broken," I scoff.

She pouts. "No, it's bad to break rules!"

I laugh at how cute she is. "So, what do you say? You'll let me stay for... well, forever?"

"What? Absolutely not. You're a random stranger!"

"Well, you just invited me into your home five minutes ago!"

A red hue creeps onto her cheeks. "Yes, but..."

"But what, A-Jin? See! I already know your name! We have to be best friends!"

A-Jin frowns. "Women are never this close..... platonically."

I grin. "Good thing I'm not a woman, then" and I change back to my original human form.

"Ahhh! So I've been bathing a man?"

"Would you be happier if you were bathing a woman?"

"God, you make it sound so weird! No, I'm just weirded out by a stranger who's changed into three different forms in the past 15 minutes."

I sigh. "I can change back into dinosaur form if you want..."

"No, that would be even weirder—I'd be bathing you knowing you're a full-grown man!"

"Well, you don't get a choice. We're besties now!"

"No, we're not," she grumbles, but I note a small smile creep onto her face. I decide to have fun with her and start fake-crying.

"Wha...what are you doing? Why are you crying? I'm the one who's been tricked by a random stranger!!!"

I start 'crying' even harder. "I've been wandering the streets since I got kicked out of my flock... I thought I finally found a kind human to take me in, but now it seems even you want to turn me away!"

"Okay... okay. You can stay for a bit." She lowers her head. "But only for a little bit! Don't think of this as a long-term situation!"

I hug her. "Oh, thank you, A-Jin! We're gonna be best friends forever! You won't regret this," I exclaim and she reluctantly hugs me back.

I look up at A-Jin's little smile. I don't know her that well yet, but somehow, I feel a sense of the safety I've longed for – as if I'm finally home.

Once in a Blue Moon

The French International School of Hong Kong, Chan, Talia – 12

Oh, how she loved watching the moon, the stars, and her whole heart belonged to the entirety of the celestial skies. As they say, when you wish for something deep within your heart, upon looking up into the seemingly endless, vast, dark abyss of dusk, the moon will glow of a deep blue hue, illuminating the sky with an ethereal, azure, glow that could reside in even the most forgetful soul's mind. People used to say she felt an inexplicable connection to the moon. Legend has it, she would always claim to catch a glimpse of something unseen by everybody else – a silhouette of a young girl hovering within reach of the moon. Was she there? Was she not? No one knew, before the highly anticipated night of the Moonlit Gala.

During the Moonlit Gala, all eyes are on the sublime, picturesque moon that takes their breaths away with a seraphic blue glow, similar to which it would be when someone wishes for something dearly, only more intense and profound. It was routinely celebrated by dressing up and making your most heartfelt wishes in honour of the moon.

“Serene! We are going to be late to figure skating practice!” “Okay, okay, we can leave now” Whilst Serene and Akari arrive to the ice rink, they remember what day it was. It was “THE MOONLIT GALA!” the girls exclaimed in perfect unison. As Serene swiftly glides onto the ice, all her thoughts seem to slip away in seconds while the icy, soothing air hits her face unravelling a sense of harmony and freedom. They jump, they spin, they twirl, and they glide. Finally, they wrap up their 3-hour training session and head off back home to prepare for the long-awaited Moonlit Gala.

On the way back from the ice rink, Serene apprehends the moon glistening in an unnerving way. It still sustained its breathtaking, hypnotising blue radiance, but this time, unlike the past few years, the moon possessed a gleam of jet black. It was almost.....iridescent looking. Not the type of black that makes you recognize elegance, luxury or power; it was the type that makes you feel uneasy, alarmed and intimidated by what is lurking behind it. Even though you don't know what it could be, or if there's even anything there to begin with, it's the lack of information you have about it that is what makes it as fearful as it is. Serene felt her heart drop into her throat. She had never witnessed such an occurrence before. As she felt herself zoning out, wondering what could be causing this, she promptly got snapped back to reality by Akari's ear screeching singing. “WOW THAT WAS AMAZING AKARI!!! NEVER DO THAT AGAIN!” Serene said using heavy sarcasm. And within seconds, the moon's seemingly menacing gleam, slipped out of Serene's mind.

With each passing year, people doubt her claims increasingly, but without hesitation, Serene would still talk to the skies like it was listening. It was as if she could see something others were immune to. She idolized the moon immensely, and cherished it deep. The moon was the one she turned to when she fell ill, wounded, or simply just needed to get a few things off her chest. It was there for her in her darkest times when she felt as if no one could understand her.

Serene stepped into the crowded gathering where the moonlit gala was taking place this year. She felt off. Something didn't feel right. Serene tried her best to express her sentiments to her mother, who was too busy partying, engaging in conversations, conversing with people she had only ever seen once or twice in her life, and most importantly and noticeably, looking to the unreal blue moon in pure admiration. Serene reiterated her unease countless times to her mother; each time was the same reaction. “Serene, just enjoy tonight! I know how much you love the moon, just admire it for a while, all your worries and concerns will fade from your mind.” Her mother's statements only made Serene more anxious about what could be occurring. She could only contemplate whether or not she was just being paranoid, and doubt if what she felt was truly there or not. After zoning out for a while, Serene ultimately decided to dismiss her concerns, and let go for tonight, only enjoying the surreal blue glow of the moon shining down on her. She took a cup of her favourite juice, and let all her thoughts be drowned in the sound of chatter. The beautiful, soft, enchanting, ethereal music paired perfectly with the glow of the blue moon. Serene swayed along to the subtle beat while Akari was flirting with every boy she could lay her eyes on. “Classic, extroverted Akari” Serene pondered. “Come on! Let loose!!!” Akari said while fixing Serene's hair. “Okay, okay! Let's go have some fun!!!” Serene said in

response. The two girls socialised with too many people to count. They engaged dance battles, spin the bottle, the game kiss, marry, kill, you name it, they played it!

There was a colossal, transcendent cathedral with a massive golden clock written with roman numerals near where the party was being held. It was just over 11pm, which wasn't exactly surprising considering the annual moonlit gala was usually hosted until the early hours of the morning. However, as soon as the clock hit 12am, bells in the cathedral had started going off. Given that the cathedral was breathtakingly large, the bell rang throughout the city.

Serene's heart leapt right back into her throat as the first bell rang. Panic rose inside of her. she glanced up at the sky, the presumably sinister gleam had returned. The gleam had seemed to be filled with vitriol, making it utterly impossible to dismiss as being paranoia. Instead of it being visible from solely one angle, this time. the gleam was almost taking over the blue luminescence, filling the once blue-lit areas, into pure darkness. She knew something was wrong at this moment in time. Everyone was bolting out of the party area, heading straight for the cathedral.

Time seemed to freeze in the moment when Serene remembered a story her late father had told her when she was very little. "I know you love the moon darling, but always remember, don't get too attached because every year, there is a beautiful festival held in honour of our blue moon, but if someone loves the moon more than themselves, the moon will lure them up to the sky as to teach them a lesson for what they should adore the most. Remember this story for as long as you live, maybe even for eternity." She recalled it, 8 years ago Serene heard the same bells as she did in this moment, her mother brought her to the cathedral but the only thing is that, she doesn't reminisce her father with her in that instant. Serene felt as if she was back in the cathedral all those years ago. It clicked. She knew she was next. Her emotions overwhelmed her at the thought of her father. She let go of her body, and let the majestic, mesmerizing, mellow moon, take control.

As tears trickled down her soft, tender cheeks, she looked up upon the alluring, irresistible skies, she had discovered her now light, weightless body had begun to float above the ground. Her wish had been granted. Whilst she delicately levitated ever closer to the serene, blue moon, she became part of the celestial skies she had once known and adored, yet now she is witnessing herself transform into the very thing she had admired her whole life.

It was raining. Something that hadn't transpired after the moonlit gala for over decades. Everyone looked to the sky in awe to see Serene's reflection in the moon. When all was said and done, it was herself who had saved her from her gravest moments, her father assisted the moon in guiding her to assure she would make it back to where she belonged, to the skies.

The Cavern

The French International School of Hong Kong, Chu, Tinnok – 12

‘Hey Timmy, it’s time to go!’ I yelled from outside the house.

‘Wait, I’m just finishing breakfast.’ Timmy said.

‘Come on, the fossils aren’t gonna wait for us!’ I exclaimed.

‘Fine...’ Timmy sighed.

So he grabs his bag and runs to the porch staring at the ‘rusty old car’.

‘Come on man, you still haven’t bought a new car yet?’ Timmy asked.

‘Stop complaining, it’s not like you can afford one anyway.’ I told him with some anger in my voice.

I guess he couldn’t retaliate as he just hopped on, and so our exciting journey to unearth the dinosaurs commences.

The long drive was painfully long to the point where Timmy stopped complaining and most likely ‘faked fainted’ and fell onto the vehicle’s floor where he slept for over an hour. When we got there, I had to nudge him until he finally woke up, where he just stared at me and he looked like a person who hasn’t slept for 5 days straight. I told him to rinse his eyes and wash his face using the water that he has packed already, but he had to choose to use mine to most likely annoy me.

Once he was done with his thievery, we got off and headed toward the grand Zhaojue tracksite.

We grabbed our tools from the largest bag that anyone has ever seen and dug in, just like the rest of the diggers we weren’t successful for the first 2 hours where we just straight up couldn’t find anything but dirt and rocks. The unlucky things didn’t just stop there, it suddenly started raining and we forgot about our raincoats or umbrellas.

We quickly had to evacuate into a nearby cavern as we couldn’t even mine in the rain using our really rusty pickaxes because if we did, it would probably just slip and hit our toes from it being so blunt and give us a reason to stay in the hospital and pay fees, as if we weren’t broke enough.

The cavern that we ran to was blocked off by some wooden boards with chinese words written on them, which we couldn’t even understand as we didn’t learn chinese yet, I’d assume it said something along the lines of: keep out, danger ahead.

‘Why do these things always happen to us specifically, John?’ Timmy asked whilst staring into the hazy sight outside.

‘Why would I ever know, maybe you are the one causing this bad luck?’ I told him with some aggression.

‘Maybe it’s you.’ Timmy said as he slowly crept towards me.

He then slips and holds my hands, and he successfully pulls me downwards, making me fall, breaking the wooden boards behind me. We then slide down.

‘Ow...’ I groaned as I woke up from my concussion, I opened my eyes and saw Timmy right beside with lots of mud which was the thing I was on as well and some blood was flowing from his right arm.

‘Are you... Ok?’ He asked in a very light voice.

‘Not really.’ I whispered.

Without another word, Timmy walks away and I impulsively follow him as if he knew the way.

For several very long hours, we had to painstakingly limp our way out of the cavern but it wasn’t easy. The cavern was deep, it was drenched in ground water that had somehow lasted all those years from the most ancient of ancient Chinese history. The temperature down there was severely colder than the summer time weathers up on the surface, but luckily I brought a jacket. Down there, I saw some crystals which I didn’t bother to pick up as they looked like they would pierce through your hands if you even tapped them. Our flashlight also ran out of batteries and died just like how I’m about to from freezing temperatures, for the rest of the journey up, we decided to use the wall to find where we had to go.

Along the way we had to drink the ice-cold waters of the puddles and pools on the ground. Being in the cold for that long made it seem warmer and warmer as we were like the same temperature as the cavern itself. Perhaps this could be my chance to finally bond with Timmy and be better friends with him. On the other hand, this could easily be our demise as there was practically no food except for the muddy bread that we brought here.

After what felt like an eternity, we have made it to somewhere, although this just seems like a halfway point. We also had a decision to make, go left or right on this split section, we had absolutely no idea which way we should go as both went up and we couldn't see anything. We eventually landed on going towards the right path as it had what seemed like a larger angle which is the perfect slide for slipping in the rain and getting sent to the bottom of nowhere.

As we went up and up something seemed wrong, the floor had much more mud than enough to stop a person who was sliding at full speed. The further up we went, the more muddy and less curved the floor was, this is getting more apparent that this was clearly not the right path, but it was too far to stop climbing and waste our efforts now.

We then found something that had torches and a rope, it seems someone explored this area before not, perhaps the reason this cave is closed off was because someone has gone really lost and never made it out. We cannot be like that guy who got stuck, we must find a way out. We both then grabbed some torches so we could finally see what's going on.

Later on, the cave was getting warmer but there was also an ultra repulsive smell that was absolutely killing our noses. I really wish that this smell was lower as our noses were absolutely numb in the cold. We then traversed downwards using a rope that was placed by the adventurer and found out what was making that smell. The smell was made by some meat down here which we could only assume was the explorers and was certainly some bat's meal. The more we traversed, we thought more and more about the fact that we are very likely to be to bat's next meal.

Just a bit after the meat, we made it to the largest cave system we have ever seen and in the middle of this giant hollow was a backpack with a non-rusty pickaxe. The pickaxe might not have been the most useful thing down here but if we did make it out, we could use it instead of our rusty one in our backpack. We then threw our old pickaxes out for the newer ones.

'Have we hit the jackpot right before our demise?' Said a very shocked, but pretty visibly scared, Timmy.

'Perhaps we have.' I responded.

Just a few centimetres away is a skull of a most likely new fossil.

'We definitely have.' I said.

'Well that one's mine.' Timmy snarled whilst hastily snagging the fossil away.

'What do you mean, we found it together.' I said.

'Yes, but you always take the profit!' Timmy shouted. 'This time you are not taking this, this is mine!'

'Why, have I not given enough to you.' I told him whilst I quickly recalled the things that I have ever given to him.

'Yes, you never even gave me anything ever!' Timmy yelled out with a very clear sense of rage in his voice.

'Your right, you—you can have it.' I said, trembling in fear of what would happen if I said no.

We then proceeded out of the hollow and went upwards. The flooring was becoming more and more wet as we went up, most likely from the rain, our torches also went out, but not like it was useful anymore due to us already being so close.

We soon reached an area with giant cliffs where one wrong step and we plummet off into the void below. Timmy was also jogging quickly like he wanted to get the news of the fossil out to everyone as quickly as possible.

'Timmy be careful.' I yelled at him.

He then proceeded to ignore my warning and walk quicker. He slips. My heart skipped a beat.

'NO!' I screamed in horror as I reached out, grabbing his hand, but the weight of the fossil wasn't allowing me to pull him.

'The fossil is too heavy, you must drop it!' I yelled fearfully.

'What about—'

'Just leave it!' I told him.

He then follows my instructions and drops it, I then pull him up.

'Thanks.' He tells me.

'No, thank you for being safe.' I said.

He smiled back at me.

We eventually exited the cavern, I looked back at it and thanked it for helping us build our friendship.

The Forgotten Path – Underneath The Surface

The French International School of Hong Kong, Godey, Capucine – 12

Are you also thrilled by risky quests? A place where rocky mountains, trees and plants camouflage hazardous species no one ever knew existed, a place in which any human being entering would be doomed for their life.

A childish university student, who was dedicated and passionate enough to do anything he desired, that person was Cheng Yu Xuan, – which signifies success, was someone who was admired for everything he did, from his talents to his courageous personality.

He stepped forward, facing the forest then turned in the opposite direction to stroll back home, until... Until he heard a rumbling, or more like a roar coming from the spooky mountains. Curious, he decided to explore this mysterious sound.

As he got back to his path, the strange noise echoed through again. Determined to find out what kind of peculiar sound he was hearing, he stepped forward and screamed his lungs out : “Hello!?”

A loud silence invaded Yu Xuan. When he was about to give up, the rumbling was heard once again, only this time, it was louder. When the brave teenager took a glimpse through the cave from which the sound was coming, he couldn't believe what he had found. It wasn't clear, but a silhouette of a huge creature came to his eyes. It had basil green scaly skin, huge back legs and spine-chilling sharp claws. What could it be? Suddenly, Yu Xuan got a gut feeling that he should leave immediately. He didn't understand why, however he knew he had to go. Panicked and alarmed, he sprinted in the opposite direction of the creature. Once he was back home, he threw himself into his bed, exhausted but relieved that he was back home, his safety net, which he'd never cherished to this extent before.

The next day, Yu Xuan was thrilled to share his adventure with his classmates. He narrated his experience in detail to everyone he met, but unfortunately, their reactions weren't the ones he had expected :

“Wow, you really thought I would believe that you found an unknown specie that looks like a dinosaur?”

“But, I'm not lying, it's true!”

“If you are so “sure” then give me proof!”

“Fine!”

That night, Yu Xuan was feeling very annoyed; “Ugh, they just can't accept my being better than them! I have to find a way to prove them wrong, but it would be dangerous to go back there...”

After a long hour of contemplating, Yu Xuan decided to get on his feet and risk his life. He was going back to the spooky cave, this time, with his camera. He was dedicated to his quest: “Don't put off till tomorrow what you can do today, don't put off till tomorrow what you...”

His voice faded as he mumbled these words into his soul and spirit, Yu Xuan had truly become unstoppable. He stepped out of his front door and walked confidently, although he feared death. He couldn't quite understand the mix of emotions inside him that he was feeling.

As he was walking, he felt a strange sensation around him. Coincidentally, his classmate, Zi Hao was there too. Zi Hao, meaning quiet, heroic and strong, seemed like a careless, cold and quiet person on the outside, but no one knew who he really was because they feared talking to him. As they met eyes, Yu Xuan was taken aback. He bowed politely and greeted him awkwardly :

“Oh, hello”

“Good evening...”

As they both got back to their own tracks, Yu Xuan heard the same sound as the day before. He took a deep breath, then easily found the cave right ahead of him. Sneaking inside, he tried taking pictures as soon as he had the possibility to, but the creature was nowhere to be seen. Where was it? he thought. That was when a huge thing started charging him. At first, he didn't notice, but then, he started hearing heavy footsteps and turned himself around and saw a figure rushing into his direction, a huge one... Yu Xuan knew he was in danger, big danger. He was so frightened that he couldn't even think straight, he told himself: "Okay, Yu Xuan, calm down, calm down, it's just a dinos- IT'S A DINOSAUR!"

He tried maintaining silence but soon enough, dread took over his mind. He started pleading for help, even though he knew nobody was there, he had to stand up for himself. He stood, tall and strong, facing the humongous creature with sky blue eyes, whose skin was a mix of basil green, charcoal and stone gray. Yu Xuan raced into the dinosaur and began kicking it. He had no idea what he was doing. The dinosaur defended, or rather attacked back; obviously, Yu Xuan was at a disadvantage, but the dinosaur was no match for Yu Xuan. The teenager tried to fight through it and endure it, but he didn't have the strength.

Before he knew it, Yu Xuan was on the edge of a cliff. He was terrified and had no more energy to fight back, he thought, "I guess this is my destiny then..." As he was about to jump off, a hand gripped him firmly. Surprised, Yu Xuan got back onto the ground and had never felt this grateful before, but who was it? It was no other than Zi Hao, the one he had always feared, yet now he was being saved by him. Why would he do that?

"Thank you so much for saving me, if it weren't for you, I would have died!"

"Sure, but let's get back home now."

Returning home, Yu Xuan wondered, "Maybe Zi Hao isn't that bad after all?" Then he drifted off to sleep.

Yu Xuan had decided to meet up with his best friend the next day, Ming Yu Chen, his kind-hearted, patient and caring classmate. He shared his adventurous story of last night:

"Wait, what, Zi Hao? The one from our class? Are you sure?"

"Yes, really!"

"Mmm, I don't think you should trust him yet, you never know what he's up to..."

"If you say so..."

Many days later, lots of enjoyable things happened, though it was just Yu Xuan and Yu Chen's daily life. It didn't last long however: one day, they were having a sleepover, but when they woke up, Yu Xuan heard this familiar sound ring through his ears.

"Wait, what? Oh no, this can't be..."

"What happened?"

"Uhh, the sound is..... a very bad sign..."

Yu Xuan raced out of his house, Yu Chen following him. The two best friends exchanged worried, shocked glances.

"So, is that.. The d-dinosaur??"

"Yup, that's right..."

"We'd better stop that huge monster before he ruins the town!"

"Sure, but.. that will most definitely not be simple..."

Yu Xuan had never thought he would be confronted by the dinosaur who almost killed him again. Well, not just him, the whole town he was living in! The creature was taller than the buildings and bigger than trees. He had a

threatening glance. This sight came like a bombshell to Yu Xuan and Yu Chen : they had to stop it before it ruined the whole town! The two teenagers sprinted through the alley that led to the entrance of the town, where the dinosaur was positioned.

“Oh, great...” murmured Yu Xuan, remembering his bad memories fighting the creature a few weeks ago. They were two now, but they were still no match.

“Ok, let’s work smartly, remember teamwork makes dreamwork.”

“Come on, I believe in us !”

They started punching and kicking the dinosaur to make him go back from where he was. Surprisingly, things were going well, until... until they realised that there were more ahead of them...

“Wait, WHAT IS THAT!?”

“Am I hallucinating or something!?”

“I don't think you are...”

They had not anticipated something like this would happen. In front of them stood a dozen of dinosaurs, as if they had been duplicated.

“Uh, at this point, I don't think there is a point in fighting...”

“Yes, you are right...”

It was too late for them to fight back. They were doomed.

“You are a very kind person that I value very much. I might not be very good at expressing my feelings, but...thank you, for everything.”

“What, already?... Well, it's very hard to believe this, but thank you so much too, thank you.”

As they were about to jump and perish together, a figure appeared out of nowhere. That person was Zi Hao, yes, Zi Hao.

“W—what?”

“Is this a dream???”

Zi Hao stood firmly in front of everyone.

“I shall die, as long as this town stays safe.”

Everyone watched in astonishment. As the dinosaur approached Zi Hao, he suddenly walked away. It turned out that everyone was worrying about nothing, the dinosaur was a herbivore...

The Stolen Museum

The French International School of Hong Kong, Jaume, Zoe – 12

Ming-Xia, a young man who has been obsessed with dinosaurs since he was old enough to talk, was speaking to his mother one night. "I was thinking of going back to GuangZhou to the museum."

"But what about your father?" said his mother worriedly.

"I know he's getting better, I'm 25 and want to continue my dream. You know it, Dad does too, he wants me to continue working at the museum." replied Ming-Xia.

"So you're going to leave us here dying alone?" assumed his mother.

"I have to go back, it's been six weeks."

"Pack your bags I don't want to see you anymore." replied his mother angrily.

He thought all night about his conversation with his mother but decided that it was better for him to leave and live on his own.

Ming-Xia found an apartment and within a week had settled in. He was excited to go back to his museum and find all the bones he had found as a Paleontologist with his team. His joy quickly stopped, when a worker blurted out that a bone had been stolen by a dozen men.

"We did everything we could to get it back before you came back from Wuyang village." he stuttered.

"When was this?" he asked stressed.

"Two weeks ago." Ming-Xia thought for a long moment, "Security cameras!" He remembered asking the staff to hang them on the walls. "We haven't installed them yet." said the worker timidly.

They sat, reflecting, for ten minutes. A family of six entered. "I hope this is as good as the French museum we visited." said the father.

"Hello and welcome to our dinosaur museum." Ming-Xia joyfully continued. "I'll give you all a free tour of our museum, does it interest you all?"

"Let's do it!" shouted the family.

Ming-Xia started with the history of all the dinosaur bones there were in his museum, he explained where he had found them and why he had decided to open a museum. The family was interested in his career, and he continued the tour. He overheard the dad and the son talking together.

"This bone attaches to another bone which, unfortunately, got stolen last month." added Ming-Xia.

"Hey Dad, remember that bone we saw at the museum park of dinosaurs in France, his dinosaur bones remind me of that one bone they said came from China." whispered Jean.

"Oh, might I ask when did you go to France?" interrupted Ming-Xia.

"We went last week, and we are trying to be the first family to travel to all countries in the world in less than 1 and a half years." replied the little girl.

"Impressive!" Ming-Xia replied enthusiastically.

Even though he thought the bone might not be his, what a coincidence that his bone was stolen by French men, and that it was the only dinosaur bone in the museum. He was very hesitant, but his urge to take back his bone was too big to overcome, so he booked a flight to France. The next day he ordered his workers to take a week off while he

was away. He insisted that nobody could go to the museum, in case of another robbery. The night before his flight, he triple-checked the doors were locked, the cameras were on and the lasers functioning. After spending three hours in the museum checking everything was perfect, he left. He was convinced his trip would only last a week, so he ordered the workers to reopen the museum one week later.

Arriving in France, he took a cab to his Airbnb and went directly to an authentic French restaurant right under his apartment. He decided that the next day he would visit three classic monuments, the Eiffel tower, the Arc de Triumph, and la Seine. He decided not to go on a Sunday to the museum because there would be too many tourists. He would go on Monday during work hours.

Monday morning; he woke bright and early to inspect the museum and persuade himself that the missing bone would be there. When he arrived at the entrance, he bought a ticket, crossing his fingers hoping that the bone was there. Once he got into the museum he went directly to the table of contents, rapidly reading all the words, but no dinosaur area. He passed through all the descriptions and tried to make the most of his day. He arrived at a section where loads of people were clustered, looking at an exhibit. People were shouting, screaming, getting pushed, Ming-Xia was very interested to see what they were looking at. He decided to squeeze through the crowd. He finally got to the glass door when he saw... a bone, not just any bone, the bone.

He screamed, "IT'S MINE, IT'S MINE." People were staring, confused. Ming-Xia banged on the glass with lots of force until the guards seized him. He was taken to the police station and a case file started. He spent the next two days getting examined by an officer. He told them everything about his childhood, why he had created a dinosaur museum and finally why he had come to France. The policemen wanted proof that the bone was, actually stolen. Ming-Xia timidly replied that the cameras weren't installed yet, and that he hadn't been at the museum the moment it happened. The officer wasn't convinced by his story. Ming-Xia tried calling his workers, but no one answered the phone since they all had the week off. The officers then filed a report of violence, and lying to federal officers.

Ming-Xia was determined he was going to get his bone back, but he was going to have to get it back alone. He thought really hard to find a solution. Then, it hit him. He had to get a friend who would help him translate what he needed. Ming-Xia knew it was impossible to get someone who would have time and who would be loyal. One thing that wasn't impossible though was to go out and get some fresh air. He went out to dinner. Looking around, he saw the Eiffel tower shining from the corner of his eye. The idea hit him; another Chinese man was sitting right next to him. He stared, and the Chinese man stared back.

They stayed like that for two minutes so Ming-Xia decided to start a conversation. They shared a bottle of French wine and talked until the restaurant closed. Ming-Xia didn't want to scare his new friend off, so he didn't mention his lost bone. The Chinese looking man spoke seven languages, Chinese being his main one, English his second, and all the rest like French, Spanish, Dutch, Slovakian, Japanese, he said had been pretty easy to learn. Ming-Xia and Zhiyu became good friends over the next few days. He learned that Zhiyu was a full time traveller, was 24, and had been in an orphanage since he was three when his parents left him. Ming-Xia couldn't hold his secret any longer, and finally told Zhiyu that he needed his help. Zhiyu was over-the-moon to help his new friend. Since Ming-Xia was clueless how to get the bone back, Zhiyu planned everything they needed to do to get the beloved bone back.

They started by making a report for the thieves and the missing bone. Ming-Xia was surprised to see the police officers had written him an email saying that they now believed him, and that his missing report was already the seventh from a museum owner getting their items stolen by a dozen French men. Ming-Xia was summoned to court with the thieves. Zhiyu helped him properly write all the letters and to be able to express himself in front of the judges.

Ming-Xia eventually won the case and got his bone back. The thieves on the other hand were sentenced to ten years of prison for theft. Ming-Xia couldn't be more grateful for Zhiyu and invited him to go to China with him. Zhiyu politely declined saying he would try to stop by, but would like to visit Spain first.

When Ming-Xia returned to China, his life went back to normal. His museum was very popular because of that particular missing bone. A year later, Ming-Xia got a very unexpected surprise, his parents said they saw Ming-Xia on the news and were very proud. Unfortunately, they had to return to Wuyang village, because his dad had a

doctor's appointment for his heart, that was unfortunately malfunctioning. Two weeks later his mother came back alone this time because his father had passed after a cardiac arrest. Ming-Xia was really at his lowest. But then he saw a man enter; it was Zhiyu. He had taken a flight to come and see his best friend. Ming-Xia was overjoyed but it seemed wrong to feel like that after his father's recent death. He decided to make the most of it and have dinner together. A phone call interrupted their feast. A worker from the museum was calling, her voice was trembling, a few words trembled out of her mouth, "They came back".

Ellie's Story

The French International School of Hong Kong, Jouselin, Lola – 13

“TRAITOR!!” accused Ellie.

“BACKSTABBER!!” shouted Autumn

“I hate YOU!! GET AWAY from ME!!”

Two stubborn girls. Ellie has lived in Hong Kong since the age of two and Autumn, had recently moved there, but had been best friends with Ellie since as long as they could remember. They were fighting about how they had both wanted different themes for the project that Mrs. Golen, their English teacher, had given them. The girls had been fighting for over an hour and had walked so far that they had arrived in an unknown forest. All of a sudden, one of the girls fell down a hole.

“AhhhHHHHH–”Ellie whimpered.

“Ellie! Are you ok?!” asked Autumn.

Ellie seemed to be unconscious. Autumn was worried. She tried to find a safe way to climb down to help Ellie but kept slipping. She had already forgotten what they were fighting about and was back to being her bestie once again.

Autumn finally found an entrance to the cave that Ellie had fallen into. She ran to Ellie, who had regained consciousness. The girls were lost.. They were worried. It was becoming dark. They chose to sleep, planning to search early in the morning.

They woke up. Autumn went searching for food. Ellie was scared, she tried to comfort herself by humming the song that she always sang for comfort with her mum. While she was waiting for Autumn she suddenly saw a sort of... glitch, she jumped up, but slipped and fell painfully: then the glitch disappeared.

Worrying about Autumn's safety, she ran to the entrance of the cave. She heard a twig crack, but was too busy trying to find Autumn, so didn't really think about it. Not far from the cave she found Autumn looking mournful , she asked :

“What's wrong? Did you find anything, Autumn? Talk to me.. Autumn please!”

“It's..well...” Autumn muttered under her breath

“What?! Tell me!”

“It's your mom.. “She blurted quickly regretting her decision

Ellie had a glimpse of joy in her eye but then she noticed the blood on Autumn's hands and clothing and started to worry.

“Oh my God! Are you okay?!!!!”

“I'm fine, but..”

Ellie looked behind Autumn, her joy quickly turned to sorrow. Her mom was lying on the ground bleeding, she ran quickly, sobbing.

“Help me Autumn! Please.. Please, she'll be fine, help me!” She cried for help in disbelief.

“There's nothing you can do, her wounds are too serious.” sighed Autumn.

The girls chose to bury her underneath a beautiful weeping willow tree which was right next to the cave they were staying in. They decorated her grave with many pretty, colourful flowers that Ellie had found all around the cave.

They decided that it was most probably a bear or wild animal that had killed her while she was out searching for them. Ellie told Autumn about the twig and the girls chose to be a little more cautious, and stick together after what had happened. Ellie stayed silent for days afterwards.

One day, the girls had gone out to find food and when they came back they saw the glitch again, Ellie tried to grab it multiple times and then all of a sudden the glitch disappeared and an exhausted, long necked, silver and sage green creature that looked a bit like a dinosaur appeared. The girls were frightened and tried to flee but Autumn tripped and fell to the ground....the creature had started running in their direction.. Autumn had clearly spraining her ankle badly.

“RUN ELLIE!! I sprained my ankle, I can't run!” shouted Autumn

“NO! I can't leave you here!”

The creature had caught up to the girls, they prayed that it wouldn't eat them, it opened its mouth and roared. Autumn had finally gotten up but she couldn't run so she started limping painfully with Ellie by her side helping her but the creature was too quick, it roared again, the girls were frightened, the creature lowered its head, snuggled against Autumn and shed a tear onto her sprained ankle. She immediately felt the pain fade away as the creature fell to the ground exhausted, then fell asleep. Autumn realised that they were safe.

“Ellie, I don't know how or why or where or anything but I'm pretty sure this is a.. Dinosaur.”

“Have you gone mad?! How could this be a dinosaur, they're extinct!!?” doubted Ellie

“I know.. but what else could Pengyoulóng be? A frog?”

“Pengyoulóng? That's not even English!”

“It means friend–dinosaur in Chinese, I learned it in class. If we have just discovered a new species of dinosaur, I don't want it to be called Oreo for example and to be laughed at.”

“But.. fine.” agreed Ellie stubbornly

The glitch that they repeatedly saw turned out to be Peng making sure they were safe. The girls came to the conclusion that it was she who had made the twig crack that day.

One month later, the girls were shocked to hear screaming and shouting. They heard a roar that sounded like Peng's. Looking behind, they noticed that she wasn't the one roaring. Terrified, the girls peeked outside : they could see people getting killed by dinosaurs that looked just like Peng. Panicking, they hid with Peng in the cave hoping the dinosaurs would leave the area soon so that they could help.

A few minutes later there was silence. The girls went outside to see if there were any survivors amongst the people, they saw blood everywhere. Many people had similar wounds to Ellie's mother when she died, the girls had finally solved the mystery of her death, she was murdered by.. Dinosaurs. The girls were afraid that Peng would attack them too but chose to take the risk. While searching, the girls could only find one survivor, a lady by the name of Ai Xin. She told the girls that dinosaurs had somehow reappeared from extinction and started to attack humans and that some of them had powers, so it was impossible to stop them. The girls asked if she wanted to stay with them? Ai Xin said she had to go help others, so left.

The girls were shocked at what had happened and were worried sick about their families' safety. They became determined to find them. They jumped on Peng and rode around the forest hoping not be found by dinosaurs.

“We're never going to find our way out, we should just give up.” cried Ellie.

“Ellie! Look!”

Autumn had spotted an enormous puddle of blood dripping out of a cave.

“I'm going in!” declared Autumn.

“No! There could be dinosaurs inside!”

Autumn cautiously walked inside and saw a corpse that looked like it was wearing a lab coat like some crazy scientist. Tubes filled with weird liquids and glass were everywhere. She yelled to Ellie that it was safe but to be extremely careful when coming in. Ellie tried to bring Peng but she wouldn't budge, it was as if she was scared of the cave. So Ellie left her outside attached to a tree. She walked in to see Autumn inspecting the glass..

“This is so weird.. Huh, what’s written here.... dinosaur DNA?! Ellie, I.. I think this is where Peng comes from..”

Ellie had found the scientist’s diary and had been busy reading what was written..

“Autumn, h– he recreated dinosaurs with..” she hesitated, “powers to destroy hu– humans.”

“That's.. crazy.” denied Autumn.

“Look..”

Ellie showed her the book and once Autumn had finished reading, she dropped the book in horror. She had read that there was no way to stop the dinosaurs... except one. But he hadn't written that one down. Instead, there was a enormous splotch of blood, and the girls guessed that that was when the dinosaurs had broken free.

After an hour of searching the girls chose to leave and find some shelter for the night. They walked for hours, then found the same cave that Ellie had fallen into when they first got lost. They were frustrated but it was night; they chose to sleep there.

“Ellie!! Ellie?!! Ellie wake up!!” yelled Autumn.

“Huh? What’s wrong? replied Ellie while yawning.

“ You okay?!!”

“Yea...? Of course...? Why? Wait.. where’s Peng ?!

“Wh..Who’s Peng?”

“Our dinosaur?!!”

“Dinosaur...? Are you sure you’re okay? You banged your head pretty hard..”

“What are you talking about? That was ages ago!!”

“Ellie! You fell into this cave, banged your head and were unconscious for five minutes!”

“Uhm– yea? But that was months ago..”

“ No! – ten minutes ago!!”

“Wait, so... Peng doesn’t exist?! My mom’s alive?!!”

“Who’s Peng..? And yea, your mom’s *alive*..?!” answered Autumn, confused.

The girls found their way out of the forest. They never spoke about that day again..

“The End. Good night, Max.” Ellie kissed her son goodnight. remembering that day.

Heir of the Dragon

The French International School of Hong Kong, Levy, Emma – 12

It was the second year after graduation. I had studied Palaeontology for years and years, it was my one true passion. I was in my second job, in Liaoning, China when I turned 25.

My name is Alectro. I'm originally Chinese, but I studied in Australia. Yes, I know, my name is odd. I was actually named after the dinosaur *Alectrosaurus Olseni*, a species of which my parents were especially fond...not that people care.

On meeting me, people say I don't *look* Asian; I have white hair, my skin is literally *snow white* and my eyes appear to be... Teal. I've been diagnosed with Albinism, just like my mom, and most of my mother's relatives. Our appearance is *quite* different from the stereotypical Chinese figure.

Anyway, I was at the palaeontology site, carefully digging dirt, when, close by, I saw a bump on the ground. At first, I thought that if it was relevant, someone would've noticed. Something pulled me towards it. A push, a gut feeling. In the end, my curiosity got the better of me, and after everyone had left, I approached it.

Now, you should know that this is what got me in this mess. If I had fought the temptation, I wouldn't have had to carry this cursed burden.

I started digging, roughly. My impatience grew stronger. I remember reflecting that this fossil seemed to be recent. It wasn't deep in the ground as I thought it would be, the bones seemed more... whole... complete. They seemed more solid. So, without struggling too much, I dug out most of the dinosaur bones. At first, I thought it was a deformed Sinocalliopteryx, common in the area, as this fossil was about the same size. But as I got a closer look, I realized this... thing had four short legs, a longer neck and tail; the body shape was more snakelike.

I was *very* hungry, so I took a few quick pictures, covered the whole thing back in dirt, and left. Later having enjoyed "Malatang," a spicy soup, I returned to my hotel feeling intrigued by my discovery. Looking through the hasty photos of the fossil on my phone, I felt a sense of familiarity. I decided to rest, hoping sleep would jog my memory.

I woke up shuddering. In my dream, I was in class, the teacher was showing us pictures... something about sculptures found in an old village ruin... carvings of dragons...OH!!!

I scurried through my suitcase, threw on some clothes, grabbed my laptop, and ran to the elevator. The hotel manager was still in the lobby, looking half-asleep. As I dashed through the door, he looked at me strangely, like I was a madwoman. Thankfully, the site was not too far away, and I arrived in a matter of minutes.

I opened the gate. It was pitch-dark, despite some stars glittering. I was excited to a level I didn't think was physically possible. I'd just got a lead. I'd just remembered a memory of when I was in middle school, when I learned about art pieces on an ancient wall made by the early Chinese population. They were mostly sculptures of dragons; long creatures who could both fly *and* breathe underwater. I opened my laptop and searched the internet for more information.

The images of the creatures looked almost identical to the shape of the fossil bones. I was completely astonished. Could the dragon have been a dinosaur? If so, how did it survive? How did it go extinct? Did it actually have supernatural powers? I had my doubts. I decided to do some research rather than risk embarrassment. I imagined even more outlandish possibilities.

After returning to my room, I searched for dragon dinosaurs on various websites with no success. Switching to documentaries, a video about old masterpieces caught my eye. I clicked on the link. "—and after our analyses, the original colour of the scales were white, and the eyes were teal. The fur was likely white too. The story of this

creature is a mystery, but the carvings say that it was been killed by ancient populations. This is all fiction, of course. It..."

I paused the video. I zoomed behind the lady, where the wall with the carvings was. It was blurry, but I managed to distinguish shapes. There were little scenes in boxes, like a comic. It took me about an hour to connect the little threads of information I could figure out, but I finally understood. These so-called "dragons" were actually dinosaurs, and because they had these wings *and* fins, they had survived the asteroid crash. They lived for centuries and centuries, but then went extinct because the early civilisations of China were afraid of them, so they killed them.

In the morning, I went to work. I tried to hide that I had just made a poignant discovery, found a new type of dinosaur, and barely slept the previous night. Nope. Nothing. As I made my way to the site, one of my coworkers approached.

"Hey, Alectro! Did you see the new system they put in? You just need a piece of any part of the dinosaur, and it'll generate an image of what it looked like, using internet data and the scanned DNA!"

After thanking her, I went to the machine and scanned the piece of dinosaur skeleton I *had* kept to generate a full image matching my dinodragon, (Yes, I named it, okay?) Curious, I tested the device with my own hair... and saw my graduation photo. The machine rumbled quietly. After a minute, it showed a diagram comparing my DNA to the analyzed *dinosaur* DNA. I squinted at the small numbers on the screen. I gasped as I saw the result.

98.9% the same.

I went around asking people for a strands of hair, then tested them. Each time, they had no relationship to the bone. Only me. I didn't understand. I noticed how the dragon and I had the same features: the hair, the eyes, the skin... but what did that prove? That the creature had albinism...?

I searched its DNA and found out it most likely had evolved from a type of fennec fox, which meant it was a mammal, and not a reptile. But in any case, this didn't help.

I called my mom. She was always talking about how great my ancestors were, and kept in her closet a big box which contained all the treasures of our lineage. It was a tradition in our family for each of us to put an object inside at the end of our lives. The box had become quite bulky after all these centuries. I asked her to send it. I was confident it could help me.

After ripping open the package which contained those objects, I found the old caveman-like painting. It had pictures of five figures, resembling a toddler's art more than precise work, despite its fragility hinting at its durability over time.

The first two creatures resembled foxes, but the second one stood straighter. The third creature stood upright with longer back paws. The fourth was more ape-like with distinct features. Lastly, there was a human, marking a noticeable transition. Then I noticed two details: firstly, the fox was a fennec fox. Secondly, from the fur to the hair, everything was white. *Snow* white.

"So, I come from a line of different humans who evolved from *foxes*, which was also the origin of *dragons*, so...I'm technically *not* human?" I had an idea. If dragons had powers, then what about me...?

I attempted to breathe underwater in my bathtub, but ended up choking. I closed my eyes, held my breath, and went underwater. But my hair got stuck in the spout and I couldn't get out. I panicked, thrashing, when something in me kicked in. I could suddenly stay there without needing air.

Whoa.

I tested flying, jumping off my bed. I fell. Upset, I hit the water, expecting it to splash everywhere. But the drops floated in the air.

Double whoa.

But then I worried that if I showed this discovery to the world, then the 0.00001% of the population who had these powers could either be normal citizens or crazy terrorists. It could be dangerous for everyone. Who knew what could happen once people had power?

That was why as soon as night came, I sneaked back to the site and collected the bones, erasing all traces of their existence. I kept a small piece and put it in a tightly sealed container. There's also a memory chip with this message on it. I'll put it all in a box and hide it.

Then I'll protect it with my life.

The Commission

The French International School of Hong Kong, Liu, Angie – 12

At just twelve years of age and a shoe size of two, Winslet was needed to complete the mission. Sixty-five million years ago, all dinosaurs became extinct. Or so they thought.

About 148 to 150 million years ago, a strange, pheasant-sized, and bird-like dinosaur with elongated legs and arms built much like wings, inhabited south-eastern China, with a puzzling anatomy. This was a dinosaur named *Fujianvenator*.

The Brigade, an agency group, focused on secret missions to save the world, was working hard to avoid facing the reality of an impending asteroid collision with Earth. They needed assistance since they had no starting point, and they needed to find someone, *fast*.

The director stared at Winslet's photograph. "A twelve-year-old girl?! Are you insane?" he yelled.

"Desperate times call for desperate measures! She's the only one who can!" responded Black.

"Can't we find anyone else? We can't rely on a girl that young!" shouted the director.

"Sorry, but she's the only one gullible yet smart enough to help," acknowledged Black.

"Find her description, we'll fly to her this week," said the director.

Meanwhile, Winslet was on vacation in Hebei. She didn't know the language and was there to relax and confirm her suspicions. Back in her hometown, she was a tech geek living in a small apartment. The thin walls allowed her to hear everything her Chinese neighbour did, making it quite disturbing to work properly.

Two months prior, Winslet had found an intriguing article about the Chinese dinosaur, *Fujianvenator*. The article had no publication, date or author. The only information it contained was, 'Written in Hebei.' It claimed that the *Fujianvenator* was immune to asteroids, suggesting it survived what had wiped out other dinosaurs. "If this dinosaur was immune to asteroids, how did it die originally?" she wondered. Intrigued, she planned a trip to China to learn more.

In Hebei, Winslet was on a tourist trip in China's largest forest, Saihanba. While the tourist leader was confabulating, Winslet was scanning the area looking for clues; most importantly, something, anything to tell her that *Fujianvenator* still exists. Completely focused, she seemed lost in another world, unaware of her surroundings.

In a flash, she caught sight of a black shadow darting around the bush, concealing itself. Attracted, she promptly left the tourist bus to explore. Behind the bush, she spotted a familiar footprint, resembling that of the *Fujianvenator*! Winslet took a quick picture and planned her trip back home.

Meanwhile, the Brigade arrived at Winslet's apartment while her parents were out, searching for clues about the *Fujianvenator*. They explored her room but found little. They attempted to access her computer but were thwarted by 17 passwords, three riddles, and seven face recognitions.

★CLICK★ The door opened. Upon her return, Winslet, exhausted emotionally and physically, opened her room's door, wanting to melt into her bed and let the exhaustion take her. She hopped into bed, eager to sleep but felt watched. Suddenly catching two men in her peripheral vision, she stood up abruptly.

"AHHHHHHH! WHO ARE YOU AND WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN MY ROOM!?" yelled Winslet.

"Please stop, I've just had ear surgery done. Sorry if we startled you, now could you please open your computer?" Black commanded in a firm but calm manner.

Winslet rubbed her eyes, as if she was seeing double. There were two men in her room! “HOW DO YOU EXPECT ME TO CALM DOWN WHEN YOU’VE BROKEN INTO MY HOUSE?!” Winslet shouted back. Completely ignoring her, Luka shoved an article about the Fujianvenator in her face.

“We’re familiar with the well-known extinction issue for humans and are here to collaborate to find a solution regarding the asteroid in 2047.” vocalized Luka.

“Oh, you want that. I just returned from my trip to Hebei.”

“Why’d you go all the way to Hebei? You travelled across the world to go there!”

Well, I came across an intriguing article about Fujianvenator online, but it lacked a publication date, it was almost like I was reading an article straight off the dark web.” exclaimed Winslet

“Could we take a look at that article?” asked Black

“Sure, let me just open my computer...”

The men stared at Winslet in awe, like two deer in headlights. She had impressed the two men by breezing through security checks. Yet, when she went to search for the article about Fujianvenator, it had been deleted. Someone, or *something*, didn’t want them to find out the solution to the extinction of humanity. Now they could only rely on the brief notes that Winslet had taken. They consisted of four things; one, a small drawing of the footprint of the Fujianvenator. Two, some brief information about the dinosaur. Three, a little charming doodle of a dinosaur. Four, the curious fact that the article only had ‘Made in Hebei’.

After a long time of consulting Winslet, the agency had finally convinced her to let them help her in this mission. Now, they were in Hebei, in the Saihanba forest. They were in the exact place where Winslet had seen the footprint.

“Are you happy? I was just here two weeks ago, and look, the trace is nearly gone now. There is only a brief trace of the print!” said Winslet in a huff.

“Hold on, don’t be so keen, you still have your little doodle of the footprint, don’t you?”

“No, I don’t.” She turned as red as a tomato.

As they looked at the doodle and the actual giant footprint, it was clear that they were from the same species. Now they *knew* that there was a Fujianvenator evolution *near* the area. They sought to camp out near the print, in a place so near, yet so remote that nobody would find them.

“Good night!” said Luka.

No one responded. Night approached, but Winslet couldn’t sleep. She was always paranoid and feared the worst. It also didn’t help that Luka and Black were snoring, together, the sounds created a symphony of snoring.

As dawn came closer by the second, Winslet was still staring at the top of her tent when she suddenly but so surely heard a twig break. As she prepared to put on her glasses and go outside to investigate, Luka turned around.

“No, Mama, I don’t wanna eat cornbread!” murmured Luka.

“What on earth is he dreaming about?” Winslet thought.

She quietly unzipped the tent, unprepared for the dawn mist. The rising sun blinded her, revealing footprints she followed to a hidden grass door. She gasped. There were 12 Fujianvenators, gathered together, before they fled with a boisterous screech. Startled, Winslet turned to retreat, but the two men, anticipating her, closed in behind her, as if they knew her every move.

“You found them, didn’t you?” ticketed Black. Still in shock, Winslet didn’t answer, but her expression was the only answer they needed.

“Ewww, what is this? Is this a crunched leaf with the Fujianvenator’s saliva?” exclaimed Luka as a leaf flew on his nose.” The leaf bore a large mouth print, almost consuming half the raffia palm.

“That is the DNA of the dinosaur! Quick, give it to me!” shouted Black

As Luka peeled the leaf off his face, Black put it into a waterproof bag so that the DNA sample wouldn't be touched. Now, they just needed a test subject. Someone useless in life.

In the contemporary, they had made it back to Winslet's hometown and started to discuss.

“Now that we have the DNA, what are we going to do with it?” questioned Winslet.

“Exactly. I have a lab not far from here that can simulate an asteroid attack. We just need someone to volunteer to risk their life to help save humanity.” stated Black.

“Jeez, you make it sound soooooooooo serious.” joked Luka

He was ignored again.

“Actually, you know my Chinese neighbour? She has no life, and she is just basically waiting for the grim reaper to take her away. The only joy that she finds in life is singing [雪花票票](#) in the shower!”

“Right, I’ll go knock on the door.”

The Chinese neighbour entered, puzzled, and reluctant. They injected DNA into her, causing no reaction. During the simulation, she sustained bruises from asteroids, healing within seconds. Despite being bashed, her arm repaired itself swiftly, showcasing excellence in regeneration skills. It also helped that she ran *very* fast, able to dodge most of the attacks.

This was it. They had seen enough. This was the answer to the extinction of humanity. They had succeeded.

CLACK. The door was opened. Winslet's parents had come back.

“WHERE’S WINSLET?” her mom screeched.

The Secret Room

The French International School of Hong Kong, Mennesson, Chiara – 12

Two young brothers were called James and Charles. James was ten, had dark brown hair and brown eyes. Charles was thirteen, also had dark brown hair, hazel eyes and was pretty short for his age. They both admired dinosaurs. They were American and Chinese, living in China. Their parents, John and Ming-Li decided that it was best for the kids to live in America because they didn't have any friends. Their only friends were themselves. But the kids loved their life in China, and wanted to stay, moving was against their will.

A couple days before the flight, the boys kept begging their parents to stay in China, but John and Ming-Li kept resisting. On the day of the flight everything was packed and ready to leave. They got in the cab to go to the airport. When they arrived, they checked-in, went through security and straight to their gate. Since they had some time on their hands, James and Charles went to explore the airport. They bought snacks and games and thought of their top-secret plan. The flight attendants called out their flight number. "Flight 846 boarding now."

"Should we go now or later?" asked Ming-Li.

"Let's wait for the boys to come back," replied John.

The brothers heard the flight attendant and went back to their gate. "Let's board," said Ming-Li. "Okay" replied John and his sons. When they arrived at their seats James and Charles said, "Mum, Dad we are going to go to the bathroom." It was hard to get through all the people but they managed. Boarding was still happening, so the plane door was still open. "Hi, my brother here forgot his favourite stuffed toy right outside the gate. Can we just head out for a minute and get it?" asked Charles to the flight attendant.

"Sure" She replied. "Just hurry back." Little did she know there was no stuffed toy.

The two boys were running to get out of the airport and called a cab. When they arrived at their house, they went in by the back door because they knew that the lock was broken. The house still had all their things in because the movers had not come yet. They packed their bags and went to their dad's office, because they knew some valuable stuff was in there. They took their dad's dinosaur bone that they had admired ever since they were young. They were looking at the books and saw a dinosaur that looked very interesting. They pulled it out and suddenly the whole bookcase started moving. "What's happening?" cried James.

"I have absolutely no idea," replied Charles. After a short amount of time the bookcase stopped moving. It revealed a whole room full of dinosaur bones like the Shantungosaurus and the Chungkingosaurus. They were amazed. "Woah this is so cool!" said James.

"Was this here the whole time?" replied Charles. They entered carefully and as they kept on going further inside they saw a picture of a backyard with a hole dug and inside were bones. "That backyard looks familiar!" said Charles.

"It really does," replied James.

It was at this moment that they realized that it was THEIR backyard. They returned outside to exactly where the photo had been taken, each with a shovel in hand. "Let's try to dig this place up so we can find the bones!" said Charles. They started digging, and digging, and digging until they couldn't dig any more. It was almost dinner time, and they were starving, but there was no food in the fridge and they had no money. They decided to go to a Mexican restaurant that was close to their house anyways, hoping for a miracle. On the way there the boys had their eyes glued to the floor, trying to find some money. By the time that they arrived at the restaurant they only had 10 yuan. It wasn't enough. They decided to go to the market because everything there was cheap. They got two small pieces of bread and one tomato. Arriving home, they started eating their pieces of bread and each took an equal bite of the tomato.

Meanwhile their parents were worried. James and Charles never came back from the "bathroom". They were asked the flight attendants if they had seen two boys, but they hadn't...

After James and Charles finished eating, they continued to dig and dig and dig. Finally! They felt something hard. Digging further around it, they finally got it out. It was a bone and they were sure that it was from a dinosaur. They kept on digging and soon enough they had found many bones. "I'm so tired" Yawned Charles, "Let's go to bed."

"Yeah, it's late." replied James. They still had their furniture, so they slept in their beds. James was scared so crept into Charles' room and slept with him.

In the morning, after waking, they went downstairs for a snack but they remembered the kitchen was empty. "Wait, let's just go and ask the neighbours for eggs. We can pretend we want to bake something and we don't have any." They went to their neighbours house, rang the doorbell and waited. Their neighbours opened the door. "Hi, Please can we have two eggs because we're baking cookies but realise we don't have any eggs!"

"Sure... but aren't you two supposed to be in America right now?" asked the neighbour.

"Yeah, ... our flight got cancelled."

After eating, they returned to the backyard. They were going to look again at the bones, but when they arrived – they were GONE!.

"Oh no where did the dinosaur bones go?" Charles. They looked everywhere for the bones, but they were nowhere to be found. "Let's just go inside." said James.

"Fine." replied Charles. They went inside their dad's office and into the secret room. When the door opened, they were shocked by what they saw. The dinosaurs had come to life! It felt dream-like, but it was real.

When they realized it was all real, they started to scream because the dinosaurs were ten times bigger than they were. They were scared. As they calmed down, one of the dinosaurs, that had white feathers, wings and beige leathery skin, came up to them and knelt down, signalling the two boys to climb up. Still frightened, the kids hesitated, but realized it was a once in a lifetime opportunity so they decided to climb up. It was quite a struggle, but there were small ridges on the dinosaur's leathery skin to help. When they arrived, the dinosaur started to fly. They were having so much fun, but started to get a little dizzy, so they went back down. They closed the bookcase door and went to the living room. "Do you hear that?"

"Oh yeah, it sounds like a truck."

"Oh no it's the moving truck."

"We have to get out of here." They got out through the backdoor and started running away. They had nowhere to go and no money.

Meanwhile their parents landed in America but were worried sick about James and Charles. They called the movers to stop whatever they were doing; to cancel immediately. They booked a flight straight back to China. The closest flight that was in one hour.

The boys went off to a park and waited there, but it was getting dark. They returned to their house to see if the movers were still there. Luckily they had left, right as the two boys arrived. They went to call their parents because they were scared and didn't know what to do. Their parents were so relieved that they had heard from their two precious children. They told them about the dinosaurs and that they were actually Chinese comfort dinosaurs.

James and Charles went into the office and into the dinosaur room. The dinosaurs were sleeping. The brothers were tired too, so they decided to sleep next to them. The dinosaur lifted his wing and covered the two boys with it. He was so soft and warm. The next day, John and Ming-Li arrived back in China. They took a cab back to their place and started searching for the boys. They couldn't find them anywhere, so they went into the secret dinosaur room and saw them sleeping with the dinosaurs.

"James, Charles wake up!" said Ming – Li.

“Where were you guys? We were so worried!” James and Charles explained the whole story. Even though their parents were so happy to see them again, they were grounded for life.

Beneath Extinction's Veil

The French International School of Hong Kong, Pinter, Maeva – 11

Josephine and Juliet Laurier were twins. Since they were seven the public library was like their second home. They knew there was something important there, they just didn't know what. One day, whilst in the library, Josephine saw a girl from the corner of her eye looking depressed. Josephine couldn't forget her.

The next day at school, she saw that exact same girl moping in the hallway, she wouldn't forgive herself if she didn't do something.

"Can we go check on her please?" Josephine asked her twin, "I saw her yesterday in the same mood."

"Fine," Juliet groaned. "If we're late to class, you're on your own."

They approached the girl and tried to engage her. "What's your name?" Juliet asked. "Ours are Josephine and Juliet." Their blue eyes were shining in the sunlight.

"Khaleesi," the girl murmured, "Khaleesi Savis."

"That's a really pretty name, what class are you in?"

"I'm in Y12D." Khaleesi stated.

"Me too!" laughed Josephine.

"I'd better go, I'll be late. We could hang out later if you want, perhaps at the library."

"Sure, see you at 4:30."

Later that day, the three girls met and discussed their favourite books. Josephine's was "Lightlark", Juliet's was "1984" and Khaleesi's was "Caraval". At some point, while Khaleesi was reading "Caraval", the twins zoned out and started talking about the important thing in the library that they had been trying to find forever.

"Do you mind me asking what you're talking about?" Khaleesi questioned. "Of course not, we're just talking about something we've been trying to find in this library ever since we were small, but we've had no luck." Juliet answered.

"Wait a sec, I think I know what you're talking about. Come with me," Khaleesi replied. She brought Josephine and Juliet to the library's index and handed them a beige coloured card with a letter Charles Darwin had written:

"Dear Mother

I hope this letter finds you in **G**ood health. I absolutely have **tO** share **T**he findings **O**f **M**y **rE**cent explorations and **D**intricate **O**b**S**ervations in the **nA**tural world. Through a profound rev**I**ew, a theory of evolution unveils **i**tsel**f**, elucid**A**ting how species adapt and transform over billio**N**s of years, an intricate tapestry woven by nature's han**D**.

In my latest inquiries, I have encountered an abundance of species across various regions, an astonishing variance of **F**ish, birds, and plants that implies the richness of **O**u**R** planet's biodiversity. **THE**se **FIND**ings not **O**nly deepen our understanding of li**F**e's complexity but **AL**so invite us into a deeper appreciation of the l**I**nks of all **F**orms of **E**xis**T**ence.

I remain on the br**I**nk of uncovering even greater things, yet the significance of these discoveries urge caution and conte**M**plation. It is of great importance that w**E** approach such knowledge with awe.

With love,

Your son,

Charles Darwin”

After reading that, Khaleesi noticed that multiple letters in the letter were capitalized and in bold, but she didn't mention it. “Can we wait ‘til tomorrow to figure out what this means?” Juliet yawned. “It’s getting really late and I have a history final tomorrow, it’s 30% of my grade.”

“Sure, I’m also getting pretty tired... and hungry. You guys think we can take this index card home?” Khaleesi inquired lethargically, “I could try to figure it out.”

The next day after school, the three girls returned to the library to continue their “research” on the letter from Charles Darwin to his mother. “How was the history final?” Khaleesi asked. “I think I passed...” Juliet said doubtfully.

“That’s great! Good news, last night, right before I fell asleep, I realized the answer to the letter was right in front of me!” Khaleesi cheerfully exclaimed “You see, the letters I saw in bold yesterday were actually a secret message!... they spell out; ‘GO TO MEDOSA ISLAND FOR THE FIND OF A LIFETIME’, I searched up where Medosa Island is, it’s in the Indian Sea, close-ish to Thailand.” The three girls just stared at each other, until Josephine finally broke the silence. “Are we just gonna stare at each other? I think we're thinking the same thing aren't we?”

“Yeah, we want to go to the island and find out what Mr. Darwin was talking about,” Juliet said.

“All in favour, raise your hands.” The three girls then raised their hands. “Great, it’s unanimous!” Khaleesi blurted. “The real challenge is getting our parents to agree... unless we buy our own tickets and sneak away.”

“I think that’s what we should do,” Josephine agreed.

“We HAVE to get there before anyone else does.”

They bought tickets for a flight from Shenzhen to Phuket. They chose a flight in the middle of the night as it would be easier to sneak out.

The appointed day arrived, the twins packed everything they thought they would need, Khaleesi did the same. Josephine packed plentiful Benadryl for the flight and the boat ride, whilst Juliet brought bottles upon bottles of insect repellent, she’s had a fear of insects ever since she was stung by a bullet ant. Their flight took off at 3am, so they left their house at midnight. They met Khaleesi at the airport. As they checked in, the receptionist asked for the papers with their parents' signatures. The girls gave the papers with their parents' forged signatures. She took a close look and gave the girls their boarding passes.

At around 4am the plane took off after an hour of delay, they left Shenzhen and spent the next three hours in the smallest seats imaginable. Juliet slept most of the time, Josephine watched multiple movies, most of them being Marvel movies admiring superheroes such as Iron Man, Spider Man and Captain America. Khaleesi mostly read during the flight, finishing 400 pages. “Our plane is going to start its’ descent. For your safety, please buckle your seatbelts.” the captain announced over the loudspeaker. The landing was smooth, and they disembarked quickly. “Now we need to get to Phuket Port and find a boat.” Khaleesi stated.

They hopped in a cab and arrived at the port, “Sawadika!” Josephine enunciated “We are looking for a boat.”

“I will give you a good price,” the seller said. “Come with me.”

The boat lady showed the girls to a hidden corner and presented a boat to them. “500 baht per day, very cheap.” the lady bragged. “How much is that in Yuan?” Juliet asked. “I think around 100 Yuan,” Khaleesi replied. “That's reasonable. We'll take it!”

That night, they set off for Medosa Island, Josephine took a Benadryl pill and Juliet drenched herself in insect repellent. The boat ride seemed like an eternity, but in reality it was 17 days long. They had arrived at an island,

when they heard it, a deafening roar coming from the jungle on the island. The twins screamed, “What was that?” Juliet shrieked, “I am NOT going into that jungle, it’s probably infested with insects!”

“Fine! You stay on the boat, and we’ll go check out the jungle” Khaleesi said angrily.

Khaleesi and Josephine walked into the jungle and passed a plethora of flora and fauna. “Do you think there are snakes here?” Khaleesi questioned. That’s when they heard it again, the vociferous roar rippling through the leaves. Josephine managed to glimpse at the creature before fainting. When she woke up Josephine was on the boat, apparently, Khaleesi had dragged her back there. “Quick! Give me a pen and paper!” Josephine exclaimed.

“Okay, okay. Calm down Fina.”

Juliet reassured her, but it didn’t do anything. “Jules, you know how I have a photographic memory” Josephine said rapidly as she drew down what she remembered.

“Yes?” Juliet replied.

“Well, I saw what made that roar.” After she finished drawing, Josephine came out with something that resembled the Liaoceratops, a dinosaur believed to be extinct. It had a bulky head and long tail, along the tail was an array of sharp quills. The skin was as leathery as Josephine’s wallet and yet there was also a slight fluffiness to it.

The girls thought that maybe the creature could have been an extremely obese chicken, with four feet of which two were in the air. On second thoughts, maybe not.

At some point, they just had to believe that this was the last surviving dinosaur. “Can we go find it?” Khaleesi asked cheerfully, “I have a camera we could use.”

“You guys can go, I HATE insects.” Juliet shrugged, “You’re lucky there’s this thing called insect repellent, I wish there was the same thing but for snakes!” moaned Khaleesi. “I’ve hated snakes ever since a cobra killed my mom.” she sobbed. “But I still went into the jungle despite the dangers.”

“Let’s go find that dinosaur!” the girls said in unison as they walked into the jungle. They passed many bushes, many trees and many creatures that were unknown to humanity. As soon as they passed a beehive, Juliet got an ominous feeling, then she heard a scream, then a crack, then a slurp, soon everything went black...

Girls, Dinosaurs, and a Fallen Sky

The French International School of Hong Kong, Vera Caillet, Mnya – 12

“...We rowed through the harbour, past bobbing boats...” Maria stopped reading, there was a knock on the door. Miss Amelia went to open it. There stood a short girl with light brown hair, green eyes and pale skin. She looked around anxiously unsure whether to enter or not. Miss Amelia extended an arm beckoning her in. The girl took a tentative step forward, then another. She looked around the class, while Miss Amelia faced the class and said cheerfully, “She’s the new student I was telling you about. Let’s give her a chance to introduce herself.” The new girl was staring at the ground. Miss Amelia nudged her gently with her arm, “Go on.” The girl hesitated then articulated, “Hi, my name is Ashley Levine, I’m from Norway and I will be 16 this year.”

Miss Amelia smiled and uttered to Ashley, “You may take a seat, there’s one behind Maria.”

“Could Maria please raise her hand?” Maria raised her hand and Ashley walked calmly to the seat and plopped down. Miss Amelia got everyone’s attention by clapping her hands, “Class, you all are going to take turns introducing yourself and say one thing you like, it can be whatever you want. Let’s start with the row on the left side.” A boy with a mop of black hair stood up. “Hi, my name is Noah and I like football.” As he sat back down, the bell rang. It was the end of the day. Everybody leapt out of their seats and grabbed their backpacks ready to go. Miss Amelia shouted, “Have a nice weekend everybody!” The students piled out, yelling their own chorus of good wishes.

Maria walked quickly, she was excited to meet her sister at her locker. “I’m so happy it’s finally Friday!” Her sister, Claire squealed. “Me too!”

At a park, they saw a girl on a bench reading a book. “Hey that’s Ashley!” Maria exclaimed, walking over to her, “You know that book? I love it!” Ashley looked up from her book. “Yeah it’s ok.” Then she resumed reading. Claire sat down next to Ashley. “Hi, I heard you’re new to the school, we can show you around if you want.” Ashley sat up; “Sure.” They started talking, discovering they had lots in common. It was soon time to go. The girls exchanged numbers and went home.

During the weekend, they hung out, got to know each other more and quickly became best friends. The next day, the sisters were waiting for Ashley at her locker when a paper on the hallway board caught Maria’s eye. Trip to China was written at the top and below, ‘Sign up here’. Maria gasped. This was an amazing opportunity! She quickly grabbed a pen and wrote her name. She rushed over to where Claire and Ashley were standing, waving the paper over their faces, they both read it. They looked at Maria, “It would be awesome to go there!” exclaimed Ashley. They quickly put their names and rushed to class.

After school, Maria, Claire and Ashley met outside the secretary’s door with the signup sheet. The school secretary, Ava, took the paper and told them the trip was this Saturday. They rushed out of school, smiling. Ashley stopped in front of her house “See you tomorrow!”

“Bye!” echoed the sisters.

It was Saturday morning, the three girls met at a cafe. They felt ready to burst with excitement as they ate pastries. When finished, the girls headed for the airport to meet their group. The airport was crowded and the girls searched everywhere for Ava. They eventually found her and went to the baggage check-in. After the security check and the immigration, they were finally able to board the plane.

The girls sat together, with Ava right in front of them. Ava showed them all the places they could go to; The Forbidden City in Beijing ,Shenzhen, Shanghai etc... There were so many places to visit and eat at! "Everyone put your seatbelts on, we're about to take off." the captain announced. It was a direct flight to Hong Kong from France.

A sudden jolt woke the three girls up, what could have made it? The airplane started to tremble, a ray of lightning hit the plane's left wing, it started smoking. The captain's voice came out from the speaker; "We are experiencing bad weather, our left wing has been hit. Please buckle your seatbelts and brace yourselves for an emergency landing." Everyone was baffled at first, then there was agitation as everyone braced themselves for the landing. The girls looked worriedly at each other. "What if we don't make it?" asked Claire, her voice trembling, "Just pray that we do!" answered Ashley.

The area between the sky and the ground felt ginormous and the fall, an eternity. First the plane crashed into the ground with a loud, 'Boom!', then it skidded through the trees, sending dirt everywhere. Finally the plane screeched to a stop. Maria opened her eyes, dazed. "Claire, Ashley!" she screamed as she tore the pieces of seats, luggage and metal off her friend and her sister. They slowly emerged from the mess and looked around. "Wow! Damn! I wonder who's still alive?" Ashley said. "No one apparently. It's a miracle we survived! So... where are we?" asked Maria. Claire walked to the entrance and looked outside then took her phone out. "I still have a little battery," she said looking at the surroundings. "We're somewhere in the outskirts of China." Maria and Ashley joined her outside. "We need to find a place to sleep before the sun goes down." Ashley stated.

"Shall we make a makeshift bed out of the broken seats?" offered Maria.

"We could try calling our parents!" exclaimed Ashley. To their dismay, none of their parents picked up the phone. The girls were all on the verge of crying; "They'll probably come looking for us tomorrow, right?" sniffled Claire. The girls huddled against each other and consoled themselves.

After a while Ashley stood up, "I'll go get wood to start a fire."

"Okay but don't go too far," warned Maria. Suddenly, the sisters heard a scream. They ran outside the plane to find Ashley smiling. "What happened, are you okay?" Claire asked.

"I'm fine, I have to show you guys something." As the girls walked to the area Ashley explained what had happened. "As I was collecting branches for the fire, I saw fences! There is what looks like a big farm! We could get help!" She was jumping up and down. The sisters exchanged looks then they joined Ashley as she jumped. In their excitement Claire spotted in the pink and orange painted sky a black splotch. It was coming closer and closer. "That looks like... like... I don't remember the name." Claire said as she pointed to it, Maria and Ashley turned to see what their friend was talking about. "I don't either." Maria said. "Lets head back to the plane." Next to the plane Ashley arranged the branches she had found, took a lighter out of her pocket and lit them. Once the fire was roaring the girls started to relax, they gazed up at the sky and looked at the splotch, which was now almost touching the atmosphere. The girls talked about how they already missed their parents and their beds. A big force of wind sent the girls rolling in the grass and the fire was now only a tiny flame. "What was that?" Maria asked.

"It came from the direction of the farm. I think we should go check it out." Ashley answered.

"Are you crazy?" screeched Claire.

"Calm down, we'll be quick, it'll be fine." assured Ashley.

The place where the farm once was looked like a big giant hole trying to suck everything in, "Oh that's what the splotch was!" said Claire "It was a meteorite! Cool!"

A footstep rattled the ground, the girls quickly hid behind a bush. What appeared to be a big ginormous chicken and a dinosaur roared furiously.

“That's a...dinosaur?!” gasped Maria, her two friends shushed her. All three girls were trembling, the chickenosaurus had a small sharp beak, bright yellow fluffy feathers and big claws. It clucked and sniffed around. It was coming closer to the girls, “We have to get out of here!” exclaimed Claire.

“How?” asked Ashley. “I say we run on three. One...Two...Three!” As soon as Maria finished her sentence the girls ran out from behind the bush to the plane but the Chickenosaurus was faster than they were and slowly closed the distance. Maria hid behind a rock crying and panting. She peeked over the rock, and watched in horror as the mutant chicken closed in on her friends. She heard a crunch, a scream. The dinosaur slowly came closer to her, she tried to run away but it was too late. Then everything went black.

The Power of Descendants

The French International School of Hong Kong, Vignaud, Edgar – 12

During the Han dynasty a long time ago, in a big dark forest with ancient trees, there was a monkey. Not an ordinary monkey, Singe was a extremely tall monkey whose wise father, Poilu was dying. Singe did his normal routine of going to the river, filling up his bowl and taking it to his father. On the way back he found an ancient Chinese dinosaur bone, but the big monkey saw only a weapon, not a bone. Singe used this bone to hunt big zebras and some large fish; he also used this bone to scratch his enormous back and to pick ripe bananas from the tallest trees. He used the bone for a long time and it helped him, as he nourished his father.

One day everything changed. While sleeping, an enormous earthquake woke him up. Instinctively, he ran to his father's room but saw him, on the floor, dead. He was scared that he would have the same fate if he stayed. Despite grieving, he decided to leave for a while.

So, the next day he packed all his stuff, even though he didn't have much left. He didn't want to take the bone with him because he was scared of losing it while walking or getting it stolen by other animals in the forest. He dug a big hole and grabbing the enormous bone, buried it deep down below the fertile soil. Sadness was evident in his eyes. He cut open his big hand to draw some blood and drew a tree and a cross on a rock, signifying the place where the bone was buried.

He walked and walked, and each time he did 100 steps he drew a point on the rock. After walking for two whole months, he found a good peaceful place with a river and some trees and a lot of food. He decided to restart his life there.

A year later, he met a female monkey who was as tall as he was, called Capuchin. She was also a monkey who had left her original home, but Capuchin left because big crocodiles had killed everybody in her family. She was totally alone. After two weeks together Capuchin and Singe got married. They had a child together.

Their baby monkey, Momo, was soon an adult. His father Singe was becoming old and sick. Singe remembered the bone he found, it had saved his father from dying, but the earthquake unfortunately killed him. He asked his son Momo to go find the bone that he had hidden in the hole that he had dug. Singe gave his son the stone-map, with the markings of the exact location of the bone. His son Momo was now determined to save his father, so he grabbed the stone and analysed it. He couldn't sleep all night because he kept thinking about whether there would be dangerous predators en route.

The next morning, he proudly said goodbye to his parents. He packed the stone and some bananas and left. The first month was easy. He had food; water was plentiful and he enjoyed the trek. Once he had finished his provisions, he felt anxious. He remembered that his dad had told him to use the nature around him. He grabbed a piece of wood and dug in the ground to find some worms to eat, before falling into a deep sleep. The next morning he woke up and restarted his walk. He looked around, at nature surrounding him and saw a big bird that he killed by throwing a big rock. In front of him he saw a big lake. This was the lake that his father had seen while walking to find a new place to live. Momo decided to go for a swim and then stayed there for a day. He cried, as he missed his family, so wrote in the sand, "MonkeyLand".

Momo wanted to be in his father's homeland as quickly as possible. After two more weeks of walking, he saw a tree so big that he couldn't even see the top, but he remembered that a long time ago when he was three, his father told him that next to the bone there was a really tall tree. A tree so tall that you can't even see the top. Momo had hope

again. He started running to arrive at the bone faster, but as he ran, the stone dropped. He had lost his only way home. He hadn't dropped it on the floor, he had dropped it into a really deep cave. After realising what that meant he got on his knees and started crying for help.

Momo was not a child anymore, he was an adult. So he stood up and decided to go down into the cave to get back the rock. Momo was scared of the bats and the animals that are hidden in the dark. His family was more important than a phobia of darkness. He went courageously into the cave, but he threw a rock first just to be sure that there was nothing. After taking precautions, he walked into the darkness of the cave, jumping at each little noise.

After reaching the end of the cave he arrived in a magical place with coloured stones shining in the dark, Momo admired the beauty of this moment. He took a stone and drew on it with mud and blood to portray the beauty of the cave. Momo drew so realistically that if he put it in his room he would never forget this incredible moment. Without realizing, he had drawn on the back of the stone on which his father had identified the location of the "famous" bone. Momo was amused by this coincidence, but was also happy that he could finally get going again. He left the cave. The moment he got out, his eyes started to hurt, because his eyes had got used to being in the darkest part of the cave. It didn't matter; he just wanted to find the bone as quickly as possible. He decided to climb on the tall tree and he swung from tree to tree as fast as a flying bird.

After a long route he landed on a tree smaller than the others. Momo was intrigued, he climbed down, and contemplated this strange tree. Looking down he noticed a big red cross, the second he saw it he knew that he was one step closer to save his dad. Without hesitation he jumped on the floor and dug, until he touched what seemed to be a bone. He took it out and screamed with relief.

After getting the big, fat, white bone he walked without stopping for months with one goal in mind; to be home before the death of his father. One day he saw the lake that he had stopped by on the way to find the bone and remembered that he almost gave up at this place. But he hadn't. Now he was returning with the bone. After walking for two more weeks, on a really breezy morning, the sun just risen, his mum was cooking a magnificent breakfast that smelled so good that Momo directly knew that she was cooking the dish with bread and eggs that he used to eat everyday. But on the long table it seemed that there was only one single plate, not two. Momo started to cry thinking that his father was gone; that he was too late to save him that he could never tell him about his journey and what had happened. Worse, maybe he was disappointed in Momo. But as soon as his mum saw Momo, she ran towards him and they hugged for what seemed like a decade. After hugging and talking about what had happened Momo talked about how beautiful the cave was and described it so well that his mum could feel the emotion that he was feeling. Capuchin then shouted, "Singe! Come, our son is back." Momo was relieved. Singe came looking very frail. Momo gave him the bone, and he took it in his arms with relief... But Singe realized that this wasn't the bone that had helped him save his dad. Momo looked into Singe's eyes with despair.

To be continued...

Little Eight and the Unusual Dinosaur

The French International School of Hong Kong, Villaceque, Louise – 12

Little Eight was born on the 8th of August 1888 at 8:00 am sharp. She was the 8th child of her mother, also the 8th child. She had wonderful parents and a wonderful little sister, named Little Snow. Her family lived in a little straw house on Lamma island, Hong Kong.

On one particular morning, she was bubbling with excitement, for it was her 8th birthday! Though her insides were fizzing away, she was sitting perfectly still at her window and staring out into the open beach of the island. She knew something special would happen today. But what? She stared out into the horizon. Suddenly, a high-pitched cry disturbed this moment of tranquillity. “I can’t! It’s urgent! PLEAAAAASE!” Her mother sighed. “Little Eight, can you please bring your sister to the cave to... you know...”

“Hurry up, hurry up, hurry UP!!” Yelled Little Snow. Little Eight sighed as she took a towel from the room that she shared with her sister and ran to the cave, her sister waddling in front of her.

Little Eight looked around the cave as she always did, as her sister relieved herself in a corner. She had known this cave her whole life. Every nook and cranny of the cave was so familiar to her that she could walk around it with her eyes closed. Some looked like little houses or huts, others like animals. Sometimes she could sit on the cool shady sand of the cave and watch those walls for hours, imagining what they could be. Suddenly, a high-pitched voice interrupted her daydreaming.

“Big sister?” it hollered. “Can I have the towel?” Her older sister threw her the towel without taking her eyes off the wall. She was too busy thinking what that line with scratches along the side could be. She sighed for the second time that day. Couldn’t something EXCITING happen on this special day?

She looked at the bottom of the wall in her search for interesting wall carvings. Her eyes widened as she spotted something she never dreamed of encountering before.

“What is that?” She whispered under her breath. She brought her face closer to the thing. In front of her lay a snake-like skeleton with small stubby legs and what looked like little wings on the sides. It was a brownish shade of white and had thin cracks all over it. There were streaks on its back that looked like spikes, and its jaws were frozen in an eternal snarl. Its eye sockets were so deep and empty that it sent shivers down the little girl’s spine. Its remains were so unusual that it looked dinosauresque. Could it be the first dinosaur found in China? She could see the headline of the local newspaper: “Girl, eight, finds a 6000 year old dinosaur...” Intrigued, she bent closer and touched its knobbly spine. “SCHLACK!” A deafening sound filled the cave, and our hero found herself trapped in the dark cave.

She yelled in despair and ran to where the opening had been. A large circular rock had slid out of nowhere and fallen over the entrance. Outside, she could hear her little sister screaming. “Little Snow?” she asked tentatively. There was a long silence before a voice cracked by crying answered. “Big sister? BIG SISTER?”

“Is that really you?”

“YES!” yelled Little Eight.

“Go get help!”

She felt her way through the cave as the sound of her little sister’s running little feet died out. She sat down close to where she thought the strange skeleton had been. “Did that rock have something to do with you?” she talked into the darkness.

“AS A MATTER OF FACT, IT DID.” Little Eight jumped up as she heard the deep cavernous voice. A blinding yellow light burst out of the skeleton, flooding the whole cave with its light. A joyful laugh bounced around the walls

as a red snake-like creature emerged from the remains of the now scorched animal. Little Eight watched it with disbelief. "Greetings, Little Eight." came the cavernous voice.

"Who-o-who are y-you?" asked the fear-stricken girl. "I" said the creature proudly, "am a red Chinese dragon." She scanned it head to toe.

"You don't look like a dragon." she said politely. The creature's smile disappeared, its body sloped a little.

"I was born with a severe mutation," it explained. "My head was too short, my body wasn't long enough, but most importantly, I was born with WINGS! No Chinese dragon is supposed to have wings." It looked down in shame.

"Can you tell me why you trapped me in here?" asked Little Eight. The mutated dragon's smile came back. "You see," it said, "dragons are supposed to be immortal...except that because of my deformation, I can only live up to 6000 years. Today is my last day alive." Little Eight gasped. "And," it continued, "every dragon must do a memorable action in order to be accepted in the Jade Palace of the skies. I only have one day left to accomplish my action." Little Eight looked at it with big eyes. "To fulfil my action, I shall break you out of this cave!" The dragon grinned to himself as he praised himself for his intelligence.

"You mean you are going to take me out of a situation YOU created!" said the girl.

The deformed dragon looked at the floor in shame. "Sorry," it said. It flew towards the entrance and pointed its short head at the big stone in front of the opening. It stayed there for about five minutes before growing even redder with embarrassment. "Errm... Little Eight?" he mumbled. "I can't remove the rock." Suddenly, a purple light shone through the crevices of the entrance.

"Oh no!" It started to cry. "A BLACK DRAGON!" Little Eight shivered. In China, black dragons represent evil and revenge. "I cannot break through the seal!" wailed the red dragon. It slumped in a corner and sighed. How could they get rid of the black dragon?

Little Eight remembered the Chinese ritual that her family performed at every Chinese new year. She needed something red. She felt her way across the cave and wrenched a sharp bone off the remains of the deformed dragon. She took a deep breath and pricked her finger with the bone, then, with her free hand ran to the entrance of the cave and drew a hand-sized character for "Luck" in the sand. She let her blood trickle down onto the character, staining the grains red. There was a great gust of wind, and the purple light from the curse of the black dragon vanished.

The red dragon immediately pointed its head towards the entrance and sent a great wave of red magic that propelled the rock into the sea. It beamed at Little Eight. "Would *you* like to become immortal?" She considered this carefully. She knew many people wanted to be immortal and live in the Jade Palace with the Emperor, but the thought of living on and on and seeing her family and loved ones die was just too strong. She didn't want to be alone.

"No, thank you. I just want my sister to learn how to come here by herself to do her business!" She answered. The dragon laughed, then blew a golden dust on her. "There we are!" It looked at the sky and started to fade. "Farewell," he muttered. "Continue helping people." When she looked back, it had vanished. Only a delicate golden smile remained in the air.

Little Eight grew to be a wonderful person. She graduated early, got a scholarship and went to study law. She later had a family, and all her children were born on the 8th of October. When she became old, she visited the cave frequently and put flowers where the skeleton of the deformed dragon had been. She died happily in the cave on the day of her birthday at 8:00 pm sharp. After her death, people reported having seen flashes of red and other colours in the sky, complemented with laughs and happy talking.

Deluding Shadows of the Reptilian World

The Independent Schools Foundation Academy, Huang, Qin Lan Valerie – 13

Dr Chen Xia wiped the trickling sweat off her brow as the setting sun painted the river basin in sparkling hues of orange and red. Another day excavating the dry creek bed was ending.

For weeks, Chen and her graduate students had dug at the Lufeng excavation site without yielding any results. Morale was waning, as was the setting sun. On their final sweep, Chen sighed, her worn-out bones urging her to quit.

As Chen's team finished packing, a glistening glint caught her eye. Brushing away the sand revealed a smooth, reddish stone carved with ancient markings. Intrigued, Chen ran her fingers over the designs. Without warning, the stone warmed beneath her touch and began to glow. Thunder shook the earth as the air rippled before her vision blurred.

When the mush of colors in front of her cleared up, Chen stood stunned by the sight of endless verdant plains stretching farther than she ever dreamed possible. Was this ancient China? Bit by bit, fear seeped into Chen's consciousness, but flashing in her eyes was more than horror; it was excitement.

Cautious steps were taken through the dense foliage, so thick that it swallowed her whole. "Woah, where am I?" she averted in puzzlement. The air hung heavy with an earthy scent saturated with moisture.

Drooping curtains of vines and mosses filtered the sunlight, bathing everything in a green-tinted murk. A faint cry could be heard in the distance, swallowed by thick foliage. Chen listened, barely daring to breathe, as the sounds of bones cracking and flesh being torn drifted through the trees. A gasp escaped her lips when she peered through a gap in the lush veil of leaves. Chen spotted movement.

Glancing at the creature, Chen's heart dropped as she confirmed her theory. This was ancient China, and this was no ordinary animal. A bannikus, and even worse, its earliest form—the form that feeds on meat.

The bannikus stood over the ravaged corpse of a small herbivore, mangling shreds of muscle and bone between hooked talons, blood dripping from its glistening jaw. It gnawed hunks of flesh from snapped ribs, consuming with a wild, savage pace.

Chen's gaze locked with its own as it looked up. Black eyes, as dark and cold as obsidian, widened as they recognized their next prey. She scrambled away blindly back into the jungle. It flung aside its meal with a bone-chilling screech and started its pursuit.

"Shoot!" Chen muttered and weaved desperately between the massive trunks, branches clutching and whipping at her as she went. She fled blindly through the forest, lungs screaming. Glancing back, her heart spiked as the bannikus bore down with terrifying speed, eating up the distance between them in great bounding strides. Bursting from cover, she spotted a dry riverbed cutting through the clearing ahead.

The riverbed twisted, doubling back on itself. Chen followed, praying for lost ground; for a split second, there was silence. But then, a shrieking mass of feathers and blades bore down upon her. Her head snapped up and dove to the left just as talons from the sky scythed where she'd stood. Rolling to her feet, Chen crashed through tall grass and foliage, thorns tearing flesh. Glancing back, the bannikus was back, shredding through the vegetation in a fever, mere paces behind and gaining with every raking stride.

However, a sudden rustle from above in the treetops snapped her head up sharply, darkness stopped over her like a giant veil while talons seized her torso. Letting out a shriek as the feathered monster lifted her at a dizzying speed that tore another scream from her lungs. Chen craned her neck to glimpse the monster's face for the first time—It was an

ambopteryx, an avian species recently discovered in 2019. She brought her gaze back onto the horizon affront, thrashing against the grip in futile panic as the cliff wall grew closer to her. Bracing for impact, she shut her eyes, screaming her lungs out until her throat was raw.

But she was released just inches away from the collision, dropping her roughly on what seemed to be sticks and twigs. After a few seconds of silence, Chen began to reopen her eyes, lying stunned amidst the nest and what was next to her. Gradually becoming aware of her surroundings, she realized she was surrounded by two pale oval orbs the size of volleyballs nested among sticks—eggs. As Chen cautiously shifted in the nest, one hand slipped backward. Her heart stopped as she felt something cave in her palm. Fragments crumbled under her palm—she'd cracked one of the empty eggshells left by the third baby ambopteryx.

“Was I—?” Realization rushed over her, she was mistaken for the third baby ambopteryx that had already hatched. With the giant ambopteryx dozing off after its tiring search, Chen spotted her chance to flee. Slowly, she crawled from the nest. With each step, glancing back constantly at the slumbering beast until she finally reached the jungle.

Slowing to catch her breath in the dimming light, Chen caught sight of movement between the trees. After her encounter with the bannykus, her first instinct was to run. However, once she peered through the leaves, she froze in disbelief—a tiny hatchling squirmed blindly on the forest floor, defenseless against the dangers amidst the jungle. Dread sunk in as the sun touched the horizon. Chen hesitated, torn. Returning the infant meant risking her life again while leaving the helpless child to die in a forest full of vicious predators, which was against her nature. “How could I turn my back like this?”, She gritted her teeth, marching through the jungle as the sky dimmed.

By the time Chen emerged into the mountain-top clearing, night had fallen fully. Moonlight glinted in the curled hatchling's eyes as it blinked awake. A questioning squeak pierced the silence.

The ambopteryx stirred at the small sound, leathery wings unfolding in agitation. Chen knelt while keeping one hand in the air to ensure her actions were seen clearly by the ambopteryx, the other gently placing the hatchling on the mellow grass.

Recognition dawned, followed by a soft croon.

Chen sighed in relief as she watched from the tree line, hidden in the shadows. She turned to head back through the dense forest as a chill night mist rolled in. Pausing, Chen scanned the murky foliage for the safest path. Which way had she come originally? Unease prickled her skin.

She had to get back. She just didn't know how.

By now, Chen was completely lost. She desperately searched for shelter as the temperature dropped, finally spotting and entering a small hollow space beneath an uprooted tree. As her trembling slowed, Chen scanned her surroundings more carefully. That's when she noticed two glinting jewels staring at her. A pair of beady eyes just visible in the gloom.

A viper.

She froze, reaching to grab something, hoping to defend herself as its flickering tongue tested her scent. Without warning, fangs flashed. Chen screamed as twin daggers pierced her right leg in a burst of liquid fire.

Her vision swam, strength draining with each throb of spreading agony. Chen clawed weakly at her swollen flesh as the serpent slithered away into the mist. Slumping back against the rotting wood, Chen knew she couldn't die like this, not while she was stuck in the past. But a red mist soon engulfed the forest, as did her consciousness, as the first rays of dawn remained eternally out of reach.

Chen woke slowly. She stirred under sheets in a silent room. The lights above blurred, then became clear. Machines beat a steady rhythm.

Walls wrapped white all around, strange yet known. Awareness and confusion spread smoothly in Chen's mind. But where was she? How did she get here?

Chen pulled down the sheet, she reached for her right ankle, searching for the bite mark from the viper, but there was no scar, no stitches, nothing. Memories were blurred and unclear; she remembered the amblopteryx, the bannykus, the viper, eyes glinting with malice...then nothing.

But then she noticed the handcuff restraining her wrist, and panic again rose as more questions crowded her confused mind.

Ripping out her IV with unsteady hands, she staggered from the bed on her weak legs, knocking down the wooden clipboard clipped to her bed. "Found in the Yimen forest unconscious; In custody of the Ministry of State Security." She read in her head. Chen peered in confusion and panic into the dim hall, where a shadow shifted at the end of the corridor. Her pulse throbbed in her ears as she backed slowly away. The figure turned, and she soon caught sight of the "Ministry of State Security" logo patched on their chest.

Before Chen could figure it all out, alarms started blaring throughout the ward. She bolted, bare feet slapping the cold tile as her instincts screamed, "RUN!"

Wayward Endeavour

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Chan, Hania – 13

The ship rumbled as the headpiece in my suit proclaimed ‘15 hours until landing’. I was on a mission, the first that had ever been presented in history, and I was going to return triumphant. Floating around the spacecraft, I glanced out the porthole to Earth, beautiful in its green-and-blue splendour at our view from over 300,000 kilometres away. Glancing back, I gazed at the glass podium at the centre of the spacecraft. Inside was the article that I had been commanded to safeguard, at least until we arrived at our destination. Speckled with brown flecks and milky white, it was unlike anything that we had ever seen before, and I was incredibly honoured to have the opportunity to be so close to it.

My headpiece crackled, and the rough voice of the director rang in my ears.

‘Is everything going smoothly?’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘Good. In 15 hours, the ship will land. Are you clear with the proced—’

Suddenly, the spacecraft suddenly gave a disarming shake, cutting the director off. I startled, reflexively bringing my hands to my head. For a moment, it stabilised, and I made to breathe a sigh of relief, hearing the director’s voice again, until the ship shook again rigorously, this time harder than before. It trembled with a vengeance, and I veered from one side of the spacecraft to the other, unable to keep my balance. With a thunderous boom, I felt a heavy collision on the ship’s exterior, sending me flying into the glass case. The last thing I saw was the dizzying lights of the spacecraft flickering into darkness, and hearing the sound of a terrible splintering, before everything went black.

‘You have been chosen to embark on the mission of a lifetime.’

Those were the first words that the director spoke to me as I entered his office at NASA headquarters. He beckoned me closer to the glass case that he stood next to, and my curiosity spiked as I saw the contents of it – a large egg streaked in brown and white sat delicately on a pile of leaves and rocks. It was far too sizable to be a duck’s egg, nor a goose or a chicken. Just as I was pondering the possibilities, the director chuckled at my confusion.

*‘This is the first **living** dinosaur egg that the world has ever created.’ Those simple words had me gasping in shock.*

‘But, sir, how can it be so? Didn’t dinosaurs go extinct 65 million years ago?’

‘Yes, that is true. But scientists have recently discovered a substance that mimics the DNA of dinosaurs, allowing them to be reintroduced into mankind. They have succeeded in creating a species that is similar to that of a pterodactyl.’

‘Excuse me for the directness, sir, but dinosaurs have never bode well with humans, how can they live in harmony with us?’

‘Precisely, that is why I am sending you on the mission to deliver the egg to the moon using the spacecraft ‘Tianwen 1’. We have tested several theories on whether the dinosaur can survive in such extreme conditions and results have come out positive. This way, we can ensure that we can study the habits of dinosaurs whilst not threatening human life. According to our calculations, the egg will hatch in approximately 5 weeks, which gives us enough time to make preparations.’

It was hard not to be baffled by the waves of information that assailed me, but I managed to reply with a nod.

‘Thank you for the chance, sir. I will make sure I complete it.’

‘Good. Now, you have to go start your training.’

Still stricken, I nodded and turned to leave.

I awoke with a groan, disoriented. Darkness shrouded me, except for the faint light filtering through the porthole, and I couldn’t register where I was. I sat up with another wince, my head throbbing, until I felt the sharp edge of something beneath my gloved palm. With a jolt, I was brought to my senses. I was in the spacecraft. Holding up what was digging into my glove, I almost blacked out again at the realization. *It was a shard of the dinosaur egg.* But where...

A growl met my ears, and I whirled around, only to be faced with a scene straight out of a movie. The pterodactyl stared at me with beady eyes rimmed with red, the back of its head tapered, and spouting claws on a scaled body. It was the size of no more than two fists, though it still had a certain menace to it. *The egg must have cracked from the impact.* Instinctively, I backed up. I had never been so glad to be covered by a suit, no matter how flimsy.

Eyeing the raptor cautiously, I stepped to the porthole and peered out. A vast desert dusted with red under a blackened sky swept forth from the shuttle, mounds of sand and stone dotting the earth. The skyline was indiscernible due to the wafting smog, a testimony to what I was feeling right now – bleary, confused and frankly, terrified.

All of a sudden, I heard that familiar growl approaching, with an underlying tone of hostility. I froze, regretting my decision to turn my back on the creature and squeezed my eyes shut. A momentary instance of silence settled, and I exhaled, turning around slowly—

BANG!

The flying creature knocked into me, sending me crashing into the porthole door. It squawked in a frenzy, clawing at my helmet with sharp talons and a crazed look in its eyes. I screamed, toppling around and scrambling to shake it off. With its body covering the entirety of the helmet, I could barely see my surroundings, yelling all the while. As I prepared to meet my fate and crumpled to the ground, the dinosaur suddenly slid off me, growling, beady eyes bearing into me.

Breathing heavily, I reached for the oxygen tube attached to the wall, keeping a close eye on the raptor as I did so. At this point, I was willing to do anything to escape the cramped shuttle and get away from that monstrosity. Connecting the tube to my suit in a hurry, I threw open the porthole door and rushed out with a burst of adrenaline, the raptor following in close pursuit. As I fell onto the rocky ground, bracing myself for the impact, the raptor, surprisingly, sped past me, shrieking.

I panted, slamming the porthole door as I retreated back into the shuttle. Thank goodness—

It was the official Day 1 on the unknown planet. I had attached myself to the sleeping chamber in the shuttle the previous night, relieved that I no longer had to share whereabouts with the dinosaur, while terrified at the thought that I had no idea where I even was. As if the heavens had read my mind, my headpiece suddenly crackled to life.

‘Are—y—ou—alri—ght?’ Static was audible in the director’s voice.

‘Yes, sir. But...’ I hesitated, ‘the dinosaur hatched after the crash.’

There was a moment of silence.

‘Well..that is something we didn’t prepare for. Be careful, it is not safe to be around. Is it still in the shuttle?’ His voice was laced with concern.

‘No, sir. I released it outside.’

‘Good. As you might have guessed, a rogue asteroid crashed into your shuttle and it veered off course, landing on an unknown planet. The installed tracker allows us to find your whereabouts and send backup, but it will take 2 days. Regardless, there should be enough food, water and oxygen to last you a few days. If you can still keep an eye on the raptor, do track down its behavior as we have no studies that suggests it can survive in this unknown place.’

I bit my lip anxiously, but forced out a reply. I had to finish this mission successfully, even if the detour was far from satisfactory.

‘Yes, sir.’

The headpiece died down and I was alone once more.

‘Scratch– Scratch– Scratch– Scratch–’

Noises punctuated the silence, originating from outside. I scurried to the porthole door and peered out, only to discover a shocking sight. The raptor was digging a hole right outside the shuttle, liquid pooling from where the hole came to be. It must have worked way into the night, as the hole had a diameter of 3 meters. Squinting, I observed the liquid. It was clear and seemed to resemble water.

‘A water source? This could mean that it has the potential to live here permanently.’ I muttered incredulously.

I watched as the raptor took tentative sips from the liquid, then began lapping it up enthusiastically.

‘Unbelievable.’

Though the hours were tedious on this unknown planet, I found peace in the fact that the dinosaur had made yet another surprising discovery. Through continuing to dig incessantly, I saw as it uncovered something that looked, to me, like sweet potatoes of some sort. The raptor ate it without hesitation, and I laughed to myself. I was convinced that this was the planet for it, even if the plan had gone haywire.

A year later

I watched the dinosaur with keen eyes on the screen of NASA headquarters as its first year on the planet became official. Who knew that a plan veered off course could reach such a good end? Perhaps it's true that we shouldn't hold too tight to rigid plans, and let fate follow its course.

Buried

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Lam, Licia – 11

Prologue:

The sky was dim, covered with grey clouds. A bolt of lightning struck the murky water of the lake trench. Two men stood near the lake's edge smoking "You found it yet?" His rough voice said "No." The second man replied, spraying a mouthful of smoke into the air. "But when we find it, the whole world will be ruled by him!"

Chapter 1: Can we go out?

"Daddy! Daddy! Cheng Qi yelled while running towards his father, Cheng Qiu "Yes my son?" His father turned his head wearily towards Cheng Qi "Can we go out today? I really wanna go out!" Cheng Qi wailed, hoping his father would say yes. "Why do you need to go out?" His father sighed "Because I want you to teach me more about finding dino swars! RAWR! GRRR!" Cheng Qi said as he tried to imitate the sounds of a dinosaur. "Alright, but only for a while, okay?" His father smiled slightly "YAY! Thanks, Dad! Let's go!" Cheng Qi smiled from ear to ear.

Outside in the Guangxi province, the forest was in full bloom. Birds chirped in every direction, and a rustle in the bushes could be heard every few minutes. Cheng Qi clung to his father's shirt tightly. After all, this tiny six-year-old boy still believed in the monsters from his father's stories. Cheng Qi only dared to open his eyes when his father stopped. "Here we are." His father's rough-kind voice interrupted the silence, Cheng Qi peeked through his fingers "No monsters?" He whimpered. "No monsters." His father reassured. Cheng Qi finally mustered up all his courage and removed his hands from his face. "WoW!" Cheng Qi gasped "You like it?" Cheng Qiu said to him, sighing a bit "Yeah!"

Cheng Qi smiled "Your mother used to love it when she was still here." A look of sorrow emitted from Cheng Qiu's eyes "But where is Mama now?" Cheng Qiu asked with wide eyes "She lives in the sky now." Cheng Qiu gestured to the bright blue sky, today the sky was cloudless, shining blue all over. "Oooooooooooooo." Cheng Qi stared at the sky "Hi mama!" Cheng Qi waved to the sky. Cheng Qi started to step forward to wave but tripped over a rock. "OW!" Cheng Qi yelled in pain "Are you alright?" Cheng Qiu ran to his son. "Yeah.... It hurts though" Cheng Qi held back a tear "Let's go back home alright?" Cheng Qiu patted Cheng Qi on the shoulder "Yeah, that's the stone I tripped over!" Cheng Qi pointed towards the stone. But it wasn't a stone, it was... a bone?"

Chapter 2: The Discovery: Real or Fake?

Cheng Qi's dad quickly called his fellow archeologists "Calling everyone stationed in Guangxi, come down here quickly!" He would yell into the phone. During the hour, reporters, fellow archeologists, and strangers would pass by to look. "Yes!" One archeologist yelled happily. He held a gleaming dinosaur bone in the sunlight. The bone shone, as though emitting a sense of pride from it. Cheng Qi's dad was so happy, he hugged one of his colleagues. This was the first time Cheng Qi had ever seen his dad so happy after his mom had died. Cheng Qi smiled with pride, since he was the one who found the bone, he felt important.

"We are now looking at a mass breakthrough in the Guangxi province! Two unknown species have been discovered! We are still waiting for more information about these dinosaurs..." Cheng Qi listened to the reporters, a bit confused "Now we are going to interview Mr. Cheng Qiu and Mr. Cheng Qi! You might think it was Mr. Cheng Qiu who found the bones, but it was 6-year-old Cheng Qi who found it! I must say, like father, like son!" The reporter chuckled as he walked towards the father and son "Hello Mr. Cheng Qiu! May I ask how your son found this amazing discovery?" The reporter nearly shoved the mic in Cheng Qiu's face "Well! If my son hadn't tripped over the bone while waving to the sky, that bone would probably have been hidden for a few more years!" Cheng Qiu chuckled, patting his son's head "Wow! How amazing! What about little Cheng Qi here?" the reporter bent down towards Cheng Qi. "I wike dino swars. Vey are cool!" he beamed. "Heh! I bet they are, little guy. Thank you for letting us interview you." the reporter flashed a dazzling smile as he walked off.

Chapter 3: A FRAUD! Where is the real bone?

“I’ll return this bone to the lab for more study.” Cheng Qi’s dad grabbed the ancient bone in his hands “Can I touch it, papa?” Cheng Qi gazed at the big bone with wide eyes “Sure, just be careful okay?” Cheng Qiu lowered the bone down a little bit. Cheng Qi touched the bone slowly. The bone felt smooth and rough. Cheng Qi’s eyes widened with delight “I’m touching a dinosaur bone! Look, papa, I’m touching the bone!” Suddenly, Cheng Qi’s eyes drifted to a piece of yellowed paper on the edge of the bone, it was so tucked in, that only a tiny corner was shown. Cheng Qi tugged his dad’s shirt “Papa, there’s paper there.” Cheng Qi tugged at his father’s shirt “A wha—oh!” Cheng Qiu reached for the paper and gently pulled it out. He unfolded the note and read—

To the finder of this bone,

I must say I’m impressed you could even find this note.

But I’m afraid to say, this bone is a fake, a replica of the one you were supposed to find.

I, myself, have found the bone first and have taken it.

I will find the rest of the bones as well, and bring him back!

“—Bring him back.” Cheng Qi’s face turned as white as a sheet as he read the last sentence of the letter. “This bone is a fake. A FAKE!” Cheng Qi suddenly lashed out “DON’T YOU KNOW HOW HARD I WORKED FOR THIS! JUST FOR YOU TO RUIN IT LIKE THAT?” Cheng Qi screamed in anger and pain “Papa? Cheng Qi” said quietly, but Cheng Qiu was too mad to hear him out. He grabbed Cheng Qi’s hand and pulled him towards the car “What about your friends, papa? You didn’t tell them—” Cheng Qi was cut off by his grumbling father “Let the idiots figure it out themselves..” Cheng Qi’s look was stone cold. “Okay...” Cheng Qi shrank in terror at his father’s words

To be continued...

A Brother's Tragedy

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Lau, Fong Hing Angel – 13

Fluorescent lights flickered above us. The air was stale with a pungent stench of decaying specimens hovering above jars oozing with murky, ominous liquid. Papers were sprawled across the oblong tables, each page more intricately detailed than the previous, until black ink seemed to completely tattoo its surface like a swarm of dark ants.

Weijin leaned stiffly against the wall, eyebrows furrowed as if holding back a torrent of words. When he spoke, I was hunched over a microscope, examining a shard of fossil. I knew this would happen one day. It was inevitable.

"I don't belong here," Weijin snapped, clenching his knuckles until purple veins protruded from his taut skin. "I want to write. I'm not father and I don't have to be."

I straightened, eyes narrowing as I turned to face him.

"You're being selfish," Snarling, I gestured to the scattered papers. "This isn't about being father, Weijin. It's about continuing what he started. Do you think so little of the man who raised you?"

He parted his lips soundlessly. Through the palpable silence, I could faintly hear his haggard, shallow breaths.

"As expected," Harsh laughter tore from my mouth. The words were like liquid venom, spilling out before I could fully process what I said.

"You've always been a quitter, haven't you? You failed at school. You barely passed Gaokao. Now you're going to throw away father's sacrifices for some—some *stories*?"

A deafening crash echoed through the laboratory. Weijin violently swept a stack of books off the nearest table. They cascaded to the floor in a heap, spines cracking against the cold tiles. His arm, still hovering in the air, was quivering.

"You know nothing," He spat, voice hoarse with fury. Without looking back, he stormed out, the heavy door slamming shut behind him.

I stood still in momentary silence before scoffing incredulously. My gaze dropped to the pile of books on the floor, their pages splayed open like wounded birds.

Kneeling down, I picked up a book, wiping away a layer of dirt and grime that caked its cover. It was worn, with creases and faded lettering, but I immediately recognised the meticulous handwriting and dinosaur sketches. It was my father's journal.

As my fingers ran through the pages, the weight of my words finally began to settle in my chest, heavy and suffocating as a barrel of rocks.

The days in the lab morphed into an oppressive monotony, a constant repetition of waking up, eating cold leftovers, and conducting experiments that led to nowhere. Without Weijin guiding me, I felt like a lost sailor without his navigator.

Fragments of the *Sinosauropteryx* fossil lay scattered on the workbench, each delicate piece preserved in slabs of ancient sediment, as though they were trapped in time's unyielding grip. Farmers plowing their fields had unearthed wonders beyond imagination—feathered dinosaurs, winged reptiles, all of which had once roamed these lands. Yet as I scrutinized the rock, the questions the *Sinosauropteryx* posed eluded any possible solutions I proposed. The hours spent sketching diagrams, comparing skeletal structures, poring over Father's notes, all led to doubtful hypotheses, ultimately resulting in an array of question marks.

Uncertainty clouded my thoughts. Through my mental fog, I often saw glimpses of Weijin, wild arms gesticulating at something obscured, imperceptible. Those were moments when the regret of not reconciling with him gnawed at

me, an intangible claw of bitter guilt that dragged me deeper into the pit of apprehension. Despite his disinterest in science, he'd always had a knack for seeing patterns where I only saw chaos.

"Should've figured this out hours ago," he'd grumble with a slight smile gracing his lips, tapping the blackboard impatiently, pointing out what I had been oblivious to.

However, our paths had split, there was only myself to depend on now. I looked down and sighed. My notes were a mess of contradictions, my sketches littered with incomprehensible scribbles.

The Sinosauropteryx was a relic of the past, connecting the prehistoric predators to magpies outside my window. China was filled with untold stories, bubbling beneath soil fertile with rich history. And here I sat, staring at several rocks, unable to complete a single chapter.

I flipped through Father's journal again, its pages brimming with notes on dinosaur genetics. I held up a page with my fingertip. Paper had never felt so heavy.

A shrill, obnoxious ring vibrated through the air. I picked up my phone.

"Hello?"

"This is a pre-recorded message from the police. Mr. Li Weijin was involved in a pedestrian accident and was struck by a vehicle. According to his emergency contacts, you are listed as his brother Mr. Li Xiaojin. Regrettably, his injuries were severe and paramedics could not save him. The police extend our deepest condolences for your loss. For further information, dial....."

My phone crashed onto the floor. The screen burst into glass shards, shattered beyond retrieval.

Days passed in a blur. I was disoriented, as if my consciousness had been cloaked beneath a veil, beneath the thick linen shroud my brother's body was wrapped in. The world had turned monochrome and lost all vibrancy. A few months after his death, I opened the box containing Weijin's belongings. Inside, piles of artifacts and trinkets lay densely stacked upon each other. Waves of nostalgia hit me as I sifted through them, a bittersweet smile tugging at my lips, though a throbbing ache pulsed with every beat of my heart. I picked up a flimsy plastic dinosaur, fidgeting with it as I reminisced about the nights when we'd huddle under the blankets, stifling our giggles as we played with the toy dinosaurs.

Digging further into the pile, I noticed a folded parchment with my name written in bold black calligraphy wedged between two books. They were my father's journals; I hadn't expected Weijin, who had often regarded them with disdain, to have kept them in his possession.

Etched into the yellowing parchment was Weijin's handwriting—something I had often criticised as an unintelligible jumble. Now the familiar scrawl seems like sacred runes, an eccentric, original masterpiece.

I scanned through the letter, hands shaking. A tear slid down my cheek, leaving a blossoming dark bruise on the paper. I clenched the paper and sobbed silently, frantic breaths racking my body as I cried for the brother I had lost.

Dear Li Xiaojin, my beloved brother,

The very moment I stepped out of the laboratory, I knew I had made a grave decision. Father's legacy depended on us, and I had left those heavy burdens to you. For that, I am sorry.

In many ways, you were a better son than me. You wanted to contribute, to give back to our motherland through science, to glorify our family's name. Li Xiaojin, the Li family's scientist. Compared to you, I admit I was selfish.

For years, I have helped you achieve your ambitions. Took chemistry instead of literature. Spent countless nights assisting your experiments on dinosaur anatomy. Stood behind you while you presented our accomplishments on stage, a blinding spotlight cast upon you as I stood in the darkness. For years, I neglected my aspirations, for you.

Currently, it has been weeks since we last spoke. My actions then have been ignorant and spiteful, I apologise again. Yet my choice remains unwavering. For once, I will decide what I want to become. I want to be Li Weijin, an author, not Li Weijin, a palaeontologist.

Please do not resent me, Xiaojin. This has been abrupt, but it was the only way for me to escape everyone's judgemental comments. Especially yours. Everything I have previously done was to gain our family's approval. Now, this is for me.

However, the guilt of leaving everything behind has been nagging me. Brother, I've always admired your passion, and sincerely hope my departure doesn't hinder anything for you. Therefore, during my weeks away, I gathered additional research on your current hypothesis. All my results are attached below. Consider this a parting gift, and the last scientific report I will ever make.

*Love,
your brother,
Li Weijin*

Attached to the letter was a thick wad of documents, 30 pages of meticulous analysis containing every detail I had missed, concluding the experiments with sophisticated, satisfactory results. As I emptied the contents of the box, buried beneath everything was a battered notebook, titled "Manuscript".

One year later, a biography was published in a blog for dinosaur enthusiasts. It read,

"The observations of primitive bird-like dinosaurs, mainly the Sinosauropteryx, are accredited to the late Li Weijin, Chinese palaeontologist and author. His discovery is of the utmost significance in dinosaur studies. Mr. Li's surviving manuscript was transformed into compelling sci-fi novel "The Warm-blooded Reptile", published by his brother Li Xiaojin, fellow renowned palaeontologist. Li Weijin's accomplishments in palaeontology and speculative fiction will inspire many future minds. His name will continue to be featured in history books—as one of China's great scientists and authors."

Stories

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Leung, Hin Ching – 13

The world outside blurs into a mix of colors and shapes as raindrops streak down the glass like tiny rivers.

I remember the day when the police showed up at our door. “There's been an accident” they say.

My dad, who would let me put makeup on him. My dad, who would let me and Kai put clips and bands on his beard. My dad, who was there for everything.

“He’s gone”

Outside the storm raged, thunder rolled like a distant drum.

Mom should not be driving.

I don’t say anything but Kai says instead.

“You should stop the car,” Kai says to Mom.

Except Kai says this to her phone because she doesn’t look up.

Mom sighs. “Oh please, we don’t need to stop. It’s just a little rain.” But she ticks the windshield wipers up a notch and taps the brakes until we’re going slug–slow.

The rain started as soon as we entered Beijing, where my nai nai lives.

Kai rolls her eyes dramatically. “Ugh.”

“Kai, can you at least try to have a good attitude about this?” Mom squints as she shoves her glasses up on her nose with a lot of force.

“How can you ask me that?” Kai looks up from her phone so she can glare at Mom.

This is how it always starts. Their fights are explosive. They burn each other up.

I say nothing and I try my best to divert my attention to somewhere else.

I gaze out the windshield. The landscape that slips by is peaceful. Gray stone houses, green grass, gray buildings, green trees. Gray, green, gray, green, and then, greenish brown. There was a huge figure that I have never seen before.

I sit up, There’s a creature lying ahead. It was ginormous. It looked like a giant turtle without a shell.

As we got closer. The figure got clearer, it was the same thing I saw in bed time story book mom reads to me. A dinosaur.

I rub my eyes. The dinosaur was still there. But that couldn’t be real, Kai told me dinosaurs don’t exist.

“Mom...ummm I think there's a unmmmm,” I start saying.

Now a little closer, the dinosaur was still lying down in the middle of the road.

Mom still doesn’t stop, instead she says. “Girls, please stop for a minute, I really need to focus on driving.”

It doesn't make sense. Mom should have noticed the giant creature by now, but she doesn't say or do anything, maybe she's too distracted by Kai.

"Mom," I say again, louder this time, waiting for her to hit the brakes. But she doesn't.

The dinosaur wasn't like anything I had seen before, it was glowing and it had shimmering scales under the pouring rain.

The dinosaur belongs in one of nai nai's stories.

The dinosaur stands up and looks at me directly in the eye and turns its head.

"Mom, Mom! Stop!" I yell.

But Mom's busy talking to Kai, or rather shouting to Kai.

She doesn't stop the car. We get closer. Closer. I can't breathe and I squeeze my eyes shut.

BAM!

We must have hit it, but we kept going. I slowly opened my eyes, horrified. I see Kai with her hands crossed and phone resting on the car floor, next to her feet. "It died." She announced.

I start sweating, my heart racing as I look back to scan the road.

Nothing's there.

"Kailani, please don't throw your expensive phone around." Mom huffs.

I stare at them confused. If the sudden bam was Kai's phone, then where—

Nai Nai was waiting for us with her warm smile and comforting presence. She has always been a source of stories and magic in my life. It was already really late so we all went to bed. I tossed around the bed until I finally closed my eyes.

When I finally woke up, it was around midnight. I hear a strange noise coming from downstairs. It was a deep noise, like a growling animal.

Slowly I walk down the stairs, fear nips on my toes as I walk down. I finally get down and peek inside the bathroom. I see a shadow beast, hunched over and heaving. It growls and moves.

My heart freezes over, but then the shadows slip away—

And it's not a beast at all, it's nai nai.

Nai Nai, sick and throwing up.

"Are you okay?" I ask softly.

"Of course I'm okay" she catches me by surprise as she sees me and she stands up to flush the toilet. "Why you up?"

I tell her everything in the car ride.

"Maddie," Halmoni said softly, "the dinosaur wants back what I took from her."

I blinked, trying to process Nai Nai's words. The air felt thick with magic, and the shadows danced around her like whispers of forgotten tales. "What do you mean, Nai Nai?" I asked, my voice barely above a whisper.

Nai Nai sighed, her eyes reflecting the soft glow of the moonlight streaming through the window. "Long ago, I took something precious from the dinosaur spirits—fossils that hold their memories and stories. They have come to reclaim what is theirs."

I felt a shiver run down my spine. "But why now? Why did you take them?"

"They were lost to time, buried deep beneath the earth. I thought I could keep their stories alive by sharing them with you and Kai," she explained. "But the dinosaurs are restless. They want their tales told, not hidden away."

I remembered the glowing dinosaur from earlier—the way it had looked at me with its wise eyes, as if it understood everything I felt. "What do we have to do?" I asked, determination rising within me.

Nai Nai smiled gently. "We must return the fossils to their rightful place and tell their stories under the stars, where they can be heard once more."

Without hesitation, I nodded. "Let's do it."

Nai Nai led me outside into the cool night air, where the moon hung high above us like a guardian watching over our journey. Kai followed reluctantly, still half-asleep but curious about what was happening.

We made our way to the small garden behind Nai Nai's house, where she had often told us stories of ancient creatures and their adventures. "This is where we will begin," she said, kneeling down and brushing aside the soil with her hands.

As she dug deeper, I felt a strange energy in the air—an electric hum that made my skin tingle. Suddenly, her fingers brushed against something hard and cool. With a swift motion, she pulled out a small fossil—a beautifully preserved dinosaur bone.

"This is one of them," she said reverently. "We must find more."

One by one, we unearthed fossils: claws, teeth, and even a tiny footprint that seemed to pulse with life. Each time we uncovered a new piece, I felt a connection to those ancient beings—a longing for their stories to be shared.

As we placed each fossil in a circle on the grass, the air began to shimmer around us. The dinosaur from what I saw in the car appeared.

"Tell us your stories," I whispered, feeling frightened and exhilarated.

The dinosaurs roared softly in response, their voices echoing through time. One by one, they shared tales of their lives—of soaring through prehistoric skies and running through lush forests filled with ferns.

I listened intently as each story unfolded in my mind like a vivid dream. There was a tale of a brave little dinosaur who saved his friends from a volcanic eruption; another spoke of a mother protecting her nest from predators.

As each story was told, I could feel the weight lifting off my shoulders. The dinosaurs were no longer just creatures of the past; they were alive in our hearts and minds.

When the last story faded into silence, I looked at Nai Nai with tears in my eyes. "They're free now," I said softly.

Nai Nai nodded, her expression proud. "Yes, Maddie. You have given them back their voices."

With that, the dinosaurs began to fade back into shadows until only their glowing eyes remained—watching over us as guardians of memory.

As dawn broke over Beijing, painting the sky in hues of orange and pink, I felt light. The storm had passed; the world outside was calm once more.

“Can we tell more stories?” Kai asked sleepily as we walked back inside.

“Of course,” Nai Nai replied with a warm smile. “There are many tales left to share.”

And as we settled down for breakfast together, I knew that our lives would forever be intertwined with those ancient creatures who had once roamed the earth. Their legacy lived on in us; every story told was like another piece added to our own history.

In that moment, I realized sometimes it takes a storm to uncover what truly matters—the bonds we share and the stories that connect us across time and space.

The Hair-raising Bone Heist

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Li, Andrea – 12

In the busy city of Shenyang, China, between skyscrapers and ancient temples, stood the renowned Liaoning Paleontology Museum. This day, two 14-year-old teenagers, Emily and Atlas, were visiting the museum once again. They loved looking at the ancient treasures, from bronzeware to fossils, so they were regular visitors. But this day, they were there to see the extraordinary Sinosauropteryx bone, which had been transferred to the museum just a few days ago.

This museum was very special as it contains over 10,000 fossils, which gathers archeologists together, and even had a big fossil lab at the back to research each bone from different areas carefully.

The bone was found not too long ago, in 1996. It was found by farmers near the Sihetun village and was named “the Sinosauropteryx” which means “the first dragon feather” in Chinese, as it was the first feathered dragon that wasn’t directly related to birds. It symbolizes the past and is a relic of long, long ago when dinosaurs roamed the earth. However, it was also the target of a notorious evil organization of thieves known as the Black Scorpions.

The Black Scorpions had done thousands of thefts and heists previously, but the Sinosauropteryx bone was what had caught their attention recently. They had stolen artifacts from museums, vaults, and more, then sold them back for millions or even billions of dollars. Seeing how popular the Sinosauropteryx bone was, they had called in their best thieves for the heist.

Emily and Atlas were not your typical kids. They spent their free time reading books about famous mysteries from the past. While looking at them, they noticed something very common between the robberies: they were all done by the Black Scorpions. Every time there had been a heist, the Black Scorpions had stamped a black scorpion stamp on a surface nearby.

At the museum, while they were discussing the Sinosauropteryx bone, Atlas’ ears perked up as he abruptly heard 3 words: “heist”, “museum” and “tonight.” Was that the BLACK SCORPIONS? The two friends exchanged a glance, their hearts pumping. They couldn’t possibly let the sly Black Scorpions steal such an important piece of history!

“Let’s go to Mr. Lee,” Emily suggested, her eyes sparkling with excitement. “We have to warn him and the rest of the guards!”

Atlas nodded, and they quickly gathered their things. As they raced towards the security area, they stopped at the Titanosaurus bone exhibit, where they spotted the familiar security guard, Mr. Lee, leaning against the wall of the exhibit, seemingly unaware of the danger that lurked just a room away.

“Mr. Lee!” Emily called out, rushing towards him. “We overheard a plot to steal the Sinosauropteryx bone tonight!”

Mr. Lee raised an eyebrow, looking skeptical. “Oh hey, Emily and Atlas. What are you doing here again? Playing detective again? I’m sorry, but I’m working right now.”

“This is serious!” Atlas insisted, panting slightly. “The Black Scorpions are planning to break in!” They kept trying to convince him, but still, he wouldn’t budge.

Just then, the museum’s alarm system blared to life, and red lights flashed throughout the hall. Mr. Lee’s expression changed from disbelief to alarm. “We must evacuate the building!” he shouted, reaching for his walkie-talkie.

But Emily and Atlas weren't about to leave. They knew that this was their only chance to finally solve a mystery themselves. "We can help!" Emily urged. "We can keep an eye on things while you get everyone out."

"Are you sure? You're just kids! I know you read mysteries a lot, but..." Mr. Lee hesitated, but the urgency in their voices convinced him. "Alright, fine. But you two make sure to stay hidden and call for help if you see anything suspicious."

As the last of the visitors exited the museum, Emily and Atlas found a dark corner near the exhibit. They waited there silently, their hearts pounding in anticipation. The minutes ticked by, and finally, the sound of footsteps echoed through the hall.

Peeking from their hiding spot, they saw three figures dressed head to toe in black sneaking toward the Sinosauropteryx bone. The tallest one, with a dark mask covering his face, pulled out a crowbar.

"It's now or never," Atlas whispered, his voice barely audible. "Wait! I think we need to distract them since all of them are twice our size."

Emily nodded, her mind racing. "I've got an idea. I remember that in Sunzi Bingfa, Sunzi mentioned that a good way to fight enemies more powerful than you is to confuse them and lead them to a different location. Then, you will be able to sneak attack them."

"Oh yeah! Let's do that. I can use my strength on the actual attack! This is what we've been waiting for. Let's do it!" Atlas said excitedly but then whispered a quick 'sorry' when Emily reminded him of the volume he was speaking at.

Unzipping her backpack, she pulled out a small drone equipped with a camera. She had been practicing flying it for weeks and knew it would be perfect for this situation. With a few quick taps on her phone, the drone whirled to life and took off into the air, buzzing toward the thieves.

"Hey! What's that?" one of the thieves shouted, pointing at the drone.

The distraction worked. The thieves turned their attention to the buzzing object, allowing Emily and Atlas to slip out of their hiding spot. They hurried to a nearby display case filled with ancient treasures.

"What's the plan?" Atlas asked, glancing back at the now-fumbling thieves.

"We need to trap them!" Emily replied, her eyes darting around the room. She spotted a heavy statue nearby.

They moved quickly but quietly toward the statue, trying not to draw attention. Liam reached for the base, and with a quick heave, he and Emily managed to tip it. The statue fell with a loud crash, blocking the exit and startling the thieves.

"What are you kids doing?" one of them yelled, scrambling to regain control.

"Mr. Lee!" Mia shouted, hoping the guard would hear them. "HELP!!!"

Beep, beep, beep... Just then, the museum's alarm blared again, and the lights flickered. The thieves, now panicking, attempted to push the statue aside, but it was too heavy.

Within moments, Mr. Lee and several police officers rushed in. "Hands up! You're surrounded!" Mr. Lee commanded, his flashlight beam landing on the startled thieves.

In the chaos, the thieves were stopped, and the Sinosauropteryx bone was safe. Emily and Atlas watched, their hearts swelling with pride as the police cuffed the criminals.

Then, their gaze fell on the fallen statue. Oops. "Sorry about the statue, Mr. Lee. We hadn't meant to break it, we were just trying to block the thieves. Please forgive us." Emily pleaded, her eyes wide.

"Oh, the statue? That's alright, it's nothing compared to the Sinosauropteryx bone. Don't worry you two, you did a spectacular job, possibly one even we couldn't do," Mr. Lee said, grinning. "You saved the day."

As the excitement faded and the museum returned to normal, Emily and Atlas exchanged high-fives. They had faced danger, worked as a team, and thwarted a heist for the first time without training!

“After this adventure, I’m so tired, especially from pushing that statue down. It was so heavy!” exclaimed Atlas. His eyes were half closed, and looked as if he was about to fall asleep on the spot.

Suddenly, they were pulled away into a corner of the museum by a mysterious lady and a man, both wearing dark coats and black sunglasses.

“Emily and Atlas, we noticed how you two managed to stop the thieves earlier.” the man explained.

“Uhh... yeah?” stuttered Emily. Uh oh. Were these people going to kidnap them?

The man and woman exchanged a nod, and then the woman said, “We are impressed by your actions earlier, and we hope you will work with us to stop the Black Scorpions.”

“Wait. Do you mean we will become real spies? I mean, that’s pretty cool. Sure!” replied Atlas instantly, as swarms of energy rushed over him.

Maybe, just maybe, their dream will come true after all...

Fragments of Time

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Ongvises, Hatty – 12

Buzz! Buzz! Andrea grumbled and reached out her hand to turn off the alarm. Her hand swung towards the counter, accidentally swiping the alarm off. Crash! She leaned over the side, looking at the demolished alarm with an annoyed look plastered on her face. “Guess I’ll have to buy a new one.” She muttered to herself. Buzz! Buzz! It wasn’t the alarm. She scanned the room. Where was the sound coming from? Oh! She saw her phone vibrating on her wooden desk. Her phone was ringing! She stood up and stumbled across the room to answer it.

“Hello? Professor Lei? Are you there?” The female voice on the other side asked.

“Hi! What are you calling for?” She was trying to sound cheery when she just wanted some sleep. She walked over to the window, staring at the skyscrapers of Beijing.

“You are a famous archaeologist, known by many for your outstanding skill of unveiling the hidden mysteries of fossils. I am calling from Jiangxi, with some fabulous news for you!” The voice exclaimed delightedly.

“Oh? Jiangxi?” She had always wanted to travel there but never had the time. She straightened and listened more intently than ever to the lady.

“Yes, Jiangxi. There has been another exceptional discovery: an entirely new species of titanosaur! We hope you will travel to the dig site and help us with this amazing fossil!” The speaker spoke so elatedly that it sounded like she was squealing.

“Of course, Ms...” Andrea didn’t know her name.

“Ms. Bradley. I’ll book a flight and send you the details. See you in Jiangxi!”

“Ok, Ms. Bradley!”

The phone gave three beeps, signaling that the call was over. Jiangxi! Of course, she would go. It was a beautiful place! Although she was clumsy and groggy from sleep, she rushed around to pack her necessities for an unforgettable trip.

It was summer, the worst time for a trip there. From the moment she left the airport, she was hit by a hot torrent of wind. Luckily, Ms. Bradley had booked an Uber for her. The car traveled over hills, endless roads, and lush, green forests for what seemed like days. Finally, when Andrea thought she would never feel her legs again, the car door slid open.

A woman with a notepad and standard dig site uniform greeted her.

“Welcome! Professor Lei! We’ve been waiting for you! I’ve admired you and your work for years, and it’s such a pleasure to finally meet you in person!”

Andrea smiled. “Are you Ms. Bradley?”

“Yes! You remember me! It’s such a pleasu—”

Andrea cut her off. “I know you’re excited, but I would be delighted if you could show me the way.”

She knew Andrea was getting agitated by her endless praise, so she just nodded and smiled.

The dig site was big – expected, as most titanosaurs are as big as blue whales, with very few exceptions.

“Let’s take a closer look, Professor Lei! The equipment is over there in the tent.” She looked over at Andrea. “And don’t worry, all the inconvenient procedures have been arranged beforehand, so we can get straight to work!”

When she put on her gloves, disposable shoe covers and grabbed her tool kit, she went down to the dig site, fully prepared. The outlines of the fossil were jutting out of the earth, each section swarming with archaeologists.

“We’re still carefully uncovering the ribcages and a section of its tail.” Ms. Bradley told Andrea.

Andrea nodded and inspected the crew. They were made up of experts, coaxing the fossilized titanosaur up to the surface. She herself settled somewhere near the tail, chipping off the dirt stuck on the fossil.

She worked from morning to night, only stopping at lunch for a sandwich. She was still working on a section of the tail when the stars appeared, and she decided to call it a day.

“Guys, time to rest!”

Something shiny caught her eye in the dirt. A fragment of the fossil? She picked it up. No, it didn’t feel like it. It might be important. Ms. Bradley, now her trustworthy sidekick, came over.

“Professor Lei? We should go back to the tents before the bugs find their way in.”

Andrea rummaged for a biohazard bag in her rucksack and zipped up the heavy object. It was a matter for tomorrow.

When she woke up the next morning, her legs and arms were itching with millions of bug bites.

I should have listened to Ms. Bradley and come in sooner...

She sat up, and the first thing that she noticed was that there was a lot of shouting going on somewhere. She started changing into the dig site uniform so she could start working as soon as possible. She stopped for a moment, pocketing the rock in the biohazard bag. The moment she dazedly tottered out of the tent, she was hit by the cacophonous roar of ecstatic journalists asking their questions. The journalists were penned in precariously by some barrier tape.

“Professor Lei! Have you decided what the titanosaur’s name will be?”

“Professor, this is the Horizon Network. May I ask you a few questions?”

Andrea backed away from the mob and sprinted back into the tent. Unfortunately, the persistent swarm of cameramen and reporters somehow broke through the barrier. Some of them practically climbed on top of each other to reach her.

Now there’s no escape from them, Andrea thought nervously. Out of the blue, Ms. Bradley appeared and dragged her into the crowd, squeezing through and stepping on fallen cameras and notebooks.

“Run to the jeep, professor!” She commanded.

Andrea obeyed, rushing over and diving inside, Ms. Bradley trailing behind. Ms. Bradley slammed the door shut before a supposedly unhinged reporter smushed his face against the glass. The driver sped off down the road, jamming his foot on the pedal.

Ms. Bradley wasn’t in shock, but Andrea was. She calmly took out her mobile phone and called someone, perhaps a crewmate still at the dig site. Suddenly, something sharp prodded her on the side. “Ow!” she yelped, sitting back up. It was that unidentified piece of rock! She took it out, angling it so the sun could shine on it. It had a sharp point, and it looked polished despite only being dug up yesterday. A spearhead? *No. That isn’t possible*, Andrea thought, alarmed. *Intelligent humans didn’t appear until about 233 million years after the dinosaurs!*

“Ms. Bradley! Where are we going now?” Andrea asked impatiently.

“We are going in circles until the journalists decide to go home.” She answered warily.

“Change course for the lab! I think we have something important at hand.”

The driver nodded and took the next intersection.

The second they arrived, Andrea jumped out of the car, holding the spearhead, sprinted through the sliding doors, and skidded to a halt in front of the counter, where a bored woman sat while scrolling on her phone.

“Excuse me, ma’am, where is the archaeology section?”

“On the 3rd floor, room 309.”

Andrea turned towards the lift.

“Fill in the form before you go.”

“I’ll do it later!” Andrea told her, making a break for the stairs.

“Hey!” She heard the clatter of the woman’s phone and some more commotion before she reached the stairs, clambering up, taking two steps at a time. At last, she made it to room 309.

“Hello? I have something important!”

The scientists all looked at her. They’re probably thirsting for something new to investigate. Andrea presented the arrowhead to them. The lead scientist put on his gloves and carefully picked it up.

The scientist spoke to Andrea sincerely. “Professor, we’ll find out what we can about this. Be ready for any news that comes your way.”

After returning to the dig site, Andrea waited patiently for the message, and finally, two weeks later, when she was in her tent with Ms. Bradley, the message came...

Dear Professor Lei,

We are pleased to inform you that we have good news.

Over the past two weeks, we have invited many experts to inspect this artifact. The majority of them agree that this rock isn’t a normal rock but a spearhead, presumably made by some intelligent being in the past. We have also done

multiple tests using carbon dating techniques, and this spearhead is truly from the age of dinosaurs. This is the only recorded data about intelligent life from this early age! You are invited to the unveiling of your fascinating find in the Jiangxi Museum, on October 1st.

*Best wishes,
Lab Archaeologist Wang*

Andrea and Ms. Bradley both gasped in surprise.

“There couldn’t be a more memorable trip than this!” Andrea exclaimed, turning to Ms. Bradley. “Yes indeed, profess—”

“Just call me Andrea.”

“Oh. Yes indeed... Andrea.”

She peeked outside. The fossil was almost fully unearthed and will be put up in Jiangxi Museum. Andrea felt lightheaded with joy and a feeling of accomplishment.

Of course, she would still need to buy a new alarm.

The Boy and the Sinosauropteryx

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Zhou, Rachel – 13

A small boy trudged down the vast, muddy rice field. His boots submerged into the mud then broke free with a slimy pop, and then sunk and allowed the mucky glop to swallow it once more. The rest of the boy's clothes couldn't escape the mud either; large blobs of earth clung to the hems of his shirt and spattered all over his rolled-up pants. Groaning, he tugged off his oversized straw hat and stared into the sky. The sun slowly boiled him alive with its deadly stare.

As the boy pulled weeds in a repetitive motion, he imagined himself as a wrestler tackling an army of monsters with his bare hands. He often imagined scenarios to make his days easier, as it made pulling weeds less like fieldwork and more like an adventure.

Suddenly, the boy came to a halt when he found what he thought was a unique rock in a perfect oval shape. With closer inspection, he realized that he had discovered a large egg, its smooth white surface blemished with blueish-grey dots.

Thrilled, he hid the egg in the straw basket strapped behind his back.

That night, the boy carried his newfound treasure to the river. He dipped the egg into the river and observed as the crystal clear water carried away patches of dirt stuck to the egg. Immediately the egg's milky shell was luminous under the moon's caress, shimmering like an opal. The boy then settled the egg into a tree hole, which he had filled with soft hay and cotton blankets.

The next day, he urged his friends to see his discovery. They leaped across rocks and dashed down the muddy path between rice fields.

When they arrived at the tree hole, the boys squatted down and held their breath. Across the delicate surface of the egg was a faint crack. Then another. They gasped in awe as finally, following the final crack, the remnants of the eggshell crumbled away like ancient parchment.

As the egg fell apart, what was revealed was a strange creature: it wasn't a bird, nor was it a snake. It was like nothing they had ever seen before. The creature looked like an oversized chicken with the head of a lizard and a long, ringed tail. It had brown feathers across its back and legs, while a streak of cream-colored feathers extended from its mouth to the base of its tail.

The boys marveled in complete silence, dumbfounded with bewilderment. Finally, one of the boys blurted, "What... is this?"

The others mumbled in confusion.

The boy reached out his hand in hesitation, the tips of his fingers brushing its feathers. The boy was surprised by the velvetiness of the creature's feathers. The others reached out as well, and although they stepped on each other's feet to secure the title of "first to touch it," they were well aware not to frighten the little creature, who was curled up on the cozy hay, breathing softly.

As the excitement died down, a friend of the boy whispered, "Should I tell my dad?"

"Don't tell." The boy declared, and the others nodded in agreement. The boys sealed a sacred oath by the hook of their pinkies.

Later that evening, the boy arrived with a large bulge in his belly and a bowl in his hand. He lifted his t-shirt and goods tumbled onto the ground — rice, fruits, and a small lizard — which he placed on the center of his palm and placed it into the tree hole. The creature sniffed at the fruits but eventually snatched the lizard with its mouth and devoured it. Then it lapped up the bowl of water.

The creature was the size of a cat. Its large, beady eyes sparkled with curiosity, drawing the boy in. He lay beside it, admiring the creature's every detail. He petted it, gently stroking its feathers, until his fingers got caught in clumps.

The boy ran back to his house and stole a tin bucket, which he dragged across the river until the bucket was full of water.

He returned to the creature and dropped the heavy bucket with a huff. Dipping his hands in the crisp cool water, he gently poured it on the creature. The creature screeched with alarm. But as the water gently dripped down its sides, a calm began to wash over it, and it soon relaxed, yielding to the boy's gentle touch. Mindful not to tug, the boy ran his fingers through its feathers, feeling the warmth of its body beneath his fingertips, a soft pulse of life that sang a soothing lullaby. Finally, after all the water was used, the boy dried it with his shirt.

The creature welcomed the feeling of clean unclotted feathers. It jittered contently, nudging against the boy's palm. The boy collapsed onto the ground beside it, a weary but gleeful smile lingering.

"Good night," he whispered. The creature chirped in return.

Weeks passed. Every day the creature matured, its body expanded at an alarming pace. Every day the boy cared for the creature, feeding it, washing it, and playing with it. The boy always fell asleep beside the creature as it rested on his stomach.

One morning, the boy awoke by the tree, his eardrums ringing from a high-pitched screech.

He looked around, expecting to see the creature. Instead, he was greeted by a crowd of angry adults. The village chief was making a call, while some others wrapped cloth around fresh scratch wounds. The boy's eyes widened when he found the creature trapped in a metal cage.

The creature paced in the cage, emitting a low, threatening growl. Its eyes widened with horror as it desperately attacked the metal bars.

With a cry, the boy stumbled towards the cage. The villagers looked up simultaneously, eyeing the boy as he collapsed beside the creature, his hands frantically fumbling at the lock.

"What are you *doing*? Let it go!" He screamed.

The village chief hung up his phone and sighed impatiently. "Look, kid," he said, "it's bad enough that you were taking care of an unidentifiable creature behind our backs. We can't have you taking care of this dangerous thing."

"Dangerous?" The boy cried with disbelief. "All he's done is eat food and sleep! He's everything but dangerous!"

"That monster scratched me so hard the goddamn wound won't stop bleeding," a man behind the chief yelled. There was a blood-soaked cloth wrapped tightly around his arm.

"Well it only scratched you because you tried to hurt it!"

"We can't have a monster hiding beside the village!" A woman screamed. "What if it hurts the children?"

"It'll destroy the rice!" Another shouted.

"No!"

"Stop your temper this instant!" The boy's dad cut through the crowd and grabbed his arm, dragging the squirming boy away from the cage.

"It's a monster! Blood-thirsty since birth!"

"No! You're *wrong*!" Desperate sweat gathered on the boy's forehead, sliding down his cheeks and merging at his chin. The boy felt nauseous, his chest was radiating with heat, his world was spinning, and his vision was blurry.

"Why won't you *listen* to me?"

Someone lashed out “Kill it!” and the crowd boomed with death threats and insults. “Silence!” The chief’s bellow cut through the ruckus, quieting the crowd. “I’ve contacted the zoologists; they’ll arrive tomorrow to retrieve the creature. It will be kept in a cage, and I’ll ensure its safety until then. Now, please return to your work.”

The crowd murmured upsettingly but slowly dissipated. The boy’s heart sank as the chief picked up the cage, the creature still struggling inside, and vanished in the crowd.

Hot tears stung the boy’s eyes. Suddenly the boy was wailing, lashing out in all directions, screaming at the top of his lungs. His father’s hand locked around his wrist. He felt a painful desert in his throat. He felt a heart shattering in his chest.

At home, the boy shut himself in his room. His father beat him with a stick and his mother scolded him for making them worry. The boy didn’t say a word, a hollow sensation swallowed him.

Through his window, he spotted his friends watching him from a distance with pity in their eyes.

Time flew by mercilessly. Soon the moon rose once more, striking its glowing claws onto the boy’s mattress. The boy lay on his bed, staring at the bare ceiling, the peeling concrete revealing old brick walls. A millions of questions flooded his head – Where was the creature? Was it frightened? Did it miss him?

As the boy looked out the window, his mind wandered into a distant world. In that world, the creature nudged the boy lovingly once more. He hugged it in return, melting in the embrace. Then he hopped onto the creature and wrapped his hands around its belly, the tender sensation of feathers soothing his mind.

The creature darted off, a laughing boy on its back.

The Lost Roars of China's Dinosaurs

Yew Chung International School of Shanghai, Liu, Daenerys – 12

On a peaceful Sunday afternoon, Li Mei was sitting in her room watching the latest episode of her favourite archaeology TV show, “Time Hunters”. Just then, Li Mei’s phone rang. She reluctantly paused the television and picked it up. The call was from the Chief of the National Archaeology Bureau of China, where Li Mei worked.

“Hello?” said Li Mei.

“Hello Li Mei, would it be possible for you to come to the Archaeology Bureau now? I have an important topic to discuss with you.

“Sure, Chief,” replied Li Mei.

“Okay, then I will see you later.”

Li Mei hung up the phone, grabbed her coat, and then headed out the front door of her house.

Ten minutes later, Li Mei arrived the bureau. She walked into the meeting room where she saw a tall, burly man, the Chief and three other young archaeologists, one female and two males, all wearing uniforms. The Chief introduced them to Li Mei: the young woman’s name was Wang Jing, a girl with dark hair up to her shoulders. The others were two sturdy, muscular young men, called Chen Wei and Zhang Hao. All three of them greeted Li Mei with a warm smile.

“Alright young people, I will not waste any time chitchatting,” Chief spoke, “I am now going to introduce you to the mission I wish you to complete.” He turned to the big screen as Li Mei and her fellow archaeologists sat down at the large wooden table. Chief then explained that in Jiangxi Province, China, a villager reported finding an enormous white piece of bone that is likely to be a new kind of dinosaur fossil.

“Wow,” marvelled Li Mei. This was her first mission since graduating from college. For someone like her, this was a dream come true. Li Mei looked around and could tell that all the others were just as excited as she was, as their eyes were sparkled with excitement, and their bodies sat straight up.

“I need you all to go to Jiangxi Province, find that villager and the fossil he or she reported,” announced Chief, “you will leave first thing in the morning.”

“Yes, sir,” answered the team.

The following Monday, Li Mei and her four colleagues met at the gates of the Bureau, and they set off. First, they took the train from Beijing to Nanchang, the provincial capital of Jiangxi Province. Then, they drove for three hours, reaching the rural town featured in the address Chief gave to them.

The four of them stood outside the entrance of the small town, gazing at the endless wheat fields surrounding them.

“Where should we go now?” asked Li Mei.

“It says on the address that this villager lives at Number 12, Shanqing Lane in this village. I wonder where that is?” pondered Wang Jing.

“I believe we should go that way,” said Chen Wei, pointing to a sign that read: Shanqing Lane – 500 metres ahead.

A few minutes later, they were sitting in the house, which belonged to an old lady with pale, wrinkled skin, and a wooden cane in her hand, who was the one who reported the discovery.

“This fossil was discovered by the farmer who used to be the poorest person in our village because he has neither the ability to make money or to manage his farm. And so, he started daydreaming that he could become wealthy by digging up gold and diamonds and eventually, he became unable to extricate himself. We all tried to persuade him to

stop dreaming but he would not listen and kept insisting on his actions. After a few months, he finally ran into the village yelling that he found his fortune. We did not believe him, so we wanted him to lead the way and show us. But he did not want to let us see the unique object he found, for he thought we wanted to stop him from becoming wealthy. Then we advised him to donate his discovery to the government. He said that if he gave it to someone else for it to be kept in a museum, he would not get any money, but if he sells it to a rich merchant, for sure, he will get his heart's desire. So the next day, he set off with a spade, planning to fully excavate the object. After that, we never saw him again."

Li Mei and her companions were amazed by this story, and more importantly, they were now more eager than ever to find out about this mysterious farmer and the "fossil" he found.

"What about the fossil – or rather, the piece of bone? Did he dig it out in the end?" asked Chen Wei.

"No one knows," the old lady sighed sadly, "he disappeared after that morning."

"How did you know he was planning to dig this thing out on that morning?" Zhang Hao pointed out.

"Well, someone reported seeing him carrying something large at five o'clock in the morning, and we assumed that he must have been wanting to make his fortune..."

"How do you think he disappeared?" Li Mei inquired.

"I do not know, he got lost or something?"

By now, everyone of them has sensed that the atmosphere has become very tense.

At this point, the old lady's expression suddenly wrinkled with worry: "Oh no, now that is big trouble!"

"It is," agreed Chen Wei, "so that's why we're trying to find him."

A glimmer of hope entered the old lady's eyes. "If you do find him, and even better, him and his precious discovery, convince him to give it to the government and share it with others."

"I promise, we'll do our best." Zhang Hao reassured her.

Just like that, the four young people were on their way. After three days of fruitless searching, Li Mei, and her companions were on the verge of giving up.

"How come we did not foresee this was going to be so hard?" moaned Li Mei.

"This is harder than I thought it would be." approved Wang Jing.

Suddenly, with a thunderous crackling sound, enormous pounds of rock rained down from above, burying everything in sight.

"Run! It is a landslide!" shouted Chen Wei.

"Wait!" Li Mei called, "I think I hear someone!"

Before anyone could stop her, Li Mei determinedly ran towards a pile of rock, dodging the ones falling as she went. Li Mei quickly pulled off the large piece of rock on top of the pile, revealing a dirty straw hat. Under the hat was a tired face piled up with bearded scum. The face looked up at Li Mei and spoke:

"Who are you?"

"I am from the National Archaeology Bureau," Li Mei explained, "do not be afraid, me and my colleagues, we are here to save you."

She pulled the man out from under the rocks and examined him closely. He was short and chubby, and wore a battered overall, looking about forty years old. Her heart skipped a beat. He might be the very farmer they were looking for! So, she asked tentatively:

“Um, did you recently see anything that apparently looks like a dinosaur fossil?”

The man’s eyes widened.

“How did you know that...that...I found something by the riverbank?”

“We are on a mission about your discovery,” Li Mei began, becoming sure that he is the one she was looking for, “and when we visited your village, we met an old lady, and she told us all about you. And so, we were trying to find you, and, um, I am sorry, but...”

“You’re going to take away my fossil?” guessed the farmer.

“Yes.” Li Mei confessed.

The farmer sighed. “This fossil might have brought me riches, but it has also harmed me. If it were not for this cursed thing, I would not have been caught in this landslide...”

“And?” asked Li Mei hopefully.

“I suppose, because you saved me, I shall give it to you.”

“Yes, thank you!” cried Li Mei, “I am sure everyone in my working unit will also thank you sincerely.”

The farmer smiled faintly.

Outside, Wang Jing, Chen Wei, and Zhang Hao were still waiting for Emma to return, and they were starting to get worried. Finally, they saw Emma come towards them, with the relieved farmer behind her. Emma smiled at all of them and said:

“Come on, let us get the fossil.”

Therefore, Li Mei and her colleagues earned them selves a gold medal for saving both the life of a person and an important cultural artefact. As the ceremony concluded, Li Mei felt the weight of the gold medal around her neck. The fossil, now donated to the government, would enrich the nation's understanding of its ancient past. This mission had not only uncovered a significant piece of history but also ignited Li Mei's passion for future adventures in archaeology, knowing that this was just the beginning of many more discoveries waiting to be unearthed.

Jakes' Wonderful Fossil Adventure

Yew Chung International School of Shanghai, Liu, En-Ray – 12

It was a cold evening when a young man stood outside his Hamlet, this young man appears to be confused, thinking about something. “Curious about the outside Jake?” Her mom came next to him without making a sound, as usual. Of course, Jake never been to the outside world, he has been in his Hamlet helping his family since he was 2 years old, he never had the time to go out and explore. His Hamlet was a poor place, it was in the more suburban place in the United States.

One morning, A man worn in shabby cloths and a bamboo made had come to their Hamlet and said, “Any of you would trade living items for some money?” Jakes mother and father both disagreed, just when Jakes mother was about to say no, Jake came and asked, “what are you willing to trade?” His father and mother were both surprised, “Jake I know your curious, but you also need to learn to think before you do” her mother told, Then Jake answered, “I know what I’m doing mom.” “How about, a horse,” said the trader, A horse was a wonderful animal, and it will come in use, but Jakes mother and father does not like the idea that they will have to feed extra food every day, it would be too stressful, but before they can say anything Jake took out his pocket money and declared “deal.”

The deep dark color horse was resting in his little hut that Jake built for him resting, Jakes mother and father didn’t had time to take care of him so it was up to him to take care, it was Jakes idea at the first time so he should take responsibility of course. After an hour of feeding and cleaning his horse, he went to help his mother and father with the chores. Jake liked the horse, He had dreamed of having an animal that he could ride on, and because he got one now, He had an idea.

That night he packed his bag and was checking if he had missed anything, Jake was ready for his adventure, “I cannot let my parents get worried, but I can’t miss this perfect chance” This was Jakes only chance for his dream, Jake didn’t only liked travelling he also dreamed of being a paleontologist, because he wants to discover more things and share with his family, this was his only chance. Jake carefully tip toed outside with of making a noise, sad on his saddle and became his journey.

The next morning Jake was already far away from home, he targeted a mountain that’s close to him as a goal for the end of today. Soon enough Jakes parents realized that Jake disappeared with the horse, they know Jake was not coming back for ages if he left, so they started to worry, they’ve asked all their neighbor’s, and they got no information.

That night Jake approached the mountain he had set his goal on, He built a small campfire found a few leaves and promise himself that he will find what he wants tomorrow, after that he silently fell asleep with a bit of worries in his head. On the other side, Jakes mother was still panicking but somehow his father wasn’t, “what’s wrong with you, our child is gone!” Jakes mother scold, His father figured out Jake was on his dream trip now and explained to Jakes mother, now she understood, even though they both are still worried, but they knew that he would come back in one piece and achieve things he never did.

The next day, Jake continued his journey, he knew where he was going, his dad told him a story when he was small, about the cave beneath the mountain, and that’s what Jake was doing, digging right beneath when he had slept. After digging for hours, he heard a voice coming from above, he climbed up the ladders he had prepare and looked around, there was a shadow moving, even though it wasn’t dark yet, but he still feared, he tried to not think of it and continued mining.

Finally, Jake had found something special, a shiny rock, “this rock looks like a gem to me!” exclaimed Jake, he threw it into his exploring bag. He knew he was close to the cave now since he found a gem, but it was also really irritating that the same sound has been repeating for hours, it sounds like a man speaking but whenever Jakes climbs up, he can’t find any trace of a living man. Jake decided to go on mining the next day, maybe the sounds will begone and he needed a rest anyway after hours of mining.

But just when he was falling asleep, he realized that the man stopped sleeping, and it sounded like the steps were getting closer to him, he stood straight up and hid next to a rock nearby. Soon enough, there was someone who appeared, "You don't have to hide, I'm not a person who will bring harm to you" said the suspicious man, Jake carefully walks closer to the man and asked, "who are you?" "I am also a miner, I live in the mountains" answered the man, that's unbelievable Jake thought, there's another person mining in this mountain. At least now Jake felt released that the man would bring no harm to him.

That whole night they were chatting together, and they realized they had similar hobbies and dreams, he gave Jake his compass and told him to get back home as soon as he finishes because it's still dangerous in the mountains then left. The next day Jake arrived at a cave full of darkness, luckily, he brought a lighter and he was able to see his surroundings, he started exploring the cave full of darkness.

Soon enough Jake found a footprint that looked like it was there a century ago, he followed it, and it brought him to a dead end. He didn't leave though, because he thought he unexpectedly saw something he wanted to see.

A fossil, yes, Jake saw a dinosaur fossil, he was searching for this piece of fossil this whole journey. Since his dream was to be a paleontologist, this step was a huge step, finding a fossil and studying it was important. Jake could finally go home.

With the help of the compass his friend that he met in the mountains gave he soon arrived home. He knew his parents were worried, so the first thing he did was find his parents and gave them a hug. Jake explained his whole journey and his parents were proud of him, they studied the dinosaur fossil together and Jake thought this might be the best experience he had ever experienced.

The Cub

Yew Chung International School of Shanghai, Wang, Oliver – 12

About 150 million years ago, on the vast plain of China, the sun shines on the wide back of a group of titanosaur. They had extremely long necks, allowing them to eat the leaves easily. They leisurely lay on the soft grassland, enjoying their carefree afternoon. This is their habitat, where they had lived for millions of years.

In the group there was a young cub, he moved here with his parents from a far place, he really likes his new home. He is very safe here and the only thing he needs to do here everyday is to find food, when in his old one he needs to hide from various predators. Although leaves taste good and it is easy to find, but his most favorite food is fish. His parents always took him to the river, and he will put his head into the water and waits for the fish to come, every time he could catch a fish or two. He really enjoys fishing at the river, not only because the fish tastes brilliant, but also that he could cool himself down in the water and hide from the heat. Besides foraging, he also likes to enjoy the landscape of the mountain in distance, and at dusk, it looks even attractive. Although there were dinosaurs frequently trying to disturb their life of leisure, but they could always protect themselves from those attacks.

Decades passed, and the cub had grown up and had his own family. In these years, he had experienced numerous attacks and starts to be responsible for protecting his family and their clan. He worked hard protecting his two cubs from any danger, allowing them to grow up safely. He and his cubs always enjoy playing together, and in his spare time, he will also teach them how to fish.

After doing so much for his family, he is also getting older and older. One day afternoon, he had a feast of six fish and a lot of leaves and felt full. He lay on the grass and appreciates the view that he watched for his whole life. He felt tired, so he closed his eyes and enjoyed the sunshine. Slowly, he fell asleep and he never woke up. Millions of years had passed and the old titanosaur's body had turn into fossil, buried deep underground. One day, it was found by the scientists in Jiangxi, China. Its discovery let the scientists had the opportunity to study it, also proved that titanosaurs had lived in this place.

The Dinosaur that was Different

Yew Chung International School of Shanghai, Zhu, Yinyu – 12

Once upon a time, there was a dinosaur that had superpowers. It had a robust body with obvious muscle lines. It had a strong body full of muscles, which made it very strong. The dinosaur also had unique patterns that could change, which made it integrate into the environments quickly. It had a blue eye that could help it look far away.

The dinosaur was not afraid of anything because it had super strength. It could turn over a huge rock that weighed 450KG easily. It could also break through thick trees quickly with no hesitation. When there was a stone blocking the way, it could crash through it quickly and run past.

The dinosaur could also catch all the prey easily because it had unique patterns on its body. This pattern helped it integrate into the environments quickly. If it saw a prey, it could blend into its surroundings and then jump out to catch the prey easily.

The dinosaur could also find prey or danger easily because it had its big blue eyes that could see all the prey or danger quickly. When it saw a Tyrannosaurus rex that wanted to eat it, it could quickly see it and eat it first. Also, if the dinosaur saw a prey, it could change its color to match the surroundings and eat the prey as fast as it could.

This was the dinosaur that had superpowers. It had a strong body, unique patterns on its body, and special eyes that could see far. This was the dinosaur that had superpowers.

The Adventure and the Note

Ying Wa College, Fung, Jayvas – 13

Demar is a 13-year-old boy living in Hong Kong. He grew up in a relatively poor family and his family struggled to put food on the family table when Demar was young. This tough childhood led Demar to always leave home and explore new things, although he's had encounters with wild creatures like snakes and bears trying to attack him. Demar has always fought and stayed alive. Last week, Demar traveled up to China with a group of students from school to check out the dinosaur fossils there. He was feeling hyped for the visit and could barely sleep the night before. When Demar and the other students reached the museum, it seemed oddly empty inside. The security guard said that on that day there were surprisingly no bookings apart from us to visit the museum, so we had the entire place to ourselves for the entire day. As there were only 8 students in Demar's tour group and there were exactly 8 dinosaur fossil exhibitions, we were each assigned to visit and analyze one gallery. Demar was told to tackle the tyrannosaurus room. The scary part was that the exhibition staff told them they had to observe the dinosaurs with the front door closed so they would literally have to be alone with the fossils! 'Oh my god! Can we drop this idea? It's way too scary!' Demar heard some other of the students echoing his sentiments. Unfortunately, the security guard said, 'Sorry lads, no other choice here. Either go in or go out. Therefore, Demar shakily entered the tyrannosaurus room and the door swung shut behind him with a click.

The first thing Demar saw in the room was unsurprisingly the tyrannosaurus fossil, but as he was writing down some details of the dinosaur, the skulls seemed to twitch and creak a bit, then before Demar could even register what was happening, the dinosaur fossil came to LIFE and swung its left paw at his head. If Demar's instincts hadn't kicked in just then, he would've been pancaked. Demar bolted for the door and tried to exit, but realized the staff had locked the door, also he found that the material of the wall surrounding the room was sound-proof so nobody could hear what was going on inside the room. But Demar didn't have enough time to think because the tyrannosaurus was trying to squish him again.

'I have to find a way to get this fossil under control.' Demar thought to himself. He picked up the only weapon he saw in his sight, a metal pole which had dropped down from the ceiling when the fossil came alive. When the dinosaur decided to bite at Demar, he swung the metal pole as hard as he could at its jaw and to Demar's surprise, cracked the fossil's head off completely. The structure of the fossil went crashing to the floor with loud CLANGS and BOOMS. Before Demar could register what had just unfolded, everything suddenly blacked out.

Seemingly moments later, Light started flickering in front of Demar, disturbing him from his deep slumber. Demar reluctantly sat up and his hands touched patches of grass on the ground. That led him to survey his surroundings more consciously, and what Demar saw almost caused him to pass out. Smack in front of him was a humongous triceratop looming over Demar and brandishing all of its thick, sharp teeth in his human face. Demar did the only reasonable thing anybody could do, and that was to run.

Although Demar was already tearing away at breakneck speed, the dinosaur seemingly managed to match ten of my steps with one of its own. Within moments the beast had cornered Demar in a corner of a rocky wall without an escape route. Then at that moment Demar did arguably the most courageous thing he's ever done in his life—leaping onto the triceratop and pulling out one of its front teeth. Suddenly the dinosaur crumpled to the ground and turned to ashes. In its place was a golden key, the ones you would likely see in movies. After Demar took the key, a door with a matching gold colour popped up next to him and he walked right through. The door closed quickly after Demar entered and within moments, he was plunged into darkness once again.

Just as quickly as Demar had fainted in the museum, he woke up to see himself still lying on the floor of the tyrannosaurus exhibition gallery. As he got up, he saw something very weird: The tyrannosaurus skull, which had literally been in pieces when Demar passed out, was now completely intact and without a single scratch on it. He could still see the other students in the other rooms examining the dinosaur fossils. Also, based on Demar's watch, he

had seemingly just passed out for one minute,so how could the dinosaur skull be fixed so quickly?Then at that moment,Demar noticed a small piece of paper beneath the base of the tyrannosaurus skull that he was sure he hadn't seen before.When Demar went over to pick it up and unfold it,the paper read: "*Well done.*"along with a red stamp embossed with a sword. 'Who wrote this note?'Demar thought.Little did he know that his life was never going to be the same from then on.

Journey Through Time

Ying Wa College, Jiang, Weike – 13

Lightning struck, lighting up a well-defined path which twisted into the woods. It led to a hidden vacation cabin. It stood in one of many dense forests in Xishuangbanna, China.

Inside stood a long-haired figure, Nicole. Beside her stood her husband, whose name was also Nicole – just without the “Ni”. That’s exactly how he, a typical windbag, prefers to introduce himself. The cabin was silent, but both of them were definitely cursing at the thunderstorm.

Bright rays of sunlight shone through the distant valleys, revitalising the entire forest. Cole decided to go for a walk before Nicole woke up.

“HEY! OUTSIDE!” a muffled voice interrupted Nicole’s peaceful sleep. Seconds later, Cole dashed into the room with wet brown mud all over his body. He was puffing excessively, and simply signalled Nicole to come with him.

Meanwhile, outside, Cole was pointing at a concealed stone-like substance, whose milky tip was visible above the dark brown soil. Impetuously, Nicole was instructed to grab a palaeontology book. And a spade.

Soon later, a new item had appeared in the cabin, next to Cole’s backpack. It was a small but imposing debris of a fossil that supposedly belonged to *dinosaurs*. One from the *Cretaceous period*, to be exact.

The sun was now shining high above the skies, as the couple emerged from the cabin. They’ve decided to desert their vacation plans and expedite away with their invaluable treasure. Venturing onto the path which supposedly led out of the forest, they made sure their movement remained undetected.

However, something seemed off. The trees, once so tall and imposing; once so strong and blossoming; now seemed significantly shorter and slimmer, as if brown lamp posts with paint peeling off. As they ventured forward perplexedly, the path simply ended at the edge of the forest, and no directions remained. Even worse, their watches malfunctioned – “12:60” was blinking repeatedly.

In front of them was a vast plain, whose end wasn’t visible by the naked eye, and no signs of civilisation were shown. With the help of the Sun, they made headway eastwards.

Day x

Time passed by quickly. Almost too quickly. Before Nicole and Cole could even conquer their first hill, sunset neared.

Regret was flooding them, but oftentimes taking a break is better than turning back. Hurriedly, Cole built a shelter in just under an hour while Nicole stood aside in awe. The humble little hut was quite cramped; the sticks didn’t look sturdy enough; and the cloth didn’t provide much protection. But it was livable, and that’s what mattered most.

Cole made sure everything was set before shutting his eyelids.

A deafening screech broke the silence. Cole subconsciously stuck his head out, trying to figure out what had dared disturb his peaceful sleep.

The gleaming sun was hung right in between the valleys in the distance, dyeing the sky into a beautiful hue. The sun was still reluctantly sinking away from darkness.

Cole, who was still idiotically dwelling over his lost sleep, scratched his head like a clown. He was pretty certain, despite his half-awake status, that he began sleeping in complete darkness. Before he could find a reasonable explanation, though, his eyelids became too heavy again.

Day $x+1$

Nicole was awakened by the morning rain. The sun had just woken up, too, but Cole was still snoring. After observing the motionless surroundings, she gladly went back to sleep.

A while later, Nicole wiggled her legs and looked outside – the sky was painted in blood-orange, yet the sun wasn’t ready to come on stage. She sank into deep thought, but was abruptly disturbed by Cole, who’d just woken up with a big irritating yawn.

It was a blazing and humid day, and the couple's last remaining clothes were soon soaked with damp sweat. Their feet rubbed against the fibrous grass, which sounded like cheese grating.

Out of pure boredom, they started telling jokes to each other.

"How do cows do maths?"

"Using a cow-culator."

Before they could get over this corny joke, a cow – an actual cow, though it doesn't do maths – came out of absolutely nowhere and charged towards them.

Nicole, who stood closer to the cow and was sent flying under the tactical disadvantage. Cole, who tried to fend it off with his red backpack, also took flight just seconds later. His idiotic efforts did make his flight a bit more dramatic.

Fortunately, the meadow was pretty soft and they sustained no serious injury. What did sustain an injury, though, was their precious dinosaur fossil. It free-fell out of Cole's backpack before splitting in half with a crisp "clink".

Unfortunately, the cow moo-ed at them and ran away.

The shredded fossils rested on Cole's palm while the couple stared towards the infinite rolling hills ahead. The sight was slowly sucking their energy away, so was the countless senselessly painful scratches on their bodies.

"How long since we've departed?" asked Nicole out of desperation.

"Dunno. The sun looks as though it hasn't moved!" replied Cole.

To their disgrace, they were right beneath the sun, and so progress was forced.

At this moment, both Cole and Nicole had gears overheating in their brain. They had their own theories of time, yet nobody spoke up.

The terrain slowly became flatter, and the empty hilltops were turning into tree-filled plains.

The enervating heat slowed down *their* pace, but it didn't slow down time. In fact, *it sped it up* – the sun was now disappearing in the distant horizons.

Just as Cole planned on building another masterful hut using sticks, he came to the disturbing realisation that all the trees had spikes. Panickingly, they resigned to building two hammocks between the dangerous trees, and dozed off uneasily.

The sun always rises no matter how tall the mountains are.

Why couldn't they?

Day $x+2$

Nicole woke up thrice and thrice she went back to sleep confusedly. It wasn't until the sun had fully risen when the couple jolted awake. The spiky forest had vanished, and they were lying on the grassy ground – which should never be the case when you fall asleep on a hammock. In fact, they were situated amidst a large plain. However, they didn't find anything off.

They tried to scavenge for food in their backpacks, but they were as empty as their stomachs. Last night they made sure there were still 10 loaves of bread, but either it was stolen or that was a hallucination. Logically, it was likely the former, and unfortunately they didn't realise, again. And this put them in real trouble.

Day $x+3$

They thought they could sleep their hunger away, but were proved wrong. Luckily, the ocean was approaching.

Day $x+4$

Thanks to Cole's restless observation, a blurred image of civilisation far away was discovered. With nothing else to lose, they decided to head that way.

Time might be speeding up again.

Day $x+5$

Patience is key in life, and sprinting turned out to be aggregating.

Day x+6

Adrenaline rush hit the couple. All pain and tiredness and numbness temporarily flushed away as they found themselves in a little fishing town before darkness.

They walked into a giant plaza. To their delight, it was filled with human beings. But no matter how many more people there were, none were useful, as all of them simply behaved like broken NPCs and wandered around ignorantly. Nicole looked at Cole – he looked surprisingly relieved and wasn't triggered by the odd situation. He signalled Nicole to follow him as if a local tour guide, and led her into an unoccupied building, where they spent their eventless night.

Day x+7

Next morning, the couple scrambled to the pier where they boarded an unknown boat.

The adrenaline rush was slowly fading away. Cole's facial expression remained calm, but Nicole's became extremely twisted, as her body burst into intolerable pain.

The waves were getting stronger and stronger, but that did not matter anymore. Nicole didn't know where Cole was taking her, but neither did it matter.

Night was falling, and only the rippling waves could be heard on the silent boat. Before her eyelids became too heavy, she took out the shattered fossil and held it. It was gleaming again, under the reviving moonlight.

Was it just reflecting light, or was it winding her up?

The boat was slowly sailing away from civilisation, so was her heart away from sanity.

10 Dec 2024

In a beautifully decorated flat in West Kowloon, Hong Kong

Coleson was just a six-year-old kid. "MUMMY!" he was pointing furiously at the TV. It read, "Dinosaur bone fossils have been discovered in Hong Kong for the first time. The Development Bureau said the fossils were found on Port Island, while experts believed they were from the Cretaceous period, about 145 million to 66 million years ago."

"DINOSAURS! RAUR!" his mimicry was on-point.

Mum smiled and lovingly tucked him into bed.

"Dinosaurs..." she murmured. She's found herself smiling again.

She looked outside.

The storm was yet to strike.

The Rescue Through Time

Ying Wa College, Lau, Ngo Hei – 13

The Rescue Through Time

And off, creating an atmospheric and perfect environment for this figures to steal its objective. As it almost makes contact with the fossil bone, another shadow swiftly emerged from the shadows and caught him by his hand.

“What do you think you’re doing, you cunning thief!” said the shadow, with a snappy voice, like his superpower.

“You surely don’t know who you are messing with,” said the person with her hand clutched, quite firmly. The person being grabbed then swung her two legs above her head like a spinning top, clamping her opponents head and knocking him on the floor.

“Oh, it’s just you, Damon,” said Jessie, seeing her innocent teammate in agony, with a ‘sorry I didn’t mean it’ face.

“Why are you even here? False alarm everyone.” Said Damon restoring his footing and rubbing his back and head, talking into his walkie talkie, “I thought you were patrolling the Africa region last month.” “Headquarters has gathered the whole gang back, this fossil contains all valuable minerals across the Middle East and Africa, making its initial bidding price to one trillion dollars in the black market,” information came from Jessie’s mouth while Damon kept listening, “the gang’s mission is to make sure this valuable fossil horn returns to its country safely but various organisations have set eyes on them, making it an impossible job to do so.

“This is where we come in,” answered Damon, finally getting the point of Jessie’s words. “We...” Jessie’s yapping was interrupted by a sizzling sound. As the duo looks towards the sound on the floor, they found a lighted grenade. Before they could make a move the grenade exploded with sparks and incinerated the place immediately. The duo gained consciousness after the heavy smoke faded.

“On the bright side, it was a smoke grenade and we’re ok,” said Damon, dumbfounded with his companion, “on the other hand, we’re screwed, cause the fossil’s disappeared.

Both of them looked at the case where the fossil was stored, only found nothing but dust and remains sparks of the impact. They knew it was going to be a long night.

“How! Just how!” The two defeated agents were questioned by their leader, Darren, “how could you guys let them pass through and just leave with the crown without even noticing!”

“Beep, hi guys, you have a new mission from HQ. It is ...” the Robot indicated, before getting indicated. “Shut it, robot! We know it’s retrieving a kind of fossil!” said general Darren, furiously, but started to calm down, “let’s head to the Warcraft and head over the fossil.”

“Wait, it was found?” said Damon baffled, confirming his idea with his leader.

“While you guys were slacking off, feeling bad and doing nothing for your mistake. I examined the dust on the fossil’s case, it indicated that it was originated in a spot in the Egypt, maybe we could find some clues there. Let’s go and try finding some clues.” said Darren, with a grumpy tone.

“I shall go with you. As this seems as a serious matter, the whole team should go, I suppose.” General Marshall boomed strictly. He showed everyone in the room his authority.

“Shut up, we’re going,” icy words came from Darren’s mouth as he starts twisting the air into a majestic, purple black hole, which transformed into a portal door whirling intensely.

“Remember, everyone, we should reduce the casualties to the minimum, also...” Marshall started using his

leadership abilities and started babbling, while Damon was sulking in a corner, not listening at all. Why should he be Darren when he’s a just power user like me! He’s just a prodigy wannabe who bosses around all the time!

After the brief done by Marshall, the gang shrunk and twisted into the portal that Darren had created. In the glimpse of an eye, all they could see was pyramids and sand all over the place.

As the team scanned across the scenery, they could only find themselves having dust and sand in their eyes, irritating their nose and their sensory system. They started commencing in their search, walking in a cautious and followed each other’s backs closely.

Marshall using his enhanced sensory system, quickly detected a dissimilar building compared to the other pyramids. It was a mini, domed shape facility, which looked deserted. The team immediately entered the ominous looking facility, with their guards up. As they got to the centre of the building a dark shadow locked the entrance and faced the heroes looking at them in a spine-chilling glare.

Damon wanting to prove his worthiness to Darren, quickly zoomed to the figure, however, he forgot the Terrain he was present, the sand started to get into the atmosphere blurring all of their visions. All the power users panicked as they hear the building starting to collapse, without any reason in particular. The figure vanished again, the team escaped the building luckily but was leaved the gang dumbfounded as they found out that their general was nowhere to be found.

After the departure of the arrogant villain, the team sat on the crumbled pillars, which were what left of the building were frozen and the air was so quiet that even the slightest vibration of insect wings emitted could be heard.

“How could you have not notice the material on the ground?”questioned Jessie

“Two wrongs doesn’t make one right,” added Jessie.

The cutting remarks infuriated Damon who was already frustrated of his mistake, his anger rises to his limit and just as he wanted to explode, a person stood out for him.

“He’s trying his best, you know,” said Darren calmly, not blaming his fellow teammate here, “we shouldn’t be quarrelling here, let’s work together and find a plan to retrieve our hostage! Isn’t this the most efficient way to finish our job and retrieve the fossil back?”

Damon who was infuriated with him teammates calmed down immediately, having Darren’s acknowledgement meant the world to him. The team was also finally getting a grip on the whole situation, and their fiery spirit was lighted.

Seeing the team in its strongest form ever, Darren grinned and flicked his finger and twisted another whirling portal. The team was ready to take on the final battle.

“I’ve put a tracker on general, on everyone of you guys, in case of emergency, let’s go.”said Darren coldly. The team was readier than ever.

After some discussion, the group had started to operate their master plan, which was brainstormed by Tom, once they arrived at the enemy’s hideout. As Tom commanded Jessie to act as a ‘damsel in distress’ The two guards at the main gate noticed her, and were out of consciousness the next second as the vigorous roundhouse kick by Jessie landed spot on. Not wasting another second, Damon who came back the gang, zoomed past Jessie into the hideout of the boss, he charged in and found countless guards carrying heavy guns.

“Let’s tango,” he said.

As the guards kept shooting at Damon, who swiftly dodged every single bullet swiftly. As he immersed himself in the hideout, he could find cables and cyber-styled designs all over the interior of it, an ominous purple neon light was glowing in pipes wrapping the hideout in and out. Darren also arrived and created energy orbs that expanded quickly in the air, which then knocked down the enemies without missing. “Well, what a twist,” as a man talked into the radio that the gang used, and let out a cackle which echoed through the dark sky. He was general Marshall!

As Marshall stopped talking he appeared behind the duo, holding Jessie as hostage “I hoped you freaks would have perished in the little accident I made! How are you guys still standing?” yapped General Marshall with a bitter voice.

“Look around guys, you have failed! My plan of destroying the world has begun! The fossil would power my hideout with its special minerals, controlling electricity across the world! Just think about all the things I could achieve! All the power! And your little friend is still in my hands! Wuhaha...haha..co..coogh,” cackled Marshall. “I don’t understand why would you do this to us!” Darren enquired.

“Do you know how much this fossil could cost me? Enough for all my life working at that imbecile headquarters! Shouldn’t you guys be joining me instead of this? Think of all the things you could purchase and achieve!” yelled Marshall who revealed the fossil from his pocket, who was also struggling to limit Jessie.

Damon said coldly but firmly again, “No we won’t do such a thing. That fossil carries educational and financial values that are essential to the world.”

“Of course,” said Jessie, punching Marshall in his stomach causing him to release the remote from his hands. As the remote flew through the air, Darren created a portal that transferred the remote to him. He turns off the glowing light surrounding the hideout. The team has successfully retrieved the fossil! “I...I will be back soon...” Marshall’s voice echoed as he threw a smoke bomb and vanished in thin air. The heroes posed as the igniting sun rose from the horizon, the mission was completed.

Prehistoric Playgrounds

Ying Wa College, Shek, Cheuk Him Aiden – 12

A random little dinosaur shook inside the confined little dark space, he fought against the wall, and CRACK! He hatched and his cute little head poked out of the hole, his eyes looking around, seeing the world for the first time.

It stepped out of its egg and ran around in little circles, free at last. The world was beautiful at first glance.

Just as it was about to run off to the wild, CHOMP! A T-Rex came out of nowhere and ate the baby dinosaur up...

'Whoa Whoa Whoa,' I told Barry, my little brother, 'I'm fine with playing with LEGO dinosaurs with you but you can't just make a T-Rex jump in and eat up the dude I'M controlling.'

'But...that's how League of Dragons works...'

League of Dragons is this weird video game about training your dragon to fight and stuff, and Barry's obsessed with it. As I was telling him that reality was not a video game, the whole house shook.

Our stuff flew everywhere, the scene of a meteor crashing onto a nearby mountaintop played in our window. Followed by banging and rumbling, it stopped after a few minutes.

'Is...is it over yet?' Barry asked.

'I think so, I think it came from there,' I said, pointing at a small mountain near us. 'We should check it out.'

'Oh no no no no, I am NOT going there,' he complained. 'It might be like League of Dragons...' I offered. 'Say no more, we're going,' beamed my brother.

After an eternity of hiking, complaining and multiple breaks, we finally got to the mountaintop.

We found a strange-looking fossil just sitting there, embedded into the earth. I knelt down, and stroked the fossil, feeling curious.

Suddenly, the fossil glowed and cracked, my eyes started to fill with concern.

I looked at Barry and he was cowering on the ground, whimpering like a baby. 'Okay that is NOT League of Dragons,' he said.

Just as he finished his sentence, the fossil burst open, flames and sparks shot everywhere, Barry and I were thrown apart, our clothes charred.

'I WANNA GO HOME' yelled Barry. A huge beam of light shot out of the area where the fossil stood, with figures the size of Empire State Building flying out of it.

As the mist cleared, a whole parade of flying, fluffy dinosaurs were right in front of our eyes, with their tiny wings they were cute, but it was the god-awful face that ruined the image.

Sitting on top of them were little bald monks holding scrolls and stuff. More came as they popped out of the dinosaurs' ahem, posterior.

'Chinese monks are the worst,' I muttered. 'Nah, they have 6000 attack power in League of—' 'SHUT UP ABOUT YOUR STUPID GAME!' I bellowed, interrupting him, I didn't want the last thing I heard to be a dumb lecture about a child's game I didn't even care about.

I guess the dinosaurs got impatient because a huge ball of fire landed a few metres away from my face.

Of course they shoot fireballs...

At that scary moment we tried to escape, slowly and as quiet as a mouse, but our unluckiness continued. Thousands of dragon scales and talons were shot around us, forming a huge wall of dragon shell around the mountain.

I grabbed Barry's hand and ran furiously towards the highest point of the mountaintop, but then the monks jumped off the dragons, landing on the ground with a thud and running towards us with such speed that they would've beaten Sonic in a race.

In a flash of light, they were grabbing us by our throats. As their grip tightened, Barry fainted, clearly unconscious. I, myself also felt the lack of air, I felt like my lungs were going to burst, my brain longed for oxygen, I felt my consciousness, if not my life, slipping away. Everything was blurry, the face of the furious monk still printed into my mind, then everything went black.

When I opened my eyes, everything was still blurry. But as everything began to come into focus, I realised that I was in a confined space.

Everything smelled like dirt and plants, and muck was dripping from the ceiling. Someone was shaking me, and I heard a familiar voice.

'Bro, bro, wake up dude! If you die, what'll I tell mom?'

I groaned and sat up groggily, intrigued by the abnormal place, I walked around, and touched the walls of the room. Right when my fingertip made contact with it, everything shook, and I saw light.

Barry and I fell as the world was revealed to us again, with a dinosaur head right above us. Shrieking, we ran. Or at least, we tried to.

Monks came charging and tackled us once more, but their fighting style was the same as before, charge and attack. So before the monk could get to me, I ran the opposite the direction and piggybacked on his short back, then he flopped onto the ground.

The other monk was grabbing hold of Barry, his eyes wide with shock as I obliterated his partner. I jumped onto him and then he crumbled onto the ground too. Since the monks were short, defeating them became much easier.

Jumping onto them, we could make all of them collapse in no time, and that actually worked ten seconds, until the dinosaurs sensed that something was wrong and tried to grab us.

One of them scooped us up and put us directly in front of its mouth, it was planning to blowtorch us for lunch, no doubt. I looked around, desperate for a way out, but all there was was a cowering Barry, and monks. Wait...monks! I had a genius idea, because the monks were so ridiculously small...

I started chucking the half-conscious but screaming midgets one by one into the dinosaurs' mouths. I was hoping that they would choke with that many monks inside their throat, but they just swallowed them with ease.

Before I could react, another dinosaur snatched us away and threw us into his jaw. Without chewing, we were sent straight to the oesophagus, and then after a few minutes, we were plopped into the stomach.

We landed face-first into a pile of monks, and they were sinking fast as they were being digested.

'Let's tickle the walls to get the dinosaur to sneeze and get out!'

'No! Cause this ain't a kids show, Barry!'

I was so annoyed that Barry was still not taking anything seriously, my feet were only a few inches from the stomach acid and the heat was really getting to me. But it must have fried and jumpstarted my brain, because I finally figured out why the dinosaurs were released in the first place.

A few days ago, I went to a dinosaur museum and touched a dinosaur bone. And me stroking the fossil must have activated the fossil. So I was the reason the dinosaurs were here. I was the result of my and Barry's death.

Barry already took off his shirt and shorts and started running around, while I just sat there, waiting for the bubbling substance to boil me alive. There was absolutely no way to get out, centimetre by centimetre we sank, my guilt worsened.

'Barry, it's over. We're dead. Just, hope that there's an Xbox up there in heaven.'

'No! We are not going to die! We are going to grow wings and fly!'

Oh innocent innocent child, how will he ever learn. I just looked up, closed my eyes, and waited for my end, I honestly couldn't describe how I was feeling.

As the acid touched my shoes, I felt the burn, pain crept up my body as I embraced the end. I watched as my legs, and soon my torso disintegrate, and with Barry's screams as background music, I left the world.

I opened my eyes and saw light, coming from the window. Slowly and steadily I got up from bed and walked out of my bedroom.

But no, this wasn't the kind of ending where I wake up and find out that it was just all a dream, because when I walked out of the house, birds were chirping, the scenery was beautiful, people were smiling and walking around, with a white sky above everything.

I saw a bunch of familiar faces. My neighbour Fred and his dog, my history teacher and a bunch of other people. I didn't know if Barry was nearby, or my parents, or what exactly happened to the world.

Maybe we released the dinosaurs and they dominated the Earth, killing all humans, or maybe it was just a coincidence that Sam the weird kid at school was walking around with a bag of Lay's. I planned on finding everyone, and what exactly happened, but that's another story for another entry, because now, I'm just going to sit on my porch, and enjoy the Popeyes chicken tenders that magically appeared in my hands.



Creative Writing
Fiction
Group 3

A Century Breakthrough

Baptist Lui Ming Choi Secondary School, Chow, Ho Ching – 13

In August 2026, young Lee dashed to the mountains as soon as he woke up. He did not even brush his teeth, as he was hyped to play in the river valley. A gloomy storm had been covering Liaoning for days and he missed the river dearly. He sprinted across the slope and jumped over rocks like a gymnast. Most people would find the route difficult, but Lee knew the mountain like the back of his hand. It did not take much time before he arrived at the river.

Lee rested on the side of the river. He tossed his shoes away and dipped his feet into the freezing water. A small giggle escaped his lips as the water tickled him. He gazed at the sun, slowly crawling up to the sky like a koala. Lee enjoyed the morning scenery all by himself, the peaceful silence calming down his energetic spirit. Although moments later, Lee started to splash around in the river. He skipped on the slippery pebbles, careful not to slip. However, he soon found it boring and craved new entertainment. An idea crossed his mind, and he dived into the water without a second thought.

When he opened his eyes again, everything was in a blurry filter. He swam around blindly, occasionally scaring the fish with his presence. He crouched down in the river, observing the riverine creatures. Tiny crabs hid in the cracks between stones, algae clung onto pebbles, but few got detached from time to time. Lee opened his mouth and caught some raw algae, the savory taste almost making him choke. As he submerged his body in water, he caught a glimpse of something special.

Lee noticed a particularly huge stone. It was not a boulder, in fact it had a rugged surface. Lee had never seen anything like it before. *Perhaps it came from the landslide from a week ago.* Lee considered. He glided through the river to take a better look. *Are those Drawings?* He wondered. A pattern of a lengthy creature had been engraved on the stone. Suddenly, a memory flashed in Lee's mind. He had read a book a few days ago in the library, it was about dinosaurs in the Cretaceous. This pattern... **could it be a fossil?!** Lee's eyes lit up. He had never seen a dinosaur before! It looked super cool! The fierce current made it hard for Lee to see crystal clear, but he was certain it was a fossil. Lee could not contain his excitement, he plunged toward the stone and tried lifting it up. Despite his efforts, the fossil was far too heavy for 8-year-old Lee. He knew he had to find help.

Lee slammed open the front door of his house, panting from the intense running. He immediately scanned around for his father, eager to tell the exciting news.

"Father! Father! Guess what I found!" Lee squealed, sparkles shimmering in his eyes. Lee's father was chopping wood. He grunted in annoyance, displeased that Lee ruined his peaceful silence.

"What is it again...?" he muttered, glaring at Lee.

Lee's enthusiasm dimmed when he saw the negative reaction from his father, but he still tried to keep a positive attitude.

"I found a fossil of a dinosaur—"

"Don't be stupid. Even if there was a fossil, why would you find it? You probably just saw a regular stone." His father interrupted mockingly.

"But I really saw it!" Lee exclaimed, trying to convince his father.

However, his father only laughed and went back to work. Lee was frustrated. He stormed off, hoping to find someone that could understand him.

Lee popped in every corner of the village, persuading each person he encountered. He was hopeful at first, but since he was a child, no one took him seriously. He began to lose hope. He walked sluggishly, sighing. He lowered his head, a moody aura spread in the air. *Why does no one believe me?*

Bam! Lee crashed into someone.

"I—I am sorry..." A lump formed in Lee's throat, making him unable to speak normally. He blinked back tears, not wanting to look impolite.

"It's okay little boy, but what's wrong? Why are you crying?" A soothing voice came from above.

Lee raised his head and discovered a kind-looking foreigner. The man had a warm smile and knelt to check on Lee.

"What's wrong?" he asked again with a concerned voice.

Lee could not hold it back anymore. He vented everything to the stranger. The stranger was surprised by the sudden outburst. However, as he listened to Lee's words, his eyes widened, and he was grinning from ear-to-ear.

"Is this true?! My name is Shane Louis. I am a paleontologist, and I would love to see this fossil!" he exclaimed.

Lee did not understand what "paleontologist" was, but he beamed at the last sentence. *He believed me!* Lee hopped in joy like a squirrel finding a nut.

"Come with me then!" Lee pulled the man's wrist and urged him enthusiastically.

Lee flashed through the village like a lightning bolt, Dr. Shane yelped as he was dragged behind him. The two soon entered the mountains. Dr. Shane was already breathless and struggled to climb rocks. Lee was an impatient child, but he waited and often lent a helping hand.

Soon enough, they arrived at the river that Lee played in the morning. Dr. Shane gulped, he was not expecting a large river valley. He carefully stepped in the water, while Lee jumped inside. Lee scanned around like a robot. Finally, his gaze landed on a rock.

"Here! There it is! That's the fossil I was talking about!" Lee pointed and rushed over.

The fossil had sunk deep into water, but the patterns were evident. Dr. Shane walked over and examined the fossil. The fossil was heavy even for a 30-year-old man. The water also made it hard to look with human eyes as well. He knew he needed help. He called his team immediately and they came straight away.

Moments later, after the archaeological team fished out the fossil, Dr. Shane quickly started studying. The fossil reminded Dr. Shane of the *Sinosauropteryx*, but some of the characteristics were unlike. The dinosaur was small, only a meter long. However, this dinosaur had a horn and had a short tail. Dr. Shane guessed that both came from the same breed. This was an extraordinary discovery, though, something baffled Dr. Shane. How did the fossil end up in the river?

"Found it here...playing in the morning...*a terrible storm for days...*" Dr. Shane overheard Lee chatting with Julia, one of the younger members of his team.

A storm? Something clicked in his mind. Liaoning had many cliffs, and just by observing, Dr. Shane saw that many were crumbling. The intense weathering in the past few days left the ground vulnerable. As the fossil was rather small and complete, Dr. Shane reckoned that the fossil must have tumbled down the cliff and fell into the river. Then,

the strong water flow washed away the dirt and dust covering the fossil, eventually leading Lee to find it. *If that was the case, then everything would make sense!* To prove his hypothesis, he ordered his team to look around the cliffs for traces.

Lee wanted to help too. Years of playing in the mountains gave him advantages. He travelled through the mountain like a little monkey. His eyes darted from cliff to cliff, inspecting each one of them. Soon enough, he noticed one peculiar small cliff. The cliff was cracked on top and had a missing corner. It was the cliff where the fossil had fallen off.

Dr. Shane investigated the cliff furthermore and at last confirmed that the fossil was from that exact cliff. The dinosaur had frozen to death in the Early Cretaceous and was buried in the ground. Dr. Shane called the local natural history museum and reported about the discovery. Lee had made the largest breakthrough of the century.

Days have passed, news spread like fire that a new breed of dinosaurs had been found in Liaoning by a little boy. Lee and Dr. Shane were interviewed by reporters from all around the world. The enthusiasm of the world overwhelmed Lee, but he was ecstatic to face them all. He recounted the entire story, occasionally adding a few dramatic points. Dr. Shane chuckled as he saw the young boy's eyes twinkling. He knew a new dinosaur lover was born.

After the exhausting interviews, Dr. Shane decided to write a book. For a paleontologist, writing stories was not something he was used to. However, as soon as he lifted his pen, words flooded the pages like a tsunami. Time flew, he finished his book. In the end of the book, it wrote,

"—And that was the discovery of the Thanazagresaurus."

Chronicles of the Chinese Reptilian Wing

Baptist Lui Ming Choi Secondary School, Yum, Yat Nok –

It was 150 MA. The Late Jurassic period. In a massive patch of forest in Asia, among some thick bushes and twigs, a well-hidden egg rattled and shook. Its spots were darkened and amidst the dotted pattern, cracks formed. They crawled open, like a spider web. Among these cracks, one managed to complete the circumference around the egg. Suddenly, the top of the egg burst open. Two legs crawled out from the tiny egg, followed by another pair. It jumped out of what had been its home for the last years and months. A lizard was born.

However, there was no time to catch a breath. It knew that one moment of hesitation, and all those months spent in the tiny shell would be wasted. It leaped out of the bushes and hid behind a rock, for if it was seen then only death was certain. Only after it confirmed that there was nothing watching did it crawl up the bark of a tree and into a small hole. It then felt the tree shake. It peeked outside and saw something massive. The dinosaur must have been searching for food! Though it did not know what species it was, what was certain was that it posed great danger to the lizard's life. It quickly coward back inside. The trees were shaking. The leaves were rustling. Around it, the screeching of what must have been other animals was heard. Rustle, rustle, rustle. The shaking was gone. The lizard took a peek outside. There was nothing there. It decided to go get some insects for food. As it jumped down from the bark, it saw an ant right in front of it. Perfect. It leaped onto the ant, biting down onto its body. It exploded grossly, and the lizard munched on its first meal. While it was chewing, though, the bushes around it started to rustle.

"Just bugs," it thought to itself. The rustling kept growing noisier. Suddenly, a twig snapped right behind the lizard. It turned to see three striped lizard-like creatures. One difference was that their tails towered over itself. The lizard looked at them for a second and got a closer look. It was standing on two legs, which were much more muscular than its. Instead of frontal arms, they had two small fingers. They were not lizards.

All that was heard throughout the jungle was a faint screech.

"That is how the dinosaurs lived," Dr. Brown explained. Though they were not exploring the topics of ancient dinosaurs, one must have felt compelled to talk about the past before relaying the future, for the big star of the lecture would be the future of fossil hunting. Quite coincidentally, a new dinosaur specimen had just been discovered in Yunnan, signaling the growth of another branch in the bark that was the family of reptiles that once ruled the world.

Dr. Brown told his students to prepare for the next lesson which saw the class delve deeper into future fossil hunting methods. As the bell screamed, students left the hall one by one. Suddenly, one of the students stopped Dr. Brown from leaving. It was the Chinese student, who had crossed the Pacific and stayed in a foreign country for years. Although Dr. Brown had no favorite students (he liked each of them equally), he was quite fond of the boy. Quiet and pleasant, he had managed to ace his essays. He asked Dr. Brown,

"Asia has never been good at fossil hunting. Are you sure that the new technology can help?"

Dr. Brown responded with a smirk, "Trust me, it will greatly affect the process."

Though he had not planned to give a speech for one question, he really could not resist.

First, Dr. Brown listed all the pre-existing tech. Of course, there was the caveman-like way of shoveling and chiseling until one hit bone, but that would damage the specimen if the tools hit the bones. There was also the excavator method, but that would also risk damaging fossils.

Then came the exciting part. First, Dr. Brown told the Chinese student about drones. Drones were used to analyze geographical positions and aerial surveys. They would then transmit the data of which experts would analyze possible fossil sites. Also, drones could get into places where a man couldn't. Take, for example, a patch of land so deep in the

Amazon that no man could get to. Drones would be set up and flown to the area to do a first check. If there were actually fossils there, the team would bring in the big guns and reach the site, whether it be airdropping in or helicopters.

He continued to talk about drones for five minutes, after which he moved on to artificial intelligence. Artificial intelligence could be programmed to identify fossil sites. Say, there were one hundred photographs of places with fossils and places without fossils, with a ratio of fifty-fifty. After showing enough photos, the AI could practically tell apart the fossil sites. After which teams would be sent to further examine the area, saving time and money for the initial survey.

Dr. Brown could not tell if the student was at all interested in his rant. So, he used examples from China. He mentioned how China had deep soil, of which it would be hard to determine if there were fossils just by drones and AI. From that, there would be a groundbreaking geophysical technique called Radar Ground Penetrating.

A paleontologist set up a small probe-shaped machine. He signaled a thumbs up from his colleagues, who pressed a button on their small tablet. Within the span of milliseconds, a radar ping reverberated beneath the soil, completing a scan of the land beneath the paleontologists. As the machine slowly constructed the map, a few peculiar bulges were shown on the tablet. They were indicated in a three-dimensional manner, standing out from the very flat surroundings. That was the indicator of a fossil.

Dr. Brown shared his experience of using the radar himself a few months ago. It was quite easy to use and was helpful in finding fossils.

By then he had been speaking for about half an hour, and he felt the need to conclude his point.

“For billions of years, dinosaurs ruled the world before man. They were creatures who possessed an incomprehensible amount of age, and they certainly left their marks. Ever since that one fateful day though, these apex predators had now frozen solid, and all that was left were their bones. To unravel this mystery, humans had spent centuries upon centuries trying to complete this never-ending puzzle. Our ancestors had completed such a big part of the puzzle that the remaining pieces were difficult to fit. Hence, we had to advance to find the remaining pieces of this mystery, for what lay beneath the soil was something that had seen everything before the dawn of man. Although the dinosaurs could not speak, I’m sure that as their predecessors who now roamed and ruled the world like they once did, they would have very much enjoyed being studied and dug up from their slumbering state.”

Cost of Fossil

CCC Fong Yun Wah Secondary School, Tso, Sze Yu – 13

It is the year 2039, humanity and scientific research is trying to advancing day by day as we speak, the economy is in decline as only the wealthy seem to stay up float.

Mark Cadaver, a middle aged man in his thirties sat content with his old ragged couch. On his phone doomscrolling. It wasn't a surprise anymore as he checked his emails.

"Sincere apologies, Mark Cadaver. Your job application was denied."

Shucks.

Guess I'll have to try again later, I still have some money the government has provided me every month.

He checked the news on his phone, he wasn't expecting anything new in all honesty.

"Paleontologists are putting a bounty on for 250,000 dollars for any more bones of the Dinocephalosaurus as they plan to reborn and re-flesh the "Terrible-headed reptile".

Anyone who dares to attempt and try to retrieve, find and hunt those fossils in deep waters will be supplied with diving gear."

Tsk... Reviving dinosaurs? What for? The companies still running zoos these days? Pathetic. Though, 250,000 dollars for even a piece of small piece?

Why shouldn't he give it a shot? He has nothing to lose. The diving gear is supplied as well.

Mark quickly rang up his close friend, Joseph who answered.

"Why are you calling me now? I'm betting on red, hurry up."

"Joseph. We have to give it a shot now. 250,000 dollars is on the line and we should be the first to get those damned bones! Think about the fame, the time we can have with this opportunity. It'll sustain us for at least a few years!"

"Woah- Woah-! Hold on there, slow down for a second what the hell are you even talking about, Marky? 250,000 dollars? Bones? Geez take a breather we have time."

Joseph hung up.

Grumbling, Mark got up from his couch, grabbing his wallet and a jacket before getting his shoes on and taking transportation to the harbour.

Rinnng! RIIIIINNNG—

“GOD! WHAT IS IT MARK? Just lost 600 whole dollars and if it’s about those wacky 250,000 dollar bones then you better elaborate further.”

“Come to the harbour. I’m waiting in line for both of us to attempt to collect some filthy dinosaur bones. 250,000 dollars for every piece that you can find. Hurry up and bring your id.”

Joseph scoffed, rolling his eyes, there isn’t no way there’s going to be “250,000 dollars for a piece of bone tissue” though. Might as well try since Mark’s getting tickets for both of them.

As Joseph arrived at the harbour, Mark ran up and shoved a contract paper to him.

“DINOCEPHALOSAURUS FOSSIL—COLLECTING EXPEDITION CONTRACT”

“Any injuries and death will not be responsible after the signature.”

“Please write your signature on the line.”

“Mark did you even read the thing?”

“Just sign the damn contract, you want 250,000 dollars with me or not?”

Mark crossed his arms, glaring at the other as he awaited for Joseph to write his signature on the paper.

Pen up and ready, ink flew down as he signed the contract.

“Joseph Tally”

Diving gear up, ready to go down.

The two first swam deep, slowly but surely feeling the pressure against their bodies, it was taking a bit of a toll on Joseph, though Mark was pushing through.

“Hey— Mark? Something’s above us. I think it’s a ship. We should probably dive back maybe?”

“Geez shut up, just continue diving. It’s a ship, not like it’s going to suddenly sink and crush us.”

Mark Cadaver swam forward, his body just below the ship as he started to swim towards a oddly shaped yet intriguing “rock.”

“Hey Josey! These damn fossils are much easier then they make it say! Hah! Found a piece in a time record of 37 and 21 seconds! See if you can beat it.”

Mark said through the diver’s communication gear as he started to swim back.

PING.

Mark ‘looked’ at Joseph for a single second behind his diving gear before his body seemed to have stiffened, losing control as he dropped the fossil.

Joseph, perplexed and concerned as his own ears were ringing, he felt like he could pass out or his eardrums were gonna explode at any moment. Getting himself together and staring at the fossil for an couple of seconds before looking back up at Mark.

The water was tainting with red. Mark’s body slowly sinking to the water’s floor.

“Marky...?”

Joseph asked through his gear, his eyes wide and vacant, thoughts disorienting and empty.

Joseph looked up.
It was a Naval Ship.

He swam back up to the harbour. Eyes barely blinking, movements stiff and hard to manoeuvre as he climbed the ladder out of the waters.

“Here is the fossil.”

“Ah yes, this is the frontal bone of the reptile’s skull! A pretty decent find.”

“Though, where’s your diving partner?”

“...”

“I don’t know.”

The examiner the expedition seemed confused but didn’t question it. Not like she cared about their well-beings. At least they secured another piece of these fossils.

“Do you want the cash to be placed in your bank account or just be in your card?”

“Placed in bank please.”

“Right, and do you want your name to be on the ‘Fossil’s found and contributed board?’”

“No thanks.”

“LEAKED NEWS OF THE ‘TERRIBLE-HEADED REPTILE FOSSIL EXPEDITION.’”

“MARK CADAVER, 37 YEARS OLD FOUND DEAD IN WATERS FROM SONAR PING FROM AN UNIDENTIFIED NAVAL SHIP ON NOVEMBER 16TH, 2039.”

Joseph looked at the news on his new TV and apartment. Eyes half lidded, dark circles can be clearly seen under them.

His trash can uncleared, simply having bottle caps and thrown-out alcohol glasses.

Looking at his card, 217,000 remaining. Blew 11,000 last week.

I’m surprised they took so long to discover his corpse.

Is this the cost of a fossil?

New Tales of China's Dinosaurs

Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) College, Chu, Hing To – 15

'Kaboom kaboom' The activity of Chinese New Year bloomed after the sound of firecrackers. People gathered around with their families to celebrate remarkable festival together. However, I had not been able to celebrate Chinese New Year since my parents passed away last year.

'The gnocchi are left on the table. You may eat it as the dinner.' My uncle had been taking care of me since the death of my parents. Nevertheless, he was busy with his works. Therefore, he could only handle my fundamental daily needs. The cultural significance of gnocchi in Chinese is the unity of family. Sadly, I could only eat it lonely. How ironic is it!

Suddenly, some strange sound, which was similar to bark, came from the kitchen. I decided to take it a look. Surprisingly, I saw a dragon! It was a typical image of China Dinosaur. It was trying to find some food from the cupboard. When we saw each other, both of us felt extremely shocked. Before I wanted to express my confusion as well as fear, the dinosaur had said, 'Do not be worried! I will not eat or hurt you. I just want to eat something. I will explain everything later!'

After I had given it some meat, it started to introduce itself, 'I was originally living in a traditional Chinese imaginary world. There are Jade Emperor, Daode Tianzun, Queen Mother of the West, and other gods you can see in some Chinese religious books. However, due to some unknown incidents, I was accidentally transported to this world and at your home.' Then, I asked some questions that I had been curious about, for instance, how is the life of that imaginary world look like, how is the appearance of those gods.

Later, the dinosaur asked, 'Do you have any wish? I can accomplish one of your wishes as you gave me food.' The idea of letting my parents rebirth appeared in my mind. Then, I whispered, 'I want to let my parents be alive again!' The dinosaur responded, 'It is a little bit challenging for me to let people rebirth, but I will try my best!'

It read out some words like curse. A cloud of smoke suddenly appeared, and the dinosaur disappeared afterward. Unfortunately, my parents still did not appear. I felt disappointed indeed. Instantly, another cloud of smoke stretched, and my parents appeared! They were truly alive! I at once gave them a hug, and my tears ran as flooding.

A New Tale of Chinese Dinosaurs

G.T. (Ellen Yeung) College, Lam, Max – 12

In a nice and warm summer in China, when a curious group of farmers were finding new land to plant their seedlings, they saw something fabulous. It was a fossil of a sinosauropteryx, but the people in the ancient didn't know that, and immediately flew the scene as they thought it is a monster.

The next day, the palaeontologists came to investigate that it was gone, leaving a long trail of shinny feathers. Most people fought it was a prank made with chicken feathers and left. Meanwhile a curious boy named Jack decided to follow it. He bought a loaf of bread and went for the sinosauropteryx.

A few hours later, he felt tired and sat on a rock next to the entrance of a cave. As he munched on the piece of bread, a low growl came from deep inside of the cave. However, Jack wasn't afraid. He went down all the way slowly and cautiously. The growl grew louder, but it seemed more like a cry. Jack. Lighted a match from his pocket, for a second he was stunned. There at the very bottom, a large chicken sat there crying, and the floor was flooded with water. It looked like a chicken but it has slightly different features like a long tail. Jack was still small and knew nothing about danger. He walked forward and said 'hi how are you?' He got information that the sinosauropteryx is named Frank and was lost with his friends. The poor creature could only go back to the past if he found them.

Jack felt a pang of sympathy for Frank. He promised to help the strange chicken-like creature find its friends. They set off together, following the faint trail of the feathers that Jack had seen earlier.

As they walked, Jack noticed that Frank seemed to be getting weaker. The water on the cave floor was rising, and it was becoming harder for Frank to move. Jack knew they had to find a way out of the cave and to the other dinosaurs quickly.

Suddenly, a series of strange calls pierced through the air, echoing off the cave walls. Frank's eyes widened with recognition and he let out an excited screech, wings flapping weakly in anticipation. Without hesitation, he took off in the direction of the sound. His steps wobbled but determined. Jack sprinted after him, his heart pounding in his chest. As they neared the source of the calls, the ground beneath their feet became muddy and uneven, making it difficult to maintain their pace. The cries grew louder and more frantic, mingling with the sounds of rustling leaves and snapping branches.

Breaking through a thicket of bushes, they emerged into a small clearing. There, in the center, stood a group of dinosaurs that bore a striking resemblance to Frank. Some were larger, with more pronounced crests on their heads, while others were smaller and had a more mottled pattern on their feathers. They were all huddled together, happy of finally being able to reunite. However, their eyes filled with a mixture of fear and relief at the sight of Frank. Their calls seemed to be a combination of greetings and warnings, as if they were trying to convey some urgent message.

Frank rushed towards them, his body trembling with emotion. The other dinosaurs surrounded him, nuzzling him affectionately and chirping in what sounded like a language Jack couldn't understand. But their reunion was cut short by a deafening rumble that shook the ground violently. Jack looked around in alarm and saw that the earth was splitting open, a gaping fissure snaking its way towards them at an alarming speed.

As the sky darkened, the dinosaurs panicked, scattering in all directions. Jack, realizing the danger, searched for a safe place. He saw a large boulder nearby and gestured for the dinosaurs to follow. With some difficulty, he managed to herd them behind the boulder as the ground continued to shake.

As the rumbling subsided, Jack knew he had to find a way to get the dinosaurs to safety. He remembered seeing a path that led out of the area earlier. Leading the group, he carefully navigated through the debris and overgrown foliage. The dinosaurs followed closely, trusting Jack to guide them.

Finally, they reached a wide-open plain. The dinosaurs seemed to recognize the place and let out joyous calls. Jack watched as they began to move freely, exploring their new surroundings. Before Jack could react, they vanished in a bright flash, as if they dissolved into the bright stars of the night.

Jack felt a sense of accomplishment, knowing he had helped Frank and his friends. As he turned to leave, he looked back to where they disappeared, he gave a smile and went back of leaving a trail of kindness.

A week later, when he went to the museum, he saw a display of dinosaurs that had been open to public just yesterday. There was a detailed model of the sinosauopteyx. Jack smiled to himself, knowing that he had been a part of something truly extraordinary. From that day on, Jack's love for paleontology grew even stronger. The little boy spent his free time reading books about dinosaurs and ancient creatures, dreaming of one day becoming a paleontologist himself. And whenever he looked up at the night sky, he would think of Frank and his friends, and the amazing adventure they had shared.

Through the Eyes of a Jiangxititan—The Untold Story

G.T. (Ellen Yeung) College, Lee, Sum Suet Charlotte – 12

“... Near the end of June, a group of palaeontologists discovered an unidentified dinosaur’s skeleton during a worksite in Jiangxi, China. It was later revealed that this set of fossils belonged to *Jiangxititan ganzhouensis*, a new species of titanosaurian sauropod. According to studies, these fossils are thought to be dated back about 90 million years ago...” Zhao sat on the side of the couch, leaning on the armrest. He turned down the volume of the TV, scoffing sarcastically as he kept his eyes and ears on the news report.

“ Can you believe it? They removed most of the important information about our discovery! First off, *Jiangxititan ganzhouensis* is not simply a new species of titanosaurus sauropod. Jiangxi is a singular genus of somphospondylan, and *J. ganzhouensis* is its sole species of this genus, therefore this species isn’t a titanosaur, and instead non-titanosaurian somphospondylan. Which suggests the existence of an entirely new undiscovered group of titanosaurs in Asia! I mean seriously, how could you mess that up?—”

“—Give them a break. After all, they only report as much information as their sources gave them.” Dr. Chang cut him off, standing near the entrance of the resting area. She had her white laboratory coat on, paired with plain gloves usually used for inspecting specimens. Chang walked to the front of Zhao, standing with her arms crossed.

“Now, if you’re done with your little afternoon tea party. We have to get back to work.” Dr. Chang commented lightly before walking hastily around the couch and back outside, leaving Dr. Zhao to quickly follow after her.

It’s unusually quiet today, aside from Zhao’s obnoxious chirping and Chang’s sarcastic responses. Usually there’s a few more people in the laboratory. Dr. Ming Lee would be at his station busy as always, mostly trying to finish the team’s piles and piles of paperwork, such as filling out forms or research. Aimee— the new intern— normally only goes to on-site work and verification as such, but sometimes she would stop around the laboratory to help out with analysing and or just basic tasks like removing dust and rocks from fossils. After doing all of their respective work, both of them decided to take a break today, hence why neither of them came in.

Nevertheless, the show must go on. As the wise Dr. Ming Lee once said, “ The history of the very earth does not wait for us!”

“So, shall we get started?” Dr. Zhao grinned cheekily.

“Get started we shall!”

She gently and carefully glided her hand against the fossil displayed for inspection, feeling every bump and dent. Dr. Chang moved onto the other side, picking up a brush with her remaining hand. She delicately dusted the specimen with the brush, taking in every scratch visible on the surface, trying to feel for some kind of...connection.

You see, to the plain eye, Dr. Chang may just be a talented and remarkable paleontologist who cares a whole lot about dinosaurs and such. But every paleontologist was once a huge geek that used to hold up their notebook to their teachers while blabbering on and on about dinosaurs and how cool they are. Of course, Dr. Chang is no exception, however she possesses a tragically extraordinary ability which no one else has.

Zhao peeked over her shoulders sheepishly.

“Uh.. so what? Do you feel anything yet?” He asked, his interest piqued.

She shook her head. What a shame, most of the time her ability worked on almost anything. But it seemed her ability malfunctioned. This might happen from time to time, so it’s not that big of a deal anyways—

Then, it happened.

It felt like someone shot a bullet through her head, except the pain was replaced with a sudden wave of nostalgia. A bright, white light flashes before her eyes, her ears were ringing. Her head was reeling with nausea. She didn't feel anything, yet felt a thousand emotions at once, but they did not belong to her. Images flashed between frames in milliseconds. The next second, everything went dead silent, peace. Dr. Chang squinted open her eyes. She found herself positioned in the middle of a wide wasteland.

She was in the past.

Well, not actually in the past, but simply... reliving the memories of the fossil she just touched, you could imagine it as some sort of dream. That was her tragically extraordinary power.

Tragic, because she has to watch the entire life of these animals, just to see them die in the end. Extraordinary because it was power no other had.

Her train of thoughts were cut off by the sound of... squeaking? No, it was a tiny, high-pitched roar. She looks to the left of her feet, and finds a little dinosaur, freshly hatched out of an egg. Chang recognized it to be a Jiangxititan.

Its little squeaks were met with a gentle roar. The mother stomped towards her baby, lightly nudging it with her head.

Then, the scene fades out, and shifts into another landscape. The pair of Jiangxititan was strolling along in the grassland, lined with tall pine-cone shaped trees which were much taller than our modern trees now. The sun was beating, big and bright. The pair stopped under the shade of a tree, the mother lifted up her head and extended her neck upwards, patiently biting off a large piece of leaf for her child. The little one was running around, making noises almost similar to a laugh, as would a human toddler. At the moment, Dr. Chang felt only contempt and warmth in her heart. She only saw what was not simply dinosaurs, but instead a mother and son.

The scene switched. The once little dinosaur had grown a bit bigger, perhaps it was in its teens. This time, It was not happiness Dr. Chang felt, but rather anger. The Jiangxititan roared at its mother, stomping its feet and shaking its heads around, which it admittedly looked quite odd considering it had such long necks. The mother was displeased, roaring louder back as a response. The teen turned away in a fit of rage, and they both parted ways.

She blinked, and to her surprise, she felt love this time around. Romantic, wife-and-husband kind of love. The Jiangxititan stood beside another one of its kind. They nudged at each other necks, moaning gently and almost purring. They picked foods for each other, they chased each other around. But they were both happy, hopelessly in love. Dr.Chang almost wished them to have a carefree life together.

The scene shifts.

And suddenly, Dr. Chang's heart sank. The worst part of the experience every single time, and every single time she would forget. She would forget that they died. She would get captured in the moment, she would forget that all these innocent animals with real emotions and lives and lovers and families, end in a devastating and undeserved fate. Dr. Chang couldn't bear to watch this part.

Roars of panic. Waves of horror and hopelessness. The dinosaurs were running for their lives, tripping over themselves. In the midst of the chaos, Dr. Chang spotted the Jiangxititan, laying down on its side, taking its final breathe before falling into an eternal slumber, thinking no one would carry on his memories, happiness or sadness, anger or fear. The most heart-breaking part most people seemed to forget was they were just as humane as we are. Some prioritize their own children, sacrificing themselves; Some run over others, desperate to survive: Some give up, because they know no matter what they do, there's no escape. And in the end, it would not matter. They would die together, strangers meeting strangers in their final moments. They didn't understand what was happening, but if there's one thing in common, they all shared an understanding that they would not survive. It's almost poetic, all species of dinosaurs —no

matter Jiangxititan or not, once separated and divided– were brought together by the tragically beautiful melody of death. A meteor collided with the ground and–

She's back. No longer feeling herself. She silently wipes her tears away with her sleeve.

“Hey now, it's okay, I'm here.” Zhao reassuringly puts his hand on her shoulder.

Dr. Chang had her back turned to him. Even though he's annoying, there's one thing you can always count on him. She was thankful for that.

“ I'm alright, thanks. The least we can do now is continue our research and keep digging up more fossils, for them, to tell their untold story when no one else can. It's our job, yeah?” She looked back at him, smiling bitterly.

So, every time she felt tired or exhausted with no motivation, she reminded herself, she's doing this for the animals that couldn't live to see another day. It's what she does, that's her motto.

A Dinosaur's Legacy and the Call for Conservation

G.T. (Ellen Yeung) College, Liu, Molly – 13

In the 1990s, a farmer discovered the world's first feathered dinosaur. Scientists named it *Microraptor*, meaning "China's dragon bird." Since then, more than 40 species of dinosaurs have been found in Liaoning Province, including over 24 species of pterosaurs.

Recently, a new species of Titanosaur was discovered in Jiangxi. What was unearthed was a well-preserved dinosaur skeleton fossil, preliminarily identified as an undocumented new species. With today's technology, a complete dinosaur skeleton fossil can be used in conjunction with artificial intelligence to create a detailed virtual image.

Within just a few weeks, the virtual image was completed. It depicted a small feathered dinosaur, with every feather clearly visible, almost as if it truly existed in the world. When wearing 3D glasses, the effect was even more stunning. The 3D image utilized the latest technology—"Virtual Biological Reconstruction Technology"—to restore the dinosaur's appearance. This technology combined 3D scanning, DNA sequence inference, and AI modeling to "revive" prehistoric creatures in virtual space. The lifelike dinosaur appeared before everyone; it was the size of a dog, covered in orange and black striped feathers, with spots adorning its long tail. It resembled a living bird but exuded an ancient wildness.

This experiment exceeded everyone's expectations, and one of the researchers announced new information. During searches in the same area, many fossils were discovered underground. This news shocked everyone. Just as they thought they could use the recently developed "Virtual Biological Reconstruction Technology" to restore the appearance of the dinosaurs, the researchers stated that the newly found fossils exhibited varying degrees of damage, requiring further study. However, with current technology, they could not be restored. This announcement cast a heavy atmosphere over the laboratory. Was it impossible to gain a deeper understanding of this new species?

After several weeks of analysis, they found that the fossils had been eroded by acid rain and pollutants for hundreds of years while underground. Due to nearby industrial activities, the soil and water sources had already been contaminated, severely degrading the preservation environment of the fossils. The team also discovered that many potential fossil sites had already been destroyed by mining and development activities. Coupled with recent typhoons and logging, the impact on the fossils was enormous.

"We were fortunate to have excavated a complete dinosaur skeleton fossil; it is already a miracle," sighed an assistant. "More dinosaur sites may forever disappear due to the destruction of modern society."

The laboratory personnel felt deep sorrow, as fossils of great research value became incomplete due to human destruction. This was bad news for both the laboratory staff and the general public. The traces of history were slowly being erased by modern humanity. Despite possessing advanced technology capable of restoring the appearances of prehistoric creatures, humanity could not prevent the disappearance of fossils due to environmental degradation. Human destruction of the environment was erasing these ancient memories of the Earth.

To make people aware of how their actions impact the environment, the government organized an exhibition under the laboratory's name. It used 3D projections to simulate dinosaurs living in modern settings, setting up different challenges for everyone to try to find a safe place to live from a dinosaur's perspective. The exhibition garnered widespread attention, and many began to realize the close relationship between environmental protection and human historical research, starting to practice environmental protection plans.

At the closing ceremony, one of the researchers stood on stage and said, “Dinosaurs are extinct, but their fossils are precious memories left to us by nature. If we do not protect the environment, even these memories will be destroyed. The story of the newly discovered dinosaur is not just about the past; it is also a warning for the future.”

Years later, the team found more *Microraptor* fossils in another unpolluted area, even discovering its nest fossil and eggshells. This time, they not only restored the appearance of *Microraptor*, but also pieced together its living environment: a social living form similar to that of birds.

The story of this dinosaur skeleton became a starting point for reconciling humanity with nature. It reminds people that every piece of land and every rock on Earth is a carrier of history. Protecting the environment is not only for the life of the present but also for those lives that have already vanished and the stories they left behind.

Mystery of Dinosaurs in Poyang Hu – Revealed

G.T. :(Ellen Yeung) College, Tsang, Jacob – 13

It was a cold, stormy day. I was trudging across vast badlands in China with my team, filled with sorrow and despair. As palaeontologists, we had a disappointing month—not a fossil was found! It is maddening to hear other teams discovering fossils in other sites. While walking back to our base, we stumbled down a valley that we had never noticed before. However, I felt that the atmosphere was enchanted and dreamy. What could possibly go wrong?

After entering the enchanted land, we settled down to have some food and voted to explore the valley afterwards. While we were eating, eerie erhus was suddenly heard playing out of nowhere! One by one, my team drooped down to a deep sleep. I was frightened and tried to yell for help, but meanwhile, I fell asleep too and had a dream. In my dream, beautiful and holy Guanyin suddenly appeared in front of me and said, “Palaeontologist Tsang, you have been working so hard to uncover the fossils hidden in the badlands of Jiangxi. I do appreciate it. As a token of appreciation, I would like to grant you a wish for your diligence.” It appeared so real and I replied, “Oh! Almighty Guanyin, thank you so much for your blessing. My wish is to uncover tales of China’s dinosaurs and let everyone in my team have an opportunity to see them” Guanyin replied, “Your wish is my command”.

Suddenly, my team and I found ourselves standing near Poyang Hu, a famous lake in Jiangxi. Dozens of dinosaurs were seen near the shoreline, with blurs and humps further out. One species of the dinosaur was exceedingly familiar. It has black scales, four clumsy little legs, a fierce-looking head with horns and a long robust body with a tail. It seemed to resemble the Chinese dragon! Unsurprisingly, unlike myths, they could not fly nor spit fire. The ‘dragons’ were swimming happily in the Poyang Hu, speedily catching little dinosaurs with a mighty bite. Many of them were either resting near the shore or swimming in the lake. They lived in groups, and the leader was the brawniest one. To communicate, they made deep rumbling sounds, like most predators. It was a fascinating sight and we spent many hours observing the dragons’ behaviour from a safe distance. We also collected some ‘dragon’ dung for examination before we got back to the present.

Out of the blue, the Poyang Hu in front of us faded and we found ourselves back in the enchanted land. We all first thought this was all a dream, but the palaeontologist who had collected the dragon dung still had the package, which had become a fossil. Then, we knew the trip was not a dream, and we knew where to dig for certain. We went back to the base and filed a request to fly to Poyang Hu to try to discover fossils. Luckily, the request was granted and we immediately flew to Poyang Hu. We chose a spot and began our fossil hunting.

After the incredible journey to the past, we knew fossils were hidden inside the rocky terrain of Poyang Hu. We worked tirelessly, in the heat of the day and the chills of the night. One day, after two weeks of digging, my shovel hit something hard. I called my team over and carefully evacuated the soil and rocks around it. Slowly, the hidden bones became clear – it was the rib of a large beast! We got rid of the dust and sent the rib to the lab. After further evaluation, it was estimated to be a carnivore that fed on fish in the Poyang Hu. This species is the first dinosaur found near Poyang Hu, marking history! This is a new tale of China’s dinosaurs, and it is very valuable to palaeontologists and scientists. This compensated for our loss a month before!

The unbelievable and wonderful chain of events led us to discover two new tales of China's dinosaurs – The Chinese dragon came from an ancient dinosaur and a new species of dinosaurs was found living near Poyang Hu. This discovery is a milestone in the history of palaeontology in China. Apart from contributing to the palaeontology in China, I also learnt that hard work always pays off. Never give up on doing something. Miracles always happen and solve all of your problems. This is an unforgettable memory and will be for all future times inerasable from my brain.

The Story of the Dinosaur Sinosauropteryx

G.T. :(Ellen Yeung) College, Yuen, Gaily – 13

I woke up at four o'clock in the morning, starting my daily routine on the farm. As usual, I plowed the soil with a small machine. After covering the whole piece of farmland, a white shiny spot in the soil appeared. What was it? I was curious about it and bent down for a closer look. Gently, I removed the soil on top of it and realised it was just an egg. But why would an egg be in the farmland? And why would the egg be so cold? The egg was a bit larger than chicken eggs too! Though I had a lot of doubts and questions, I needed to continue my work, So I placed it in one of the chicken nests. I forgot about it after a while.

After a month, while I was feeding the horses, I suddenly heard chickens clucking from the henhouse. Concerned, I immediately rushed over and found they were circling around the small pink creature which just hatched from the egg I recently picked from the farmland. I was shocked by what I saw! It had two short arms in the front and two feet in the back. Its neck and tail was long. It was just like a dinosaur but was extremely small! I couldn't believe it! What kind of creatures it actually is?

The small creature seemed to be fascinated by everything around it. It moved his head from the left to the right. I shooed away all the hens and approached it. It opened its eyes and stared at me. It tried to make some noise: "Cheep, cheep! Cheep, cheep!" Realizing it was hungry, I brought some milk for it and it seemed to be quite content.

Day by day, I fed it, taught it how to walk, and played with it. Sometimes, it also followed the chicks and had fun with them. It began to grow larger and bigger and soon, it was tall enough to reach my waist. Its fur became thick and its body turned into orange color.

However, as it was growing older, it caused more and more trouble to the farm. It broke the fences, stomped across the fields of crops, and tried smashing the door. I was afraid that it would cause larger damages to the farm. But at the same time, I wonder what made it go towards the entrance of the farm every time. Was it because he didn't want to live here anymore? Because it felt uncomfortable here? But there was a feeling telling me that he wanted to head to a place...

Ever since the last time I warned him never caused a disaster, it behaved well. However, something felt strange. It barely came out. It didn't play as much as usual. Sometimes, it shivered a lot while it was sleeping. I started to worry about it...

One day, I went to check on it as usual at 9:00 pm. However, it disappeared! My heart beat fast. My palms were sweating. I felt like there were butterflies in my stomach. Not only because I was afraid it would cause trouble, but also because I care about it! I watched it grow from baby to child. I took care of it with my greatest love. I cared about it like it was my child! I rushed out of the farm and ran on the road towards the forest. I had a feeling that it was this way.

I ran without slowing down a bit. I ran with my full speed. Suddenly, I saw a dark shadow. Was it the small creature? Was it? It had two arms and two feet, a long neck and a long tail! Yes! As I was about to call it, the creature turned around. Under the moonlight, I saw that its fur wasn't orange; it was red.

Were they the same species? Did that mean more dinosaurs live here? Weren't dinosaurs extinct? Curiosity piqued, I decided to follow the red dinosaur. It went into the woods, crossed a river and arrived at a cave. It went inside. I hesitated for a moment. Should I peek inside? Or should I just leave? Fine. I would just have a tiny peek to make sure that the small creature was safe.

I slowly turned around to the cave. I couldn't keep my mouth shut. There were so many dinosaurs in different sizes! There were some eating grass, some playing with each other, and some sleeping on the stone. It seemed to be a wonderland here, seeing so many dinosaurs which were thought to be extinct. But what I focused on the most was the dinosaurs I looked after since it was born. The particular pattern of its orange fur was very easy for me to recognize. Watching it jumping joyfully with others, I thought, It was more suitable for it to live here. Saying goodbye to this wonderland and the little creature, I sighed. I slowly picked up a rock from the cave as a memory and left.

I woke up the next morning and everything seemed to be a dream. I discovered a cave full of extinct animals. I said goodbye to the small creature that was always by my side. But when I looked at the rock, I knew that all of it was real. I observed the rock closely, and I found something strange. There was a dinosaur bone inside it! It was a fossil! I decided to sell it to the museum but I would keep the secret of the story of the cave. I hoped the dinosaur would live happily ever after. I was the farmer in Liaoning province of China, who discovered the fossil of the dinosaur *Sinosauropteryx*.

Dino Jump

HD Beijing School (JinZhan Campus) , Cui, Max – 11

A long times ago, when the dinos rules the world, there was a Dino, who has a dream, to be a hero.

But the Dino is not strong, and lives him alone, just because he's a T-rex, so no one want's to be friends, with an terrified Dino.

At a sunny day, Dino gets awake, but he is not very lucky, because he saw a pterosaur who's hungry. He was scared of that, and runs to be alive. And he runs, and he sprint. And he runs as fast as light, and he got up, and he flies, and he travels to the cyber world and can't come back.

He can saw many game characters. And he understand, that he is dropped, in the world of games, and computers. He feels it is so warm, but this place is drought. Here is a desert, Dino knows. And there is not a big T-rex who wants to eat him for dessert.

But the bad thing also comes, the world behind him start disappearing it self. So he starts to run, again this time, but the thing is, his body be comes uncontrolled. He jumps high but he don't want. He saw some thing creepy, and it is a cactus moves toward. He was scared but then he jumps, and he falls, straight to the ground. But he does not died, or moves around, because he is been controlled, by a power unfound. Yet he heard a sound saying: "Hey, don't play your Dino jump games! It's time for lunch"

And Dino knows he was controlled by the guy at his front, and he runs and he jumps, but once he was thinking, he need a way to escape, around. So he thinks hardly, and wondered dreamily, but he have not saw the cactus, moving toward him.

So he runs very fast, but he don't know why he has came in this world. But when he runs, he thought about a thing, when he comes here, he is running, and he flies, it must be a power, which pulls him up by. So he runs very fust, and he runs, very hard, but suddenly the problems come! A evil pterosaur comes and pouch to Dino's face. Dino walks toward, wants to ask why? But the pterosaur just said:" because you don't belongs here!"

So Dino asked:" does you belongs here?"

"Yes I do, and I am the only guardian and Dino who knows the way out"

"So may you tell me the way back?"

"Yes I can, but you must help me do one thing."

"What?"

"I don't now that I will be the guardian in this world, the boy who controlled you at the real world is called Jason, he said if I go in to his computer, there will be a fancy land. But he treated me, he locked me in to this computer and le t me be the guardian to scared away any other creatures who got into this cyber world."

"So do you wants to let me help you to fight with Jason?"

"Yes, and don't forget to keep this thing with you."

The pterosaur throw Dino a watch.

This watch is not very big(to Dino)but it is very beautiful. There was a Dinosaur's sign. The 12 clock on the watch has a small lines of word: 'cyber world', and there writes 'real world' at 6 clock.

"It is not a normal watch, but a watch that can takes you to the humans world."

"Wow!"

"Cool, hah. I made this all by myself. It is born for this day! But you must keep it with you the whole time. Or you can never be back!"

"And, hey what's your name?"

"Emm..."

"Are you ok?"

"Yes, am fine."

"Sorry for asking that question."

"No, am fine, and go fight with Jason!"

"So how can I use this watch?"

"Oh, yes, you can press the top button of the watch to set the clock to cyber world and the real world."

"Thank you!"

“Good luck.”

Dino press the button and set it to the real world. And he fall asleep...

When he woke up he saw he got into a house, and he also saw Jason! but Jason is not a boy, but a evil, demon scientist! Dino stomp his foot, and roar as powerful as he could. He feels his body became big again!

Jason saw Dino and said: “Yes! It is the Dino that drops into Petreo’s cyber world!”

Dino thought: “What? Isn’t the pterosaur good guy?”

At the same moment, Jason take out a box, it is not a normal box, but a box that can make Dino feels very tired!

“Hello, I’m Doctor. Jason, the most powerful scientist in the world! This box will let your power be despaired from your body, and make a diamond that have enough power to open a black hole!”

But Dino is not weaken now! He used his foot and his teeth to kill this scientist, but the scientist have guns, at the moment, the pterosaur moves toward the scientist in one second! Dino finally wins.

“Thanks.”

“The pterosaur does not answered.”

But the things is not going to the right way, Dino’s clock has set to the cyber world by it self, so he fall asleep again, and when he woke up, he saw that pterosaur is looking at him, but not friendly! He said: “You finally back, but not back to the Dinosaur’s world! Ever, never!”

“But, why?”

“It seems you have forgot all of the things, but it’s ok, I remember!”

“What?”

“I can kill you now, no one will, knows, but it’s better to tell you all of the truth, 100 years ago, when it’s the end of Jurassic time, the prophet said there will be a disaster at the end of cretaceous period, and there must be a warrior who can use the power of the black hole to save the whole world. And the warrior was me, I’m the most powerful Dinos that can control the power of black hole, and I can move between times and space by flying faster than the light.”

“So what did I do that makes you so angry?”

“Because you have take my everything !”

“Why?”

“Because you try to kills me and take my power! But you have not wings, you think I’m died that night but you don’t know because you can’t control the power of black hole, so you lost all of your memories and sent me to the human’s world!”

“Uh! My head!”

“You comes to think of it, and I found a scientist who is good at technology and Dinosaur. He tells me that if I can bring him an alive Dinosaur, he will help me make a cyber world that’s under my control!”

“I think I have all remember, and sorry.”

“It is not only a ‘sorry’, but my whole life!”

“I will give you a last chance, you need to got 99999 score in my google Dino jump game! Oh, and remember my name: Ptereo!”

“Ok.”

The games starts and Dino starts to run, faster he run, faster the cactus come toward Dino, there was also many pterosaur appearing, and when the score finally got to 99998 it is almost as fast as the light! Dino jumps harder, and finally, the score comes to 99999, there was a black hole at the front of Dino. He wants to jump in the hole, but the world around him is collapsing, and the black hole is closing!

“Hey! You said you’ll let me go!”

Dino roared to Petreo

“I don’t know what’s going on! It seems like some one is controlling this outside this world !”

“Who?”

“It’s me! Your favorite scientist!”

“Doctor. Jason!?”

Dino and Petreo said at the same time.

“Well, well, well, let’s see who is here, my Dino and my old friend Petreo!”

“Why are you here!”

“Well, when you sent Dino to the real world, I’m thinking a question, why don’t I take two of you and make my diamond even more powerful!”

“Aren’t you killed by Petreo?”

“No, I faked my death but you two will be really dead in this cyberworld!”

“I won’t let you do that” said Dino, and he use his whole body to open the biggest black hole he have ever make!

“Jump in to that!”

“What?”

“I will use my power to send you to dino world, and destroy this world!”

“No! You must go back with me! I, I need to get my power from you!”

“I will send you your power just go!”

“No, come with me Dino!”

Dino push Petreo in to the black hole and said: “Bye”

“Don’t leave me!”

“Ahh!!!”

Dino send him back to the dinosaur world and use his last power to close the black hole and destroyed this world.

And finally so, Dino becomes hero, who uses the power, for the right place.

New Tales of Chinese Dinosaurs

HD Beijing School (JinZhan Campus) , Jin, Caroline – 13

In 2050, an unprecedented archeological finding shocked the world. Chinese archaeologists have unearthed a series of ancient turtle shell dating back more than 3000 years. After taking them back to the laboratory and summoning experts to translate the inscriptions, an untold story between a soldier and a dinosaur from Shang dynasty was revealed...

3000 years ago, there was a man named Tang who lived a simple yet fulfilling life with his pregnant wife. Worried about the safety of his wife during childbirth, he embarked on a perilous journey to the snow mountain in search of the snow lotus, which was said helpful to ensure a smooth delivery.

The mountain was a treacherous landscape. Blinding snowstorms whipped through the air, and the steep slopes were covered in ice and slippery rocks. Tang carefully navigated his way, his determination was unwavering. As he reached a remote glacier, a glimmer of something unusual caught his eyes. There, half-buried in the melting ice, was a gigantic egg with strange markings that seemed to tell a story of an ancient era. Intrigued and sensing that this could be a occasional discovery, Tang used all his strength to carefully extract the egg from the ice and wrapped it in furs to protect it from the cold.

He carried the precious egg back home and intended to look after it with great care. He built a warm nest for it using the softest hay and made sure it was always at the right temperature. Day and night, he watched over the egg, with his anticipation growing. To his amazement, the egg hatched several months after his daughter's birth, revealing a small, yet fierce-looking dinosaur. The creature had bright, intelligent eyes and a powerful tail that swished with energy. It quickly formed a bond with Tang's family, especially with his young daughter. The little girl would giggle with delight as the dinosaur played with her, and it became an important member of their family. However, tragedy struck when their daughter was only four years old, Tang's wife passed away. Before they could fully grieve, the kingdom was filled with chaos and war. The call to arms was issued, and Tang, forced by the social situation, joined the military troop accompanied by his loyal dinosaur, and left his daughter.

When the ranks saw the four-legged creature with a wrinkled body, they were all amazed by how mighty it was. By its strong combat capability, the general desinated him to be the stormtrooper of the army. The Battle of Muye was a fierce and bloody encounter. Tang, astride his dinosaur, devoted to the war with unmatched courage. The dinosaur's powerful jaws and sharp claws tore through the enemy ranks, while Tang precisely thrust at the enemies. Their combined force was unstoppable and they quickly became a target of the enemy's attention.

As the battle raged on, the enemy general noticed their extraordinary performance and ordered a concentrated assault. Soon, Tang and his dinosaur were surrounded by a sea of enemies. Trapped and outnumbered, with no way out, they faced certain death. In that moment of desperation, the dinosaur let out a deafening roar that echoed across the battlefield. It turned to face the oncoming enemies and without hesitation, rushed towards them. Tang's eyes were filled with disbelief, he reached out his hand to grab it, but was powerless. The dinosaur's sacrifice was immediate and heroic. It fought with all its might, dodging spears and arrows, and using its body as a shield. Its scales were pierced, and blood flowed, but it did not wince. 'No!' yelled Tang, 'come back!' but it continued to firmly launch at the enemy without retreat, buying precious time for Tang to break free from the encirclement.

With tears in his eyes and a heavy heart, Tang made his escape. He took the last glance at the dinosuar, which its figure was teetering yet still firm. He found a hidden path and ran as fast as his legs could carry him, with the screaming of the dinosaur and the resonant bugle call of the enemies coming with a fierce momentum.

After the war finally ended, he returned home to his daughter. As she caught a glimpse of his figure, she staggered towards her father and embraced him tightly. They both shed blissful tears. From that day forward, Tang would often tell his daughter the story of the dinosaur: how it came into their lives, its loyalty and bravery, and its ultimate sacrifice. In memory of the great dinosaur, Tang carved the touching story onto a turtle shell. The tale became a family legend, passed down through the generations, a testament to the extraordinary bond between a man, his family, and a creature from a bygone era. And in the quiet nights, when the wind blew through the village, it seemed as if the spirit of the dinosaur still lingered, watching over them.

Transtime

HD Beijing School (JinZhan Campus) , Li, Dylan – 12

“It look’s like we need to start without Jason,” Grimaud said.

With that, the two scientists pulled open a door on the cylinder, stepping inside. The crazy shakes of the cylinder machine took their attention, it shook so hard as if it is having an avalanche: the shaking begin faster and faster, and suddenly it stopped, throwing Kevin and Grimaud to the other side of the cylinder.

The door automatically opens, showing a giant forest before them: a Microraptor stared at them with a lizard hanging in it mouth, stared at them with curiosity, then run away. They step out of the time machine, lighten their torches and discover forwards: strange noises come from all around them, and they could see a lizard or a huge insect from time to time. Just as the two of them are discovering the world around them like an just born baby, Kevin step into a hole and fell unprepared to his knees. “whoa!” Kevin shouted. They look down at what make Kevin falls, and retreat in terror: it is a huge footprint big enough for Kevin to sit inside.

The ground shook, and a dinosaur stepped out of a high bush, it high spines that shapes like a mask waves: it two little beady eyes staring at their burning torches. Judging by it crocodile–alike body, Kevin shout out in name immediately:

“ a Spinosaurus! The biggest hunter on land and in shallow water. Run!” with that, the two scientist simultaneously turn and run toward the direction of their time machine. The Spinosaurus only thinking for one second with it tiny brains, decided chased after the two scientist wading between plants.

“Why is this giant interested in us? We're two small for the biggest hunter on land!”

“Oh please, for a junior like that one, we’re just the right snack. By the way, I see our time capsule is just sitting there waiting for us.”

They jump into their machine, but only finding a Microraptor already in there, putting a careful eye on the true master of the time machine.

“Why are you in here?” Kevin shout at the scared Microraptor.

“We’ll deal with that later! We should think about the bigger ones. Close the door!” with a shaky but fast hand, Kevin shut them in the machine by closing the door. Suddenly, a nearly critical attack put the cylinder machine of it balance, falling to one side. Subsequently, deep group of scratches made of three sharp claws embodied the door, one even coming through: the black claws then drag it way out of the wall. Kevin hit the button beside him which supposedly will take them back time. Before they know it, they are back in the lab: choking smoke filled the machine, and Kevin opened the door dragging himself out. Grimaud then fell unconsciously beside him. The Microraptor jump out, then stared at Kevin.

“Ahh... go away. I don’t know what you want. Now I need to help my friend.”

Kevin fell beside Grimaud, shaking his shoulder: but still, he lay unconscious. Kevin lay one finger on his neck: no pulse. “No! How did he just fell dead?”

Kevin sat down, his brain working on how does Grimaud just turn dead right before him?... then in the corner of his eye, he saw the Microraptor standing before him waving it front paw at him as him calling him to follow him. Kevin stood up, then follow the tiny dinosaur for he has nothing to do now. The Microraptor walks slowly, dragging its long feathered wings. It come before the sand patch, where Kevin, Jason and Grimaud once testified their machine to see if it works in different environments. The Microraptor jump into the middle, use its claws and its talons on its wings to make marks on the sand: sometime it even waves its wings to remove extra sands and make the sand back smooth. Then with a final squeak, the little dinosaur jump aside and let Kevin look at its art: there in the middle, clearly spelled in English, reads:

I AM GRIMAUD.

Kevin slump back into a nearby chair, and review what has happened today. "What a crazy day! First we launch the first time capsule in human history, then be chased by a Spinosaurus: then when we go back time, Grimaud just fell dead right beside me: then this Microraptor we bring from millions of years ago just say its name is Grimaud! What a crazy day!"

Seeing that Kevin still don't believe it, the Microraptor then run slowly toward the cabins where the scientist lives. "Hey! Stop right there! The other scientist will gone mad if they see you running outside." As if it didn't hear it, the Microraptor still kept racing toward the cabins of the scientists. "oh...how stupid I am. As if that dinosaur really knows what I am saying."

The dinosaur hearing that, then stopped and look at Kevin, trying to scowl: but without the help of eyelids, it only makes it look much more funny. After that, the Microraptor raced on with a quicker pace, and now Kevin need to run to chase the dinosaur. The dinosaur now reach the cabins, and run directly to the third one of the second row, and making it there, raises its little head and look at Kevin. "Wait...what...how did you know which house is mine? Wait a second...just to test if you really are Grimaud... which house is Grimaud's? The Microraptor raced past a few houses, and stop before another houses. By this time, Kevin has no chance but to believe it is Grimaud. "Ahh...sorry Grimaud. I'll use the Time Machine again and try to find a solution for you." With that, Kevin raced back with Grimaud the dinosaur following him. Kevin send a text to Jason about the situation, then Kevin programmed the time machine to one hundred years later, and went into the machine immediately. Wires sizzled, fire spark sprang all around: a few second later, the machine disappeared right in its place. The computer beeped, and jumping on a seat, Grimaud saw what he least wanted now: there on the screen, it reads: capsule malfunctioned. Time displaced. Time displaced. A second later, the capsule reappeared and it opened the door, revealing a familiar jungle : the jungle where Kevin and Grimaud just explored and come back, and Grimaud himself turn to a dinosaur. A swarm of heat swarmed toward Grimaud, burning his skins: the torches which he and Kevin used to explore fell, and lighten the whole forest: now he could see whole packs of dinosaur racing toward them with the wild fire behind trying to engulf them. One after another, the dinosaurs run into the capsule and knock Grimaud aside: trying to count the number of the dinosaurs, Grimaud thought there are at least one hundred that just went through the time capsule. The dinosaurs went totally wild in the lab, and only causing fire right in the lab by biting and bumping into electronic devices. Thanks fully they didn't destroyed the computer used to program the Time Machine.

Some strong ones must have marked the door opened, for at once the lab is cleared. With such racket going on, Grimaud is so sure that they'll be on the news tomorrow that he didn't even think of poor Kevin, which is caught in time and couldn't move to the next minute. He could hear the fire alarm going off: the fires must have caught on other things. Oh, how he wish there is a miracle to save them now! And just like a miracle, Jason's tired but relieved face pop out from the door. "Oh, how did you get in that, my dear Grimaud? Kevin text me there is a problem going on so I comes. Where is Kevin?"

Grimaud typed on the computer to show "so Kevin is caught in the river of time? How interesting. Let aside. I'll reprogram it." A second later, the programming stopped, and the time capsule reappeared in the middle of the lab.

Kevin walk out, and his beard become much longer like it hasn't been shaved for a month: Jason direct him aside, and put both Grimaud's dead body and Grimaud the dinosaur into the capsule. "You turn to a dinosaur because the capsule is overstressed. Now, without Kevin, you'll return to your body." The capsule disappeared and reappeared again, but now there's only the human Grimaud. Grimaud walked out. "Kevin! I thought you recognized me. Why don't you text Jason earlier?"

"But there is still other questions. You two used my capsule without me, and you two also destroyed my life's work..." Jason point to the time capsule, now burned and all the wires burned to the ground.

"but anyway...that is quite old, so maybe we should just makes a new one." Jason concluded. With that, the three friend went building a whole new time capsule.

DinoMan

HD Beijing School (JinZhan Campus) , Li, Sue – 11

This Chinese town was next to a forest. The town was beautiful, chirping birds, colorful flowers, and houses standing neatly beside the street. It was midnight, and little Marta was sleeping peacefully in her bed. Suddenly, a chirp waked her up. She looked out the window, thinking about how she and her older sister argued today.

That afternoon, she saw a toy in Wella's bag. She grabbed the toy. "I want that toy!" she yelled, "Can you give it to me?" Wella shook her head. This toy was a kitten, and also Wella's favorite. But Marta sobbed, and her parents can bear it no longer. "Wella! Stop being so mean!" Mom snapped. Dad grabbed the toy from Wella's hands and tugged it into Marta's. "Don't cry, my honey."

Wella sighed sadly. This isn't the first time they argued, and her parents never cared about who was right and wrong, they only cared about their age. "Nobody cares for me," Wella thought, "I don't even have friends at school. They all thought I bullied my sister, because my mom said so at the meeting."

Now Marta was in her bed, looking at the window. She looked at the kitten toy in her hands, satisfied. She looked at Wella's bed. It was empty! Marta searched the house, but Marta wasn't there! Although Marta tried to tell herself that she doesn't like her sister, but her love for Wella which was hidden glowed inside her. She needed to find her sister. She thought of the forest that her sister played in everyday. "She must be there." Marta thought. She walked to the forest, in her clothes she wore at home. Cold wind blew, the moon shined in cold white, and the autumn leaves on the ground screeched every step she took. Marta never noticed that the night of this beautiful town could be so spooky.

Marta found footsteps, and decided to follow them. It led her to a wall built by iron nets, and a huge board hung on it. It read: "Zoo of Dinosaurs". She can see some giant creatures just behind the net wall.

The giant creatures behind the net moved in slow motion, and every stomp they took shook the Earth. They casted huge, black shadows on the dirty, rocky ground. Marta shivered.

The moon lit dimly up Marta's head, and the zoo was creepy. But Marta stilled walked in. She saw giant dinosaurs, all types and colors, every one was kept inside a giant cage of iron nets. The zoo was so big, and Marta thought that their were about eighty dinosaurs. But all the dinosaurs moaned and hummed in a sad, low sound, like a sad person. Marta was scared, but the dinosaurs didn't attack her, they just looked at her like looking at a toy. Suddenly, she found a dinosaur that attracted her eyeballs.

The dinosaur was a giant leaf-eater, with green and tough skin. Although it was a dinosaur, it reminded Marta of her sister. Her eyes had the same sad look like Wella's, and her face looked like Wella, too. It even had the same scar Wella had on her neck. Marta suddenly felt sorry for how she hurt her sister. But it was too late, and Marta ran back home.

The next morning, Marta woke up early. Last night's memories flashed in Marta's head. The iron net walls, the zoo, the dinosaurs. Were they true, or just a dream?

But seeing Wella sitting next to her, Marta thought that was all a dream, and kept it as a secret.

The day went on normally.

That afternoon, Marta told her parents she wanted to go to the forest to play. She went to were she remembered the zoo was. She didn't expect to find the zoo, and just like she thought, the zoo wasn't there.

The night was so dark, and the clock struck to twelve. Marta kept thinking about the things happening last night, but they seemed more and more real. "What if the zoo could only be seen at night?" Marta suddenly thought.

She ran to the zoo. It was there.

She found the dinosaur that she thought looks like Wella. That moment, she suddenly felt a feeling that it really was Wella. She felt so sorry for how she hurt her sister. Marta felt like she wanted to cry. Marta spoke softly to the dinosaur. "I am sorry, Wella. I am a bad sister." Tear drops fell slowly, and one fell on the dinosaur. Suddenly, a magical scene happened.

The dinosaur's tough skin melted, and it became human skin. The legs and arms became more white and thin. The shape of its head changed, and its human nose, eyes, and mouth started to show. It turned into Wella.

All the other dinosaurs looked at them, like looking at something they longed for. Wella told Marta the backstory of this zoo.

"Here is the zoo of the sad and unloved. The happy people do not come here. A sad and unloved person comes here, and he or she will turn into a dinosaur. The more sad and unloved a person is, it looks more like a dinosaur, and less like its human form. My dinosaur is one of the happiest dinosaurs here, and the second youngest. This one, in the iron-net room next to me, is a poor man whose house has been robbed and his mom and dad won't help him. He is a street urchin before he turned into a dinosaur. A dinosaur can only be turned back, if someone comes and cheers it up."

So the sisters cheered the other dinosaurs up, by telling happy stories and helping them. They did it for hours, but the dinosaurs who turned into humans joined, and after hard work and patience, all the dinosaurs have vanished, but tons of humans replaced them. It was four AM in the morning, and the sun was about to rise. Suddenly, a strike of white light shines, all the people they saved disappeared, and the sisters appeared on their bed.

"Where are they?" Marta asked.

"I think they went home, just like us." Wella replied.

The next day, they got a letter from a person called Rick. "That's the name of the street urchin dinosaur!" Wella exclaimed. The letter read:

Thank you sisters, for turning me back into human. I will remember your kindness for the rest of my life. I will thank you for the other people you saved too.

Now I won't be a street urchin anymore. I will get a job and live a better life. You gave us the hope for a better life.

Thank you.

Freddy: the dinosaur that was lost in time

HD Beijing School (JinZhan Campus) , Li, Summer – 11

On a peaceful afternoon in May, Tina was doing her math homework quietly in her own room, while her father, who is a famous scientist and biologist was doing an experiment in his lab. He has a large lab in his own home in the basement. There is a small cloth hanger in the lab that has 5 lab coats on it. Next to it is a long, white table used to do experiments on. There were a lot of microscopes on the table. The biologist was sitting near the table in his hand, there is an engine. I am not sure what that engine is, but one thing that I am very sure is that this engine is probably not a car engine. It is about ten centimeters long and is made of metal. It is the shape of a diamond, a huge diamond that has an orange light on the top of it. He sat there spinning the engine in his old, rough hand. Finally he stood up and walked to the shelf next to the table, he firstly wanted to take maybe a tool or something else but then he found out that it was not in the lab so he stood up to get it in a tool room that is also in the basement.

Just in the same time, his daughter Tina went down to find his dad to ask him a question on her homework. But then she realized that her dad is not in the lab, so under curiosity she opened the door and walked straightly to the lab. She saw a lot of colorful creature's cells that are neatly arranged in cabinets. They are all kept in small glass bottles. She took the most beautiful one on the cabinet and opened the tiny plastic bag and one minute later presented in front of Tina's eyes.

She looked around and found a small fossil of a baby pterodactyl, so she poured it on the fossil. Then, a magical thing happens, a baby pterodactyl sat on the fossil, the fossil that Tina poured the DNA on. Tina's eyes went wide open. She slowly got closer to the baby pterodactyl, she realized that she got something wrong, so that she decided to hide the baby pterodactyl into the closet and secretly bring the baby dinosaur to her own room. Meanwhile the biologist finally found the tool that he needed and walked fastly to the lab but Tina didn't have enough time to hide it, so when he arrives at the lab, the scent that occurred in the lab made him take a gasp.

"My goodness, what did you do with that creature, who did you do that, Tina are you crazy?"

Tina's eyes looked straightly to her father's eyes, her blue eyes with sweet appearance made her dad wanted to ignore this thing happening....

Days after days, Tina and the pterodactyl quickly became friends with each other. Tina even named the dinosaur as Freddy which the pterodactyl seem to love this name. Together they had a very happy time, for example when Tina is doing her math homework, Freddy would sit on the floor of the lab and watch Tina writing her math homework. Freddy's favorite food is meat and fish, so Tina would use her own pocket money to buy fish and meat for Freddy. Of course, Freddy would also help Tina to take the book that she wants before going to bed. He would fly above the most top floor of book shelf and use his beak to pick the book and flew over to give it to Tina.

They had a very good time together, I must say that twist and I promise that. But all good things come to the end, not to two months, both Tina and her dad realized that Freddy could not just live in their home, and here are some reasons:

Firstly, while Freddy is growing bigger and bigger they need a bigger space to fit him, and their house is filled of furniture, which is not very good.

Secondly, while Freddy growing up, he needs more food to eat, and they do not have so much money to purchase so much food for the poor pterodactyl to eat,

Finally, Freddy needed to practice how to hunt and fly, which is impossible to be done in a family.

Under the three huge problems that Tina's dad told to Tina, although that she didn't wanted to, but she also wanted to let Freddy have a good life, so she agreed. The biologist led Tina to his lab, this is the first time that he agree his daughter to his lab. (In the past, he often thinks that the lab is so dangerous for Tina.) He walked near to the table and took the engine that has been put on the table, then he walked to the wall, there is a black lock in the middle of the wall, the biologist walked to the wall and reached out his finger and use his thumb to put on the lock.

In the next second, the wall start moving and a invisible door opened. His daughter was shocked, but the biologist just sweetly looked at her daughter and smiled, slowly. They walked in the little room, then, they saw a big time machine putting in the little room, nothing else.

The biologist make a sign to let his daughter to step back and then he walked into the small room, taking the engine with him on his hand with him on his hand. He opened the cap on the machine and put the diamond-shaped engine inside. Then he opened the window made with glass. There is two sits inside the machine, the biologist sits on one of it and Tina sits on the other one. The biologist said slowly:

"I am not sure if this could work in the time bridge in between of now and the past, so it might be very dangerous, are you ready?"

"yes!" Answered Tina, excitingly holding Freddy tightly in her arms.

"Hold tight !" called Jackson, closing the window. In one second, they disappeared, no one knows how they transpired to the dinosaur world. I for the one that was telling this story to you is very sure that they succeed in transporting to the time before.....

The two people walked into the place and they saw a mother pterodactyl sitting on the tree feeding meat to the other pterodactyl babies. When, the mother flew away again, they slowly walked to the nest of the dinosaur while the mother dinosaur was going out to take some food, but then they feel something enormous behind them. Jackson turned around and saw a huge t-rex staring at them. He screamed out loud which made Tina also saw the dinosaur that could cause them to death. They straightly ran toward the forest, and the t-rex chase them at the back without any resting. The dinosaur nearly caught them and Tina signed to make everyone hide into the grass, the t-rex stopped and them turn into the opposite direction Fastly. They slowly get out of the grass and trees,

"that was close!" The biologist say slowly. Tina nodded and walked carefully forwards to the place that the dinosaur nest is at. They walked slowly and carefully to close the nest and put Freddy inside the warm, an comfortable nest. Tina They succeed in putting Freddy back to his family. Then, the two of them walked to the place that the machine has landed. In their walked back there, they saw quite a lot of fascinating pictures of the dinosaur world. At last, they sit in the machine and disappeared in the deep secret forest that is filled of special ancient animals.

Back in Jackson's lab, he is tidying up all the mess that his daughter, Tina has made. He accidently found out the fossil that Tina used to born out Freddy and in a shook, he knew that this fossil has diseases on it, and this baby pterodactyl is probably dead because of this scary diseases. He remembered that when the other biologists found this whole fossil, they knew that there is some diseases on it that people could avoid, but not dinosaurs could not, so this means that the disease is probably spreading inside the dinosaur's world! After thinking of this, the biologist was frightened and decided to go back to the dinosaur's world and help them. But then, he found out a huge problem,

the time machine that he invented can only be used once, he tried to fix the engine, so that it is brand-new, but that didn't work at all. He that he has no idea to return to the dinosaur world.....

And, I guess that is probably the reason why dinosaurs were extinct!

Jurassic Scavenger

HD Beijing School (JinZhan Campus) , Li, Ryan – 13

Dark settled in the town of Jurassic, as the moon creeps up upon the inkish skyline. Beside the deep forest, stood a lone wood cabin, surrounded by wire mesh and metal cans torn into shreds. Windows of the cabin shattered into pieces, faint lights seeped through the room, forming the contour of a person. Suddenly, a rush ring of the telephone broke the dead silence. A young man wearing a yellow sweater slowly stood up.

"Hello? Anyone there? Hello?" No one answered.

He gently put down the telephone, and grasped his electric prod firmly, aiming it at the door. His breathing stopped, not daring to make a tiny sound. Outside the door, Hurriedly footsteps came close, violently bombarding drops of dusts in the air. His heart raced. Suddenly, the footsteps stopped. He slowly moved to the side, bending his waist low.

"DING DONG!"

"Hank, I need to talk to you, right now! " The deep voice of another young man came in from outside.

"Come inside," Hank exhaled as he laid his electric prod against the deteriorating wall. "The door is not locked."

The young man rushed inside, breathing heavily as he sat on the sofa.

"Relax Eddie," Hank confronted, "What's wrong?"

"We are running out of time! They are coming after us!"

"Dude, it's already midnight, nothing's going to hurt you. Tell me what happened." Hank patted him on the shoulders.

"We need to leave" Eddie cut him off, "Right now! before they find us!"

"Who...?"

"Do you think Sadie's death was an accident?" Eddie interrupted. "Don't you think it's weird? Why did these victims all die from the same Velociraptor? Sadie, Carter, Kenji. Don't you think someone's behind all these deaths?"

"Listen Eddie, your interpretation might be correct, but we

're definitely safe to stay here."

Outside the room, wind pierced through the shattered window, banging metal cans creating a cacophonous sound. The dull afterglow of the moon lingered on the withered stem of a red rose. Through the rustling leaves, the vague outline of a huge creature emerged, it's huge round eyes gleaming.

"Shh!" Eddie lowered his body cautiously, slowly backing away.

Hank snatched the electric prod, shivering as he turned off the lights.

"Maybe it will pass." Eddie said hopefully.

Suddenly, huge pieces of glass along with fragments of wood flew in, exploding towards the two of them.

"Duck!" Eddie jumped to the side, and hid behind a blue sofa.

The furry back of a dinosaur appeared in the room, and it's length reaching two meters. It's huge greenish tail whipped towards the wall, vigorously clashing plates and vases.

"It's..." Eddie murmured apprehensively, "It's a deinonychus!"

“No, it’s a verociloptor.” Hank corrected.

“Look at the huge scar on his back,” Eddie pointed to the dinosaur, “It’s the same one from Russia.”

Hank’s expression hardened from the frightent face. “But how is it possible to be in China?”

Behind the sofa, Eddie mouthed: No idea. He gestured Hank a count down to run. Then suddenly, the verociloptor spotted Eddie laying behind the sofa, it roared aggressively, pouncing towards him.

“Run!” Eddie ducked aside, and the verociloptor sank it’s claws into the wooden floor one inch beside him, leaving a huge deep mark.

“Over here!” Hank yelled from the floor, his hands swaying in the air. Eddie caught the signal, and sprinted towards the exit. Behind him, the huge verociloptor struggled up from the ground, and immediately shot forward, swinging it’s claws insanely.

“Go! Go! Go!” Hank lit up his electric prod, sparkling drops of fire as he swung open the door.

Eddie is reaching closer to the door, but the dinosaur was even closer to him. It tried to snap him in the legs, but Hank’s flying prod backed the dinosaur away.

“To my car!” Eddie ordered as he pulled down the heavy metal rolling door, just in time to lock the dinosaur inside.

They ran to the dark, and spotted a brown van parked beside the woods.

“That’s my car!” Eddie reached for his keys, and the engine roared to life.

“Quick!” Hank peered back to his hut, noticing the cans were already torn into pieces. Then, between the woods, he saw that verociloptor sprinting towards their direction.

“Eddie! Start driving!” Hank yelled as he hit close the doors.

Eddie’s hand flew over the handle, “On it.”

The van coughed enthusiastically in respond to Eddie’s moves. He managed to get the van running on the road, and the picture of the verociloptor slowly faded away.

“Whoa, that was close, we’re almost eaten!” Eddie let out a sigh.

“But that also meant we’re in danger, plus...” Hank took a small sip of water, “My bells didn’t ring when the dinosaur came, which means someone broke it, on purpose.”

“Yes indeed,” Eddie pointed back, “I’ve been doing some research about dino murders.”

“Interesting, have you made any progress?” Hank took off his sweater, leaning back casually.

“No, not yet.” Eddie adjusted the rearview mirror .

“And... you need to rest.”

“Sounds like a great idea.” Hank yawned and lied down, the he started to snore.

Eddie tapped on the radio, and then it started to broadcast.

“Breaking news, Since Dr. Carl’s dino cloning plan started to institute in parts of China, many issues has been reported from local residents. Authorities claimed that corruption occured during this adoption, resulting in dinosaurs escaping from the labortory, threatening the safety of citizens. Details related to this case ‘re still investigating.

“I can’t believe that!” Eddie murmured, “It’s gone so far in a month, they even use dinosaurs for crimes!”

Outside the window, the distant horizon started to light up, revealing a trace of sun that hiding behind purple clouds.

Hours passed, the winding old road turned into a highway, and the dimly-lit surroundings turned bright. "I hope Dr. Ray's correct," Eddie muttered, "Hank! Wake up!"

"Mmmmm....I would love to make emojies while eating crackers. Hank blurted out while chewing on his thumb. "Come on dude, a T-rex is nearby!" Eddie stomped his feet, trying to mimic it's footsteps.

"Where! Tell me!" Hank sat up so quickly that he almost head butted Eddie in the noes.

"Jeez, you got good ears!"

"So," Hank scratched his ears, " Where are we?"

"Look outside." Eddie lowered the window.

A gush of wind blew in, along with the flavor of fresh herb. A huge skyscraper stood in the middle of the department buildings, surrounded by huge metal fences. The logo of a dinosaur was printed on the side wall, labeled "P D E".

"Welcome to Haikou! "

Hank nodded, "Yeah right, so...I guess we'll find some clues, hopefully."

"No," Eddie stared at his phone, "We need to move to a safer place."

"And...why would we do that?" Hank raised an eyebrow.

"For safety." Eddie replied.

Together, they entered the skyscraper. Inside the building, windows the shape of rhombuses glued themselves into masterpieces. A huge skeleton dinosaur stood in the middle of the hall, guarding this area.

"This place is amazing!" Hank stared at the huge dinosaur in awe.

"Yes indeed." a man wearing a white gown walked towards them, on his chest, a name tag printed Ray Tang particularly conspicuous.

"Dr. Ray!" Eddie moved forward, "It's so nice to see you again! This is Hank." He gestured.

"Nice to see you too Eddie," Dr. Ray exhaled a breath, "But time is ticking, we need to get you two as far away from China as possible."

"But why can't we stay here?" Hank took out his green water bottle, and started to drink.

"No, definitely not," Dr. Ray glanced around apprehensively, and lowered his voice, "Dr. Carl and his crews sold the keys to control dinosaurs, and I'm afraid that some of my employees are involved in the murder case."

"And we're all in danger now." Eddie concluded.

"Exactly," Dr. Ray agreed, and started to run, "Let's move."

Soon, the picture of a barge ported in the harbor zoomed in.

"We're almost there!" Eddie breathed heavily. Suddenly, the alarm ran, blinding their vision red. Behind them, people scattered around, running for their lives. Eddie's heart sank. He saw a huge dinosaur sprinting towards them, and beside it, smaller ones following the lead.

"Run!" Dr. Ray grabbed their arms, and started to sprint.

They rushed through the glass door, and flew towards the barge 10 meters away. The dinosaur behind ignored the intimidated crowd, and leaped across towards Dr. Ray.

"Help!" Dr. Ray screamed as the verociloptor snapped him in the leg, and swallowed him in a blink.

“Run!” Hank scurried forward as Eddie jumped onto the boat, noticing a driver waiting for them.

“Go! ” Hank commanded as he banged a small dinosaur in the head with a shovel.

The barge speeded away from the shore, leaving the dinosaurs roaring with anger.

“We need to find the truth ourselves.” Eddie’s expression’s deadly serious.

Together, they sailed into the open sea.

Suddenly, a tense scratch of claws clanged on the back floor, shaking the room vigoursly.

Dinosaur Invasion

HD Beijing School (JinZhan Campus) , Liu, Jason – 11

The whole event starts at year 2011.

Most people would never want to live at Dawn village, for it's ugly environment and filthy road . The Dawn village is between Germany and Poland and you need extra vision to discover this highly protected and hidden village . In most people's eyes, they will just see a plain grassland with old trees .

Now, you must been wandering: Hey, why it's been hidden, and why it's been hid so good?

Well, this should be a secret, but never mind. This place is a town, of course. But under it is a huge underground station with people streaming to work.

This is the top secret of Germany. Germany wanted to invade and control Poland years ago but didn't succeeded, because of the united allies. And now Germany wanted to start the world war III to rise the Nazi.

Below the Dawn village, there's an agent called Kevin, who's the most popular agent. He had messy hairs, brown eyes, always wore a black smith hat and he never change his clean, silky black gown. The group always sent him to complete missions and he had never fail, at least from now before.

On 2055 the December, the group sent him out to complete a mission to get information of Poland and steal the recipe from the train station at 225 road.

Kevin was a self-confidence man, but this time, he was nervous. He knew the whole German army was looking for this recipe, and this recipe was also the only way to beat Poland.

Kevin wasted no time and he was on his ways to 225 road 10 minutes later.

On the hills beside the road, someone spoke:

"He's on his way, sir."

"Good," said the voice "Make sure to track him inside the VELLATRED367, and leaves no survivors behind.

Kevin soon arrived and began to find the door with H on it . It's the door on his map that told him to go inside.

He carefully slid the door into a crack, and slithered inside through the crowd of people.

Inside was a sign read "No entry"

Kevin scanned the room and soon spotted the recipe.

But something caught his eyes and he observation began to set on a closet, and the inside was gleaming bright, and that's the only light in the room.

Out of curiosity, Kevin opened the closet and a strong wind burst out and blew him inside.

Inside was huge, Kevin suddenly found himself in a forest, the closet and the room had disappeared.

Suddenly, a dinosaur roared.

No, an animal roared, not a dinosaur! Dinosaur didn't exist.

But on the next second, a huge Brontosaurus came stomping down towards him .

Ok, maybe it's a time machine, that will does it.

But just as he took a step back, he felt of stepping on something. And the next thing he knew was that he was flying high and landing with a thump on something.

He looked down and nearly faint.

Kevin the agent was sitting on a Tyrannosaurus-Rex's back.

"Ahyahyah !" Kevin screamed out loud .

The dinosaur must had heard it, because it opened it tiny eyes and saw Kevin, with a roar of rage the dinosaur began to shake it's gigantic body and Kevin fell down with no alarm.

The Tyrannosaurus—rex charged at him. And Kevin suddenly remembered that he brought a light gun that can shoots light and pass signal

He took it out and aim it at the speeding dinosaur. A beam of light shot out and hits

The T—rex.

The dinosaur yelled in confusion for the strong beam of light and it backed up a bit, seizing his chance, Kevin began scrambling through the bushes and began to run towards the place where the time machine was.

It's just a second before the Tyrannosaurus—rex realized that his dinner was running away so it yelled and charged behind Kevin.

Just as Kevin began to get exhausted, a strange noise ranged up the whole forest, and the next thing he knew, strange types of pterosaur began scooping down to peck the T—rex's neck.

The T—rex roared again and thanks to the pterosaurs, Kevin was able to escape.

"Phew ! That's close ." Kevin said to himself, "I need to be more careful in this danger—"

He felt he had stepped on something square and hard.

He bent down towards the long grasses and somehow, he picked up a stuff like medallion. And it also had a letter H on the top of the box.

He examined it carefully, and it tells him one certain fact: somebody had been here before!

Kevin somehow shuddered to think about that, and he had completely forgot his missions.

Suddenly, another strange sound appeared from the hills. And the next thing he knew, an Hadrosaurus was marching down the hills and began to open and shut his mouth. Kevin looked left, and he saw piles of buried sand and he knew instantly that it's piles of eggs.

He hurried off incase the dinosaur began to charge at him .

I must find my way to the time machine before dark. He thought.

It's a long way to the time machine, or even Kevin himself wasn't sure that he was going the right way.

Speaking of it, he just thought he was so lucky to be thrown so far by the trap—wait.

He thought, why's there a trap? Trap hadn't been invented yet, and also it surely couldn't throw him that far—

He stopped, nearly ran into a big something, and it took him one second to realized that he had found the time machine .

The closet door was still opened, and just when he's about to walk inside the closet door, he was knocked aside by one strong man

"WHOA! SAM ! INTRUDERS!" He yelled after he bumped into Kevin .

"Close the portrait VELLATRED367! Get out, quick!"

Kevin wanted to scrambled in the portrait VE whatever, but he got punched by some one and got down, unconscious .

A shadowy figure marched forward, and Kevin saw his long hat that read H.Y.D.R.A on top .

"You !" Kevin gasped.

The shadow faded, as Adolf Hitler himself walked out from the closet .

"Yes, I'm wandering when I'll see you, Agent. I appreciate your abilities, but you have a heart of justice, so I am very sorry to let you inside and then send the dinosaur back—"

"You WHAT?" Kevin demanded.

Hitler however, didn't seemed listening .

"—and I will took the world using it . You know, VELLATRED367 is my baby, spent me tons of years to built . It's beautiful ! But one second here equals a day or so ."

He walked back to the closet.

"NO!" Kevin screamed but too late, the closet had already been closed .

Now Kevin began to feel hopeless, what will he do?

After an hour on present days, people were screaming and there's lazar any where !

And dinosaurs were roaming freely in Poland.

It's 2056 now and people had thought Kevin had died in the mission.

Kevin finally opened his pocket and found a medallion in it.

He opened the cube and found a watch and a scribble of note.

The note read : "The fossil controls VELLATRED, Nazi, EDI fossil .

The watch had a recipe: "Time watch, one time only.

Kevin knew that EDI fossil wasn't a fabulous fossil, but that's the only way to stop Hitler and his dinosaurs, so there's not so much to do except to use the watch .

He studied the recipe and turned the watch three times and said: "bring me to 1900 !"

In an instant, he had travelled to the past. He knew there's no time to waste but destroying the fossil.

As the piece had been destroyed by Kevin, the future changed, the dawn village didn't exist and there's no dinosaur attacking people anymore .

Kevin stayed at the 1900s and got married and lived happily ever after. And apart from you, who else would know that an agent which had disappeared in 2011 had saved the world?

THE END

(I 'm running out of paper anyway)

A New Home

HD Beijing School (JinZhan Campus) , Lu, Hannah – 11

It was a peaceful fall in a bustling city, Shanghai .When someone walks in the city ,they will smell the moisty leaves that had fallen on to the ground and feel the cold breeze dancing by their cheeks. You can see skyscrapers all around , driverless cars were the most common cars on the road. The communities in the city have many green spaces and they are all very neat. The people in the city all have smart housekeepers to do things for them.

Meanwhile, on a small island that no one knew ,dinosaurs still exists. People do not know about this because they think they know everything and were lazy to explore more.

The dinosaurs have a children (a human) that they adopted one summer. Her name is called Mia .Mia was washed to the shore of the dinosaurs' island lying on a surfing board ,she was surfing on the sea when she and her family were on holiday , suddenly, a huge wave came and before she knew it , she was stroked away ,then she fainted. Maybe its because she was lucky ,when she woke up ,she spotted an island not far away and she used all her might to make it to the island. When she arrived at the island, she was exhausted . The dinosaurs found her when they went drinking by the seashore. They were very kind so they decided to adopt Mia . When Mia lived with the dinosaurs for the first week she merely knew what they were saying . However , there was a patient Sinosauropteryx that helped her and they became friends .So , after practicing everyday , Mia could speak dino language deftly .

Although they have a land all to themselves, the dinosaurs were facing a lot of challenges .They were nearly out of food and many dinosaurs died because of hunger. The dinosaurs decided that they would have to move to another place . When everyone were worrying about what they would have to do next , Mia thought of a great idea . Mia said to the dinosaurs , “Maybe we can go to my home , the land where I lived before . ” The dinosaurs had heard about the humans' world from Mia many times and they had a great desire to go there .

The sinosauropteryx said, “I agree , maybe we can go tomorrow , I will be the captain and Mia can be the sailor .”

“Some big ones like me can just swim and you will just need to build a boat for the smaller ones like Mia ,”Said a big dinosaur.

“Ok, we agree ,”Said all the dinosaurs.

Then , the dinosaurs and Mia started working. Some of them got a bit of wood for the boat, some prepared the last bits of their food and packed them in a small bag so they would not get out , some built the boat and tested it by the beach . This took them so long that it was midnight when they finished . “Do you know the way Mia ?”asked a dinosaur.

“Well, I probably know which way to go ,but I am not sure,” replied Mia.

“I am so sleepy , lets sleep,” Mia yawned and dozed off.

Following that , there was only the sound of little birds chirping in the distance ,the leaves danced beside each other making a rustling sound , the moon was full and bright . They did not know that this very moment , families are supposed to be celebrating the mid-autumn festival and eating mooncakes , but Mia's mom and dad could just look at the moon and celebrate without Mia .

Time flies when you are sleeping , the sun has just risen when something disturbed the silence. “Wake up sleepyheads , lets start our journey ,”said Mia. So they all woke up and started the day . The dinosaurs and Mia ate a simple breakfast and went on their boat get ready to sail . Finally , they took off.

Being on the water everyday was not easy for the dinosaurs .For the first two days, they finished the tiny bit of food that they have . On the third day, they were totally out of food.

“What can we do, if we do not think of something quick , we will all die on the sea,” said the Sinosauropteryx.

“Maybe we can eat fish , we can just catch some and cook them ,”said Mia .

“How can we catch fish if we do not have fishing tools ?”asked a dinosaur.

“Look , I invented this fishing net when we were at our island ,”replied Mia .

“You are so attentive, ”said a dinosaur .

Then , they fished and got two fishes that they can split after cooking . Mia burned a fire and cooked the fish in boiling water . “This is the most delicious fish I have ever smelled in my life, ”said a dinosaur.

After about ten minutes , Mia said, “Dinner is ready, come and get your share of this delicious fish.”

They finished the fish so fast that it seems like they had just started dinner . Everyone was sleepy after all this dinner making.

So, they all went to sleep.

The few months of traveling were something like this, eating fish everyday and fishing.

They sailed for several months when they saw a glimpse of an enormous boarder that had a beach that looked familiar to Mia . The dinosaurs got excited and one of them asked, “Is this the humans’ world ?”

“Well , I hope so.” answered Mia.

After ten minutes they arrived. Dinosaurs started to step out of the boat and all the people on the beach were frightened and they ran in horror shouting for help.

“There are a bunch of creatures roaming the city , help!” shouted a woman .

The dinosaurs were so hungry that they dashed into the city and ate everything they could except for people. The carnivores ate all the meat they can find in the grocery store . The herbivores ate grass , tree leaves and stems. This made the well organized city chaos.

People called the police and because they can not deal with this, they told this to the government to let them decide whether to keep the dinosaurs or not.

The governments were planning on evicting the dinosaurs out of their world .However, Mia can not let this kind of thing happen to her friends , so she decided to help them by translating what they said to the government.

Mia was ready to make her speech in front of all the citizens and she was not nervous at all.

“Good morning , ladies and gentlemen, my name is Mia and today I am here to announce something that is about life or death. So, I want the ones in here all take it seriously. First, I want to apologize about the dinosaurs roaming in without any warning. Secondly, I want to say that they were really hungry and were starving so I would ask if you

can kindly make them a part of your life. I will also respect everyone's opinions about whether keep them or not. Finally, I want to thank all of you who had come here to listen to my speech .”

The governments was very pleased about her speech and they let the citizens vote whether to keep them or not. Most people thought her speech was great and decided to give her a chance. Every family can get a dinosaur if they want, the left ones will be kept in the Beijing Zoo. Mia also went back to her family with a dinosaur.

This story tells us , do not judge an animal by how it looks , their heart can be kind . Also , be kind to animals or they might extinct .

Original

HD Beijing School (JinZhan Campus) , Mu, Leo – 13

In the beginning, when God created the universe, the earth was formless and desolate. Then God commanded, “Let there be light” —and light appeared. Four days later, God commanded, “Let the earth produce all kinds of animal life.” Then the world was now filled with life. The world was now a peaceful and harmonious place. God viewed his work and marveled at its beauty. However, he wanted to create a species that could rule the world, the strongest species in the world. “They will stand tall on the ground, like the pillars that withstand the weight of the world; I will let the wind breeze aside them. They should be formidable as the heart of truth, show their virginity, and hold their heads high, because they are mine, my most remarkable work.”

Therefore, God illuminated the eyes of the creatures and strengthened their strength. “The dawn is coming, and I have created for them; this age shall be called the Triassic Period.” The first dinosaur was created, towering between the world like the giant in Greek myths. It was effulgent, showering the blessings of God, living in peace and a place above itself. God then said, “I will offer the creature the ability to reproduce; their children shall be revered, and they are doomed to be the kings.” The second dinosaur was created. They were aloof from conflicts, away from disputes, living a halcyon life. “How can I subvert the world’s order if every creature is living happily? The desire for revenge is glittering in my heart; I want to disturb the settled water in the world, I will put the world in chaos and disorder.” The devil went straight to the dinosaurs, along with the cloud and darkness.

“Aren’t you the most powerful creature in the world? Aren’t you the strongest creature in the world? Attain more, rule over the lives, be the creator of the world, override the nonentities!”

“We are already the happiest creatures in the world; we do not want anymore. Please go away, trickster.”

SHADOW

“I have already used my blandishments, but no words can demoralize their heart. The rage has intensified, the malice is killing me; if I cannot contort their destiny, I cannot change the fate, then I shall destroy them, ruin them with death, the influx of fear. I will create the most fearful creature, and at that time, even God cannot stop my devastation. This creature will be strong, even stronger than the herbivores, and fierce, as fierce as my talons and fangs. Their teeth will be as sharp as the blaze quenching in the fire, their skins as hard as the chain on Mammon. They will nip the hope that already exists, drink the blood that is flowing, bite the neck, and rip the meat.”

Therefore, the second type of creature was created. “This fantastic creature, I will call it the Tyrannosaurus. “Killing and murder are engraved in their mind, the words they heard and the songs they sang were the whisper of inferno. They invaded the residence of the herbivores, slaughtering them with violence, followed with the devil.

“What has the devil done to the world! I gave them the strength to appreciate, but not to kill. These creatures are also educable; I believe from their heart they are tangled and oppressed. I shall tell them to stop the massacre, because they are all brothers.” God put his hands on the head of the Tyrannosaurus, allowing them to touch the light. When a crack was opened in their mind, when luminosity dispel the cloud of darkness, they surveyed their bodies that were covered with blood, they gazed into remorse. They stopped their invasion.

WHEN HATE IS UNAVOIDABLE

“Do you think you have made the world peaceful again? I will not let you. I see the sorrow and grief beside the corpses of the herbivores' brothers, the hunger of the carnivores, desire is combusting, and it will result in the victory of me.” He turned into a Brontosaurus, walked through the storm, and absorbed the groan of the darkness. “Now the atrocious species has stopped its pace forward; they show their weakness and deficiency, that is our unity. We shall strike them with our bodies, revenge for the sacrifices!”

“But we shall rest in peace,” said the leader of the herbivores. “Coward! If we do not have any means to fight for our rights, we do not have any liberty to live; then what is the meaning of creation? Anyone standing here can tell me what we are. We are the most powerful creature in the world; we shall stand and disdain the trifles; we shall go with the glory! Now, shall we wait for the death that is doomed, or shall we finish the mission and duty of us as the king of the world? Shall we live in the fear of the Tyrannosaurus or resist using our strength and rule the world? Go with me and fight, fight the chains on me, fight the enveloping of dawn, fight the violence and atrocity, stand with me!”

“We shall fight! We shall fight!”

“I will give you sharp weapons, give you the ability to penetrate the skin of the carnivores, the ability to seek freedom.”

EXTINCTION

“What shall we do now? Shall we obey the gospel of God or stand in opposition to our brothers that do not eat meat? Shall we turn our left cheek to our enemy or stand with the herbivores?”

The devil, disguised as a Tyrannosaur, spoke to the desperate souls, “I have foreseen the future; there is a great philosopher who says, 'To be or not to be, this is the question.' Now, our race is standing at the crossroads woven by fate. Cowards will sink into the marsh; this is an eternal truth. Only the creatures with courage can survive. When the enemies swarm towards us, we shall dare, we shall bite all that hinders our way forward, we shall say yes when war is coming. Now, you will decide: one day more, and that is our destiny.”

When the sun broke the gloomy and hazy night, when the horizon was painted gold, God kneeled down to his work and added his one last orientation to them, a glimpse of red. This is the color of blood, also the color of termination. The boosting volcano roared with the dance of splattering, the art of ruin. “They will endure and suffer more if they exist, so please rest in peace.”

In the land of Eden, a man named Adam was created.

The Cloned Dinosaurs of 2070

HD Beijing School (JinZhan Campus) , Nie, Coco – 13

Someone was knocking on Serena's shell. A glaring light fell on her. "Stop it!" She growled.

"Hey! Here comes another one breaking the shell!" There was a voice whispering outside. Nonsense. Why would I leave such a cozy home! It's perfect here, she thought.

"Come on, you'll be coming out anyways. It's amazing out here!" Serena stood up. Crack! Her shell broke with a loud snap. The blinding light made her eyes hurt, she could barely see the creature that stood in front of her. She looked around and saw lots of dinosaurs peeking out their eggs, crying and screaming toward the two-legged creatures. They were in a room filled with glass shelves and tables, with a sign on the door frame: Dinosaur Cloning Laboratory. One of the two-legged creatures picked Serena up and walked out of the room.

In the corridor, people walked past her, carrying strange machines and other creatures that she had never seen before. Serena had a bad feeling about this, an uneasy atmosphere of metal and chemicals pervaded the air, and she knew that she didn't belong here. Eventually, Serena was placed on a grassy field.

"Hello," a bigger dinosaur greeted her. "I am your brother, Dylan," he said.

"Where is this?" Serena asked in confusion.

He sighed, "we are trapped in this glass room by the humans, those two-legged creatures" he glanced at the exclaiming two-legged creatures standing outside the glass. "Probably forever," his words fell on Serena like stones. Is it my fate to be imprisoned in this glass box, and be watched over by crazy humans? Serena felt helpless. Dylan seemed to see what Serena was thinking about, he shook his head and said, "It is too hard to escape, we can't fight with humans."

The sound of laughter came from a distance. Other dinosaurs were playing with each other joyfully in the bushes. No one appeared to notice about the tragic destiny that was creeping up onto them. Perhaps I'm just overthinking about it, Serena comforted herself.

"These are Brachiosaurus from the Late Jurassic period. Chinese scientists have just developed the technology to clone dinosaurs, and we are lucky enough to see the first ones that just broke their shells today– May 10th, 2070. Today is undeniably a significant day for China archeology," a curator was explaining to the humans. In 2070, Chinese scientists discovered dinosaur genes in Sichuan province. This discovery shocked the archeological field and scientists were anticipated to clone them. Surprisingly, they succussed, and the first dinosaurs of 2070 were hatched.

Serena felt miserable, I was cloned? She sat down aggrieved. Just then, Dylan and his friends walked towards her. The three of them stood in front of Serena with solemn faces.

"We've decided to escape," Kayla said. She was a green brachiosaur with big eyes. Serena was surprised because her brother had just said that it is impossible to escape.

"We can't be imprisoned like this forever," another added.

"I will gather all the brachiosaurs and make a plan together," Dylan announced. He walked to the center of the room and cleared his throat, "dinosaurs, I don't think staying in this glass room for the rest of our lives is a good idea." Dinosaurs looked at him in shock. Obviously, none of them had thought about escaping.

"Escape!" Eric, Dylan's other friend suggested. Some dinosaurs started to discuss about Dylan's statement, others were whispering in surprise.

"I agree," someone shouted.

"Me too," noise began to increase, more dinosaurs started to realize their real fate. After a while of discussion, the dinosaurs decided to carry out their plan three days later.

Soon, the day came. It was a cloudy night when everyone was asleep. "Dinosaurs, this is the day that we've been waiting for. Remember our plan and fight for our freedom!" Dylan was the leader of this 'rebel'. Everyone cheered. Kayla picked the lock with a twig and signaled everyone to leave.

The moonlight streaming through the curtains fell on the marble floor, Serena gazed out the window and saw the bustling city of Zigong lit up with lights. They passed through different laboratories and finally reached the gate. "There are guards!" Panting, Serena alertly warned.

"They're sleeping soundly!" Someone jokingly remarked. The group of creatures tried to bend low and sneaked out of the gate carefully.

The city was bright even during nighttime, a few people walked on the streets watching their chip screens. The dinosaurs had to walk through the bushes to hide away from the city and people.

"What's that!" a person on the street screamed in horror. His voice caught peoples' attention.

"Run!" Dylan growled as the dinosaurs speeded up. After hours of walking and running, Serena and the group finally arrived the mountains. It was getting bright, a hidden stone road guided the dinosaurs into the deep mountain, where forests and streams stretched for thousands of miles. The news of the Brachiosaurus escaping from the lab should have spread all over the city by now.

At dawn, sunlight sprinkled on the mountains of Sichuan, where a group of dinosaurs cheered and celebrated for their freedom...

Sauroposeidon

HD Beijing School (JinZhan Campus) , Yang, Michael – 13

50 years ago, in Chengdu, China, a group of archeologists discovered a dinosaur site with fossils and stones. They found many important clues about dinosaurs. Among the discoveries was a large egg, as big as a balloon, with black spots and colorful stripes. It sat quietly in the dirt, as if waiting for someone to find it. Many scientists saw it, but everyone was too busy to dig it out. Then, one day, a pair of gloved hands picked up the egg and took it to an old, mysterious house. The hands belonged to a historical professor who loved studying dinosaurs. He was amazed by the egg's size and spent days inside his dirty home, examining it. People found it strange, but no one dared to stay and watch, not even his students. One morning, the professor woke up and found the egg empty. The creature inside was gone! He heard a strange, sharp noise coming from the kitchen, like metal rubbing together. With curiosity, he tiptoed to the kitchen and gasped at what he saw. It was a tiny, grass-eating dinosaur! He couldn't believe his eyes. He caught the dinosaur and looked at it from every angle. The creature just made sharp noises, showing it was hungry. The professor quickly searched online. This cute plant-eating animal had gone extinct millions of years ago. It was named Sauroposeidon.

Comparing the real dinosaur to an AI model it seemed that the long neck, green body, and very long tail—all matched what the model showed. He was sure this was a real, living dinosaur from the past.

Excited and scared, the professor named the dinosaur "Chengdu" after the city where it was found. He started to document everything about Chengdu, from its eating habits to its movements. The professor realized that he had a huge responsibility. He needed to keep Chengdu safe and learn as much as he could from this miracle

creature. News of Chengdu spread quickly. People from all over the world wanted to see the living dinosaur. The professor's house became a center of scientific research. Teams of scientists worked day and night, studying Chengdu and trying to understand how it had come back to life. Chengdu grew quickly, and the professor's house wasn't big enough anymore. They moved the dinosaur to a special place where it could have more space. The place had a large, indoor area that imitates the dinosaur's habitat, with plants and a place for Chengdu to take a walk. The professor made sure that Chengdu was well cared for, and he continued to study the dinosaur's behavior.

As time went on, the professor and his team learned a lot about dinosaurs from Chengdu. They discovered new facts about their biology and how they lived. The world was amazed by the things this one dinosaur provided. Schools taught about Chengdu, and children everywhere dreamed of becoming dinosaur experts. The professor knew that finding Chengdu was more than a scientific discovery. It was a chance to reconnect with the past and understand the history of our planet. He hoped that by studying Chengdu, humans could learn to protect the animals and

plants that lived on the Earth. Chengdu's story became a symbol of the importance of protecting our natural world.

The professor and his team worked hard to make sure that the knowledge they gained from Chengdu would help protect species that were in danger of extinction. They believed that it was humans to make sure those stories of the world could continue. In the end, the professor's discovery in Chengdu changed the world.

It showed that the past exists surprises and that sometimes, the most unexpected things could teach us the most important lessons. The professor, once a quiet historian in his old house, became a person who reminded the world that surprising things could be found when we explore and protect our natural environment.

The Rescue

HD Beijing School (JinZhan Campus) , Wang, Ava – 12

Ming's Note

--- What I'm Facing

In Room 1202, there lived a family on the verge of collapse. My name is Ming, and my father, Hao, is a man with outdated beliefs, like a grandfather. I possess a jade necklace, which has prisoned me for the past 12 years. We are the inheritors of the Fu Ma language, a nearly extinct dinosaur language. In search of a better education, my dad and I relocated to Beijing, where Mandarin is the predominant language. I feel completely lost. I desperately wanted to learn Mandarin to communicate with my classmates, but my dad refuses to allow it. This argument began on the 19th of November.

"Dad, I want to learn standard Chinese. There's no way I can speak the Fu Ma language with my classmates. Even our teacher, Mrs. Wang, was miserable," I said, growing increasingly frustrated.

My dad turned around and suspiciously stared at me. "Why? Don't you think it's impressive to know a niche language?"

I retorted, "No, what's more embarrassing than not being able to communicate with your classmates and teachers?"

My dad suddenly growled, "No! You have enough Mandarin at school. At home, you should speak the Fu Ma language with me. The extinction of our language is because of people like you!"

I shivered and became completely fed up with my dad's stubbornness. "If you want me to become a professor of the Fu Ma language, then what was the purpose of moving to Beijing? Just let me stay in Hainan!"

My dad tapped his head and said, "Whatever, but you still need to learn the Fu Ma language with me on weekends."

I sighed. My heart was pounding so fast. This was the first time I had argued with my father. I missed Hainan as much as I missed the taste of vanilla ice cream (I had only eaten it once). Why did we move to Beijing? Well, the school was nice, the roads were clean, but I missed my home. I walked slowly to my room, which was filled with cardboard boxes. My eyes were wet. What could I do? Lying on my bed, I tucked myself into the blanket, wishing that tomorrow would be better.

Mrs. Wang's Note

--- One of My Students

I have always had a passion for working with children, which is why I pursued a career in teaching. However, this year, I am faced with a unique situation. Ming Li, a student who recently moved from Hainan to Beijing, is facing difficulties in communicating with us. It is important to note that he is not a foreigner or mute; rather, he can only speak Fu Ma language, which is a nearly extinct dinosaur language. Ming is a well-behaved boy, and as his mentor and Chinese teacher, I can see that he is making a genuine effort to fit in. However, the complexities of the Chinese language in Grade 6 are proving to be a challenge for him, to the point where he struggles with basic spelling.

The root of the problem lies with his father, Mr. Hao. He firmly believes that there is no need for Ming to learn Mandarin. During my first parent meeting with Mr. Li, I was taken aback by his perspective. Our conversation unfolded as follows:

"Mr. Li, let's skip the formalities and address the issue at hand. Ming's Mandarin proficiency is at a Grade 3 level, and the Chinese curriculum in Grade 6 is proving to be too demanding for him. However, we have noticed that Ming is

putting effort to lean in class. After consulting with the school administration, we have collectively agreed to develop a customized curriculum for Ming to help him catch up with his studies."

Mr. Li seemed engrossed in Ming's test paper, seemingly disregarding my words. Feeling disappointed by his reaction, I called out to him. Mr. Li snapped out of his daze and responded, "Apologies, I wasn't paying attention. But, I didn't enroll Ming in this school to learn Mandarin."

I looked at him with a perplexed expression. "I see. Well, what I have to discuss today is of utmost importance. Ming is struggling to make friends, and he is feeling isolated."

Mr. Li widened his eyes and calmly replied, "I understand."

Attempting to convey my shock, I continued, "Do you truly believe that this is acceptable? Ming is unable to communicate with his classmates, making it impossible for anyone to understand his needs or desires. His desk mate noticed this and brought it to our attention. Are you genuinely unaware of this situation?"

Mr. Li nodded and smiled. "When did this start happening?"

Taking a deep breath, I responded, "It began around two months ago, if not earlier. We are unable to help him if he does not reach out to us. Even if he does seek help, we are unable to comprehend his needs. Mr. Li, this is why our school has established a special class for Ming. This is a rescue mission."

Hua's Note
—Desk Mate

At times, I am extremely selfish. My new desk mate, Ming, is a boy who is incapable of speaking Mandarin. I was filled with dread upon being paired with him. When Zhen (my dearest friend) caught sight of my slip with our seating arrangement, she gazed at me as if I were a pig about to be put on the roasting spit. Sharing a desk with Ming is exasperating. I have to help him with his Chinese homework and comprehend what he need as a "new student", which is frequently nonsensical.

The day that everything changed was a Friday. I hastily packed up to return home. As I closed my locker, I noticed something peculiar — scars on Ming's arms. He tiptoed nimbly and made his way to the bathroom. I sensed that something was wrong, so I followed him. The corridor was silence, with all the students already gone. It was so silent that I could even hear my own heartbeats. I stood outside the bathroom, covering my mouth, and listened intently. A few moments later, a groaning sound emerged from the bathroom. I peeked into the room and witnessed blood flowing on the newly tiled floor. I covered my mouth and knelt on the ground. I crawled nearer to the door and saw Ming sitting on the floor, holding an art knife and cutting his own arm. Then, he pulled his Jade bracelet off his neck, it shattered on the floor. I struggled to stand up, my legs trembled, and then I gasped, blacked out, and collapsed.

Nothing.

Hao's note
—Why I did this

I have had enough of what I've done. Our family was the heir of the Fu Ma language. This implies that if our family does not speak this dinosaur language, it will become extinct. I cannot deny that I am not an enthusiast of this language. I had no intention of learning the Fu Ma language initially. However, our family has a terrifying curse that no one can resist — the Jade necklace that we are forced to wear upon birth. When we reach 30, we need to tear the necklace with our own hands. The moment the necklace leaves your neck, you can learn another language. This implies that you need to have a child before the age of 25 and teach them the Fu Ma language to prevent it from

becoming extinct. However, everyone endures it. The reason why I took Ming to Beijing was to accelerate his thought of destroying the Jade bracelet, so that he could escape this curse and the curse would disappear from the world. The reason for being so strict is to push him harder. What surprised me was that Ming was harming himself to break away from this curse. I was nervous. I knew that if he didn't do this, he would be tormented for the rest of his life. But as his father, you couldn't heartlessly watch your son cutting his arms. Two weeks after my son's desk mate, Hua, found him cutting his arms and pulling off his Jade necklace, Mrs. Wang informed me that Ming's standard Chinese had improved significantly. This indicated that the Fu Ma language had become extinct. Things returned to the way they were before. Ming went to school, I went to work. Nothing changed and no one remembered the dinosaur family ever again.

Think that the story ended? No. It was all my imagination. When we found Ming, he was dead, sitting in the bathroom. His face was as white as a sheet of paper, pail and rigid. Behind him, there was his necklace and a letter. On the paper, it wrote:

"I can't endure it anymore. Sorry, dad. I Love you."

"I suddenly understand that the curse is there to protect us. This is a failed rescue. Something I'll never forgive myself." This is what I wrote before I tied the rope on the roof.

On the 6th Day

HD Beijing School (JinZhan Campus) , Yang, Kevin – 11

To begin with, Adam was a man who just had graduated from university, at this time it was the best time to say about his own thoughts on the world and to do important things, but now it is hard to find jobs and make a living. Adam had been very strong and powerful, he had worked on a building team and carried huge and, also heavy objects up ten or more flights of stairs he was also very smart too, he was a straight A student and passed all of his courses at university.

Adam has strong arms and, also a strong body, he works out sometimes at the gym next to his house, despite this he was also very childish, he plays children games and go to children theme parks, he only watches movies that children could watch. Adam also has a pointy face, a large mouth and also a pointy nose, his face reminds you of a person who has experience the pressure and cruelty of life, his face also has scars which are left there when a terrible disease struck him at childhood, his life was very unfortunate indeed. Adam was always cheerful on things even though there might be things that didn't suit his tastes or made him do things that he didn't like, he can remain cheerful even though a really bad thing just had happened.

One day, which I think is his 56th day trying to get a job, but this day he saw an advert in the newspaper looking for an assistant to a fossil hunter, there is also a phone number under the ad so Adam called the number on his Apple 4s phone, the phone number was: 136 4128 1829, and after a while the call was answered.

"Hello, this is the fossil hunter center, what do you need?", said the phone.

"Emm, hello, this morning I saw an ad which said that you needed an assistant for a fossil hunter.", said Adam.

"Yes indeed, are you applying for this job?", asked the phone.

"Yes I am.", replied Adam boldly.

"so you can come to the cross section at seventh avenue and Queen's road, you will see the center there."

"Okay thank you.", said Adam.

Adam went to the place that the center had told him, and went inside, that place is the most beautiful place that Adam had ever seen, there were fossils everywhere, different kinds of them, fossils of birds and dinosaurs, also there are fossils that Adam had never seen before, fossils of giant elephants and prehistoric human skeletons, then he saw a person wearing a large cowboy hat and was also wearing a Hawaiian T-shirt and pants, this person who was called Jack has a hard face, a round chin, he also has a pointy nose, green eyes and jet black and brownish hair, his personality is also very different from Adam. Jack was longing for a chance to go out and have some adventure, he also wants to prove to his parents that he can live by himself and not dependent on them.

"So, you are the person that is applying for the fossil hunter assistant job.", he said in a loud voice and looking Adam up and down, "you better come with me and learn something about fossil hunting."

Adam, knowing this is once in a lifetime moment, followed Jack to the back of the center, there were a pit where people can learn how to dig fossils and how to find fossils, so Jack put Adam in a chair and showed a presentation to him about different types of fossils and how to dig up and once it was up how to preserve the different types of fossils, after Jack had told Adam how to do all those things, they had to practice the skills that Adam had just learnt, Jack and Adam jumped down into the pit and started to dig the fossils which are buried there.

Finally, Jack and Adam climbed back up.

“It seems that you have a potential for digging fossils,” Jack said to Adam, “I will hire you as my assistant.”

Adam laughed out loud, he was so happy that he just had gotten his first job, Jack stood nearby looking puzzled.

Adam said, “Sorry, I am just too happy that I have got my first job.”

Jack understood he happiness, it was the same for him when he had gotten his first job.

Following that, Jack and Adam, this team went all across America to find fossils and they had a lot of interesting adventures, one time in the wild, they found a fossil of a T-Rex but suddenly they were attacked by a boar(a wild pig) and they have to run for their lives, because of this when they escaped the boar they can't find the T-Rex fossil spot ever again.

Afterwards, they got a mission from the up and up to go to China and find fossils in the Gobi Desert, they also got an envelope with two plane tickets inside, on the plane tickets there is the time that they are going to fly, it was 2:30. Jack looked at his watch there are only one hour left. They packed the most important equipment and some clothes, and they rushed to the airport.

At five in the next morning, they had arrived in the Gobi Desert, it was hot and dry, with cactuses every few feet, it was sandy and dusty, even the air was filled with sand, it's almost that you can fry an egg on the ground.

Jack and Adam weren't lucky in this place, they searched and searched and searched for days, but they couldn't find anything. One time Adam fell down on the sand thirsty and crying for water, the heat, the plants, the animals and also the weather is against them finding fossils, other times they faced the danger of hunger and poisonous, dangerous bugs, they also faced the danger of buried by a sandstorm all these things were trying and succeeding to stop them find fossils in the Gobi Desert.

One day they got lucky and found a cave that has fossils in it. To be safe, they first put a camera into the cave and looked around, checking around for hidden dangers, after they were sure that the cave was safe, they slowly lowered Adam into the cave. With a Puff of dusty air, Adam landed on the floor of the cave, he looked around him, saw all the different fossils lying all in the cave, then suddenly with a large boom, the cave of the wall collapsed on and around him, Adam was hit by a rock and fell unconscious.

After a few minutes, Adam woke up again, he found that he is in a world that is filled with green plants and trees, and, also dinosaurs. He didn't felt nervous, he only felt excited at the chance that he can explore a new world, with different surroundings, and soon he realized that he is going to compete with dinosaurs for food, water and shelter, Adam immediately started to gather material to build himself a place to live in the cave. Adam used branches and leaves to hide the entrance of the cave, then he used soft fur to build himself a comfortable bed, then he thought the next important thing is to get food, Adam gathered wild berries and made some bowls from leaves, Adam also made tools from rock and wood, he built a fire inside the cave and used his tools and weapons to hunt down small dinosaurs for their meat.

By doing all this he managed to thrive in this new and dangerous world, and in the end, he became the ancestor for our species—human.

The Seventh Spirit

HD Beijing School (JinZhan Campus) , Zhang, Coco – 12

Look, being an animorph was really cool but difficult. Because we have to deal with things accurately in the mortals and immortals.

If your reading this for a narrative for advancing your knowledge or for fun, fantastic. But if you feel something grumbling in your guts, you may be a one like me.

Some of us are born animorphs, so we don't realize we are being a normal kid having a normal life will be awesome. Only when they find out that they have a special power either from others. For example, an animorph cheetah, they will run faster than anyone .

Alright, my name is Taffeta. Di. Roses, my friends in mortal call me Taffy. My name is Jelly Beans while I'm in animal form (a wolf) in the immortal world.

I'm 12 years old, so I finished primary school in mortal world and started lower secondary back in Adagiora, my home.

Well, I have more friends back in my home, such as Summer. Lemonade, the lioness. Jaycee. Pineapple, the owl. Coco. Mango, the spider. Finally, Yannis. Mango, the alligator. They're all animorphs, but we don't stay in the same school while in primary. The reason is, we're all born in Adagiora so we have to train for years to be an animorph and pass a test. Or else, we'll just stay in animal form. My sister is in this situation, although she trained for years and years but she did not pass the test. So sad, I passed the test!

Alright, I know it is un respectful.

A description for my home: Adogiora, A kingdom with 7 different areas: 1. Gingerbread Town, a place where houses are made of cookies and all kinds of bread. Gingerbread man lives there, he's the mayor of this town, he decided to make a Marsh Mellow Hill and a lake. The pastries who live in this town drinks chocolate syrups instead of water, so the mayor worked out a chocolate syrup lake. The Marsh Mellow Hill are just huge fluffy marsh mellow, citizens could have a picnic on the hill.

2. Candy Cane Forest, candy canes and lollipops instead of trees, the air filling with fruit flavored gummies. All kinds of candy lives there, they build their own house using the kind of candies they like.

3. Popsicle Peaks, where mountains are soda flavored ice-cream, and some rocks are different flavor of popsicles. Animals live in another mountain which is the neighbor of this one, that mountain is normal, polar bears and a bunch of other animals that live in cold places.

4. Bubbly Jungles, normal jungle where normal animals live. Always raining

5. Dessert Desert, super-hot, most of it is normal, but beware: some cacti are dessert, some are real! Try not to spike your mouth!

6. Pearl Lake, a lake that has a part of it is sea, and a part of plain water. So, all kinds of water animals could live there.

7. City Center, very normal except it's for animals to work.

You know, we have a star named Dr. Holmes, a panda. He created all kinds of buildings and machines that made our lives better.

Commented [NH1]: no a

Commented [C(2R1)]: ok

Commented [NH3]: not "we"?

Commented [C(4R3)]: ohhhhhh, yes!

Commented [C(5R3)]: Done

Commented [NH6]: ; being

Commented [C(7R6)]: like i need to change the punctuation to ;

Commented [C(8R6)]: done

But what we don't know is, our slightest biggest problem was him, he'd like to have the world he like. The dreamland of Dr. Holmes was kind of chaos, such as-----

"Shut it, Jelly!"

"Alright, alright. Um... Jaycee, would you mind if you pass me some more jellybeans? I'm out of them right now."

"Okay, as much as you want." the owl sighed.

My friend, as I mentioned before, was a barn owl. She has white and golden feathers, twinkling in the night. Sharp claws could easily snap Coco out of life, and with eyes dark as night. As she said, I can't inform you guys that much, so I'll start with a math class in my immortal school.

Sitting with my best friends in the classroom, waiting for our professor to come and teach. He's a super professor, that's why math's my favorite subject. He agrees to let us eat snacks while learning in class if we understood what he taught us today.

We waited and waited, but he never came to us. Some students started to act like Summer, crazy. They jumped up and down, eating all kinds of . While this time, Summer acted weird. The fur on her back straightened, she whimpered and muttered something such as, ' It's coming, the scent, '

About 2-3 minutes, a different teacher stepped in the classroom. Students stopped eating and chatting, they turned while the other professor had a short speech in the auditorium.

"I'm here instead of Professor. Thomas, he had a serious accident and I'm teaching you guys for him."

Students groaned, the class was really boring just as listening to a sloth talking. Finally, the bell rang, my friends and I ran to our closet and slung our backpacks on our shoulders. No, it should be: Back(for Summer, Yannis, Coco, and me), and Grabbing using their claws(Jaycee). Animals aren't easy.

We headed straight to the Mango's house, Yannis and Coco's cousin was their too, so maybe he'll join us.

It's pretty amazing that their house was huge. I thought that Yannis was crazy by getting up an idea to have a party at their house and for a family of spiders, the house won't even fill Jaycee, but it actually did. My friends and I always come up a question that beset us for a long time: Why does a spider family got an alligator for a child?

The New Tale of China Dinosaurs

HD Beijing School (JinZhan Campus) , Zhang, Dorothy – 14

“Yoo—hoo, check it out, guess who just got in Universal Studio!” A teenager shouted at his phone screen with excitement. “Shut up Scott, stop pretending you are a influencer with million followers, nobody cares about your dumb livestream”. Katrina commented with a bright smile. Scott Puckered up in dismay. “You are supposed to take good care of your baby cousin... What's his name again?” “Dino.” A five-year-old boy answered her question while licking an ice-cream. “Dino.” Katrina finished her sentence. “Let's see, the roller coaster takes the most time in line, so let's go to the Jurassic Park theme-land first.” Katrina took a deep breath and start marching towards front, the rest of the crew follows.

“Wow... dragon bones!”

“...Dinosaur skeleton. Dinosaur fossils refer to the soft tissues in the body of dinosaurs after death due to decay and disappearance, bones and other hard tissues deposited in the sand, in the...”

“Nerd.” Scott said within a fake sneeze.

Katrina turned back, pursed her lips, slightly shocked her head, “No Scott, I'm not nerd. You can't just call anyone who is smarter than you a nerd.”

“Wow... A golden egg.” Dino has a new discovery. A golden egg shimmered inside the dinosaur's jaw.

“You are right, but how come a golden egg appears in the skeleton's mouth? Weird.”

“Maybe it's some special festival celebration activity, hmm... what is nearest festival?” Scott took it down and hand it to Dino.

At the exact same moment, Dino put it in his mouth and bitten it hard.

“Why are you biting it?” Before the words were finished, Katrina felt a whirl, The heaven revolves, and the earth turns. As a huge halo of dazzling light passed over them, the surroundings environment began to change as well. Colorful Neverland transformed in to mounds of dry thatch and dirt roads. Laughters of youth vanished, replaced by the roar of the merciless wind. The strong wind forced everyone to close their eyes, when they opened them again, they found their selves on a savanna. The winds came from the north, across the plain, whooshing over their cheeks.

“Wha...Where are we? What happened? Why we are here?” Katrina's brain completely blacked out for about one minute.

Scott felt dizzy and still did not forget to joke, “Are you writing an essay in Chinese class? The six elements of a good essay? Hmm, interesting, let me guess what's next.”

“Ugh can't you just shut up for a second? Look at our situation here! ” Katrina said with a furrowed brow. “Okay, since we unbelievably started all of this because of the golden egg,” she speak towards Dino with all hear and soul, “Please don't tell me that you swallowed it.” Dino didn't cry or make any noise, just stared at the empty space ahead. “Ahhhhhhh——” Scott shook Daddy's shoulders.

“Here.” Dino took it out from his pocket and slowly replied.

Katrina and Scott both breathed a sigh of relief.

“Can you keep it safe in your pocket, Dino?”

He nodded.

Then a distant roar of a primordial beast echoing woke them up from the dizziness.

“Dinosaurs.” Katrina and Scott whispered at the same time, trying to keep composure. They’ve realized how vicious these prehistoric giants were, and how human lives were nothing more than ants in front of them.

Scott took out a telescope from his Jan-sport backpack, leaning forward to ‘Spy on the enemy’. “Well, I knew that we are going to use it somewhere, at first I was planning on use it for the musical.”

“What are these long necked, leave eating dinosaurs called again?”

“Brachiosaurus, safe, they are fed on leaves and twigs, gregarious.”

“The egg is glowing.” Dino said with a glowing pocket.

A golden ghost which looks like Bowser of Mario float out of the egg. “Hi, I’m your time travel guide, Guano. So, back on track, your mission is to give this egg back to the mother dinosaur. I’ll guide you, here is a map and some weapons that you might need, good luck.” Then Guano disappeared again.

They followed the map into a deserted canyon, dust and sand suddenly kicked up all around. They had wandered into the Velociraptor’s quarters. Fortunately, the big pack seems to be out looking for food, and there’s only one left on guard, or the crew would be dead. There is no other way but fight, there is no way to outrun a velociraptor, much less they were in a narrow valley. Scott grasped the spear, Katrina clutched her dagger, and Dino covered behind. The velociraptor hissed menacingly. Scott made a bold thrust; it nimbly evaded and countered. Katrina darted in, slashing. Scott then directed Dino to shelter. He struck the raptor’s leg, but it kept attacking. With a final heave, Scott hurled the spear, striking true. Katrina seized the moment to deliver a fatal stab. As the beast fell, the group gasped for breath. They realized the perilous journey had only begun. Yet, this small victory filled them with determination as they pressed on, following the enigmatic map into the uncharted.

The trio followed the map and head down a winding river. They met an old man wearing a bamboo hat, writing some thing on bamboo slips.

Katrina looked at Scot and encouraged him sincerely, Scott, go say hello, he doesn’t look very hostile.

“On it.” Scott had set off without a word, he ran toward the guy with courageous chivalry at first but suddenly slowed down in the last two hundred meters and began to inch closer to the mysterious bamboo hat man. At his last few steps, he spoke in Mandarin with a subtle hint of awkwardness and timidity, “What a beautiful day to write on bamboo slips! Hi sir, I’m Scott, nice to meet you.”

The man rise his head from his onerous, burdensome task. He glanced at the boy who dressed strangely, but he was not surprised nor shocked due to all the other marvelous creatures in all shape and color he has seen. And replied with a weird accent that Scott have never heard of, “I’m the descendant of the Yellow Emperor, Bo Yi, I was ordered by the emperor Da Yu to travel the mountains and seas to record these creatures.”

“A book of mythical creatures...Shan Hai Jing?! You are writing the Classic of Mountains and Rivers?! They are dinosaurs?!” Scott was so shocked, that his jaw almost gott up close and personal with the ground.

Bo Yi’s face exuded radiance with praise and recognition, “The is a very good book title indeed, I’ve never thought of it before. Thank you young man, what can I help you with?”

Scott didn’t expect things to go so well, he hurried back and brought the golden egg to Bo Yi, “Can you help us find the mother of this egg, see I know it seems like a impossible task but...”

“You are in luck, I happened to be a expert on this, I’m like the neighborhood committee of dinosaurs. Let me look.” Bo Yi took over the egg. “A golden one, it is very rare for dinosaur eggs. But I also happen to know a dinosaur that may be the mother of this egg, which is probably the only one in the world.” He blew a horn shaped like a nautilus. The sound waves are so strong that the weeds swing and the willows sway. A golden tyrannosaurus galloped on the prairie; her rapid thumps were so heavy as if the earth would shatter. “Bo Yi stroked the head of the

golden T-Rex beside him and said: "She appreciates what you did. About how to repay your kindness. Why don't you tag along her, dinosaurs understand human nature very well, she will know what you want."

At some point Katrina and Dino came; after saying goodbye to Bo Yi, they followed the dinosaur to the river. At that time, the Yellow River was still crystal clear, had not been stained yellow by worldly dust. She roared at the river, like she was hinting the crew to jump down.

"You want us to dive in?" Katrina affirmed.

The T-Rex bowed twice.

Katrina and Scott looked at each other and chuckled, "You know what? Everything has been so magical and unrealistic today, Let's jump."

"Will do—" He gestured with two pistols and swung them up and down in laugh.

"I'm———ready!" Dino seemed excited to go back to the modern world where they belong. The three tightly held each other's hands and jumped down together.

With a splash of water, they have found out them selves in the drifting river in Universal Studios, there is an upside-down inflatable raft nearby floating on the surface.

"Tell me we didn't capsize and hit the bank and get concussions." Scott said, covering his head.

Dino and Prejudice

HD Beijing School (JinZhan Campus) , Zhang, Nono – 13

One early autumn morning in Asgardia, all of the new seventh graders returned to school. The sun was shining high, a breeze was blowing in the western hills, and leaves were turning to red and brown. Only the day before, the students had been running down the hills, laughing and playing with their friends.

Our math teacher introduced a new student; the teacher was called Ms. Machel, and she was a nice teacher, but not to students who were in any way different or unconventional. All of the students were curious about who would be our new friend, but as soon we saw their appearance, we all screamed.

"Ahhh! What the hell is this creature? Why will he come to this school!!!"

"Well, he's Ethan, and he's the new student, as all of you noticed! Be nice to him. " The teacher said.

Our shock was because Ethan was a dinosaur; as we later learned from Google, a diplodocus, a kind of a dinosaur with a long tail and long neck. He had green skin but with a brownish underside...

"So, please introduce yourself, Ethan."

"Hello, I'm Ethan and um.....well I'm from the dinosaur world, but....."

The new student stepped forward towards us but then seemed too shy to continue, and Ms. Machel spoke in his place. "Ethan is from Eldoria, where as you all know, all middle school dinosaurs must pass a survival test to enter seventh grade; but, because of a childhood condition, Ethan is not the hardiest, so they sent him here, to a human school. Please be nice to him, because he's here for no fault of his own."

"Well, Ms. Machel, why can't he join other classes, why this one? It's not fair! We don't want a stupid dinosaur in our class!", one of the students yelled.

Ethan looked down, like he knew that he didn't belong to this world. He had probably been told that he might be treated like this, and done some mental preparation, but he still looked highly uncomfortable.

"I don't know either", confessed Ms. Machel. "I guess the school just randomly picked one class. I certainly don't want any misfit ruining our awesome group. Please be nice to him, so we won't have any fuss. And we can always just pretend that he's not here."

The teacher pointed to a seat in the corner, and said with clear dislike, so we all saw her true feelings, "Go sit there! And don't make trouble!"

Ethan sat down quietly and started to go through the textbooks that he was going to use. He enjoyed reading, smiling to himself, but squishing his hands until they turned to red. He concentrated so hard at times that he seemed not to hear what everyone was talking about. But perhaps that was the way Ethan avoided hearing how other people talked about him.

At break, no one wanted to play with Ethan. He must have been very lonely, but he couldn't find any help. Everyone, including even the principal and his teachers, actually disliked him. The only reason that they accepted him was because they didn't want any incident which might ruin their reputation as the best school in the city.

Time passed very quickly, Ethan went to school every day, apparently using money that he found on the street to survive. He was actually very talented at school work, but no matter how hard he works, still no teacher appreciated him. He was best of all at math; no matter how hard the problem was, he could always solve it. The thing is, no teachers or classmates acknowledged his powers.

Every time that he solved a problem, the teacher would hint that he cheated, and whenever he was the first to raise his hand with an answer, the teacher would always say that it was wrong, even it turned out to be right. He couldn't have liked that and must have realised that the teacher was just picking on him because he was a dinosaur.

Another reason why the teachers didn't like him was because he could only eat cooked food, and it was a lot of trouble for the school to prepare dinosaur food just for him.

Ethan still planned to prove himself in the mid-term exams, and so he studied very hard. He stayed awake studying until as late as 4 am, and during the day seemed to live in the library seeking knowledge. Finally, it was time to apply what he had prepared.

The exam was clearly easy for Ethan, as he was done quickly, and then raised his little arm as a sign to the teacher. The teacher did not respond, pretending that she did not see him, but as he kept his hand raised, she eventually walked towards him with an impatient expression.

"What is it?"

"I've finished", replied Ethan.

"Ok, fine. You are disturbing your other classmates! Don't be so arrogant! If you can't get a perfect score, then just sit here, and be quiet." The teacher said with open disrespect, "and if you dare disturb your classmates again, I promise I will give you a zero." She considered for a moment. 'In fact, you know what, because you have already talked during your class, I will give you a zero anyway. Do you understand?"

Ethan nodded, with pained confusion.

He sat there, quietly, trying to not make a single sound, in case he actually ended up with a negative score. He must have been wondering why no one ever treated him like a normal person. He wanted to have friends, he wanted to be treated with consideration, and the truth is, what happened to him that day was not right.

The end of the test came too quickly for most of the other students, and Ethan sorrowfully handed in his paper.

But no matter how unfair life seems, things can always change. A few weeks later, Ms Machel had another announcement. "Ok, everyone, please give me your attention! We have another new student. She's called Judy, and as you can see she is the same as Ethan, so let's try to be nice to her."

Judy stepped in, looking kind of shy and nervous, but as soon as she saw Ethan, she smiled.

"Ah, can I sit here?" Judy asked, pointing to the spare seat beside Ethan. Ethan was surprised and also excited, because she was the first dinosaur that he had met in the human world.

"Well, that's perfect", said Ms .Machel. 'Ethan and you both belong to the same species, with the same virtues, so just as long as you don't disturb the class, you can stay with Ethan."

Over the next few months, Ethan and Judy became best friends; they played together, ate together and even did homework together.

Ethan's fight went from being a solitary struggle to a shared battle, and he was no longer lonely. And as Judy was also very talented at math, they had many opportunities to prove themselves, much to Ms Machel's displeasure..

Dessert Rush

HD Beijing School (JinZhan Campus) , Zhao, Jaycee – 11

"I won't brag , but we are trending!" exclaimed Butter Ginger Bread.

"Have you ever wondered what would happen if we didn't actually defeat Nooooooooooooo?" asked Lemonia Di Marmalade from the internet game, Dessert Rush, "We might have just wandered in the Google building forever, wouldn't we?"

"Probably" replied Mellowdy Fluffies, another avatar , "But we did defeat her so that's not a worry. Not at all."

It was the monthly reunion of the Dessert Rush racers. Dessert Rush is a popular internet game about racing. The coded world is a star-shaped land, separated into five areas: City Crunch, Icy Peaks, Tart Tunnel(that tunnel is extremely long), Candy land and Water Villages.

City Crunch was a city with lots of crunchy stuff. The C –Starting Line is also in here.

Icy Peaks is a freezing land of popsicles. Mount Cream, the highest mountain is here.

Tart Tunnel is just a dark space with boiling jam lava underneath. A path made of tarts and small cakes is lined above the lava. The tart tunnel is also the most challenging part in the whole race. All the lava goes out of Jam Springs, a hot lava spring(NOT a volcano).

Candyland is a forest and a mountain. It is Candy cane Forest and 8 layer chocolate pastel nicknamed "Swirly" because they have to run in circles swirling up then go in a tube which blasts you out to the last area----- Water Villages.

This creek is filled with all kinds of drinks, and jam. Spewers spill juice out into the creek, filling it up.

All the racer avatars are from one of these areas. The good friends, Lemonia Di Marmalade, Mellowdy Fluffies, Cocoa Puffs, Butter Gingerbread and Rancis Schweets, are each from a different area. They are also the racers most commonly used.

These racers held the monthly reunions----- to celebrate the day they defeated Nooooooooooooo. Every time, they told the exciting tale of Celebration...

An old arcade is opened at the corner of a park. Their game Dessert Rush was still one of the games in there. That period of time, they were still very popular, even in an arcade. Speaking of which, the game was simply popular because of the racers' powers. Lemonia could glitch through players or obstacles, Mellowdy could puff marshmallows. Rancis' power was to speed up, Butter's to activate gingerbread man walls(to block stuff) and Cocoa could blow chocolate .

Everything seemed good, and even the racers thought so. But time ruined it all. After four decades or so, all the kids turned into adults, and arcade games were no longer popular. Older ones like Pac-man were already unplugged. All companies were making much more complicated phone games, and nobody even bothered this place anymore. I mean, that's not the main problem, the racers could still race by themselves, and they would still live peacefully in the program, but conflict came when the demolition company came. In their meetings, the racers all panicked.

"As you all know, the company is taking apart our game tomorrow morning." announced Lemonia, " We need a solution to save ourselves. "

"What?"

"I don't want to be homeless!"

"I have an idea!" shouted Cocoa, " not all companies are making phone games----- They also invent internet games! We can take the code globe, all the players except us would protect the codes from inside the globe's core. "

After some whispering, all the racers agreed, and they headed for the vault. Carefully taking the globe out of its socket ,Lemonia pressed the "Combine" button, and all the codes folded. The other players hopped into the globe and stuffed the codes into the core.

Taking a deep breath, Lemonia signaled Rancis. In response, she activated the globe float. The racers put the core on a new socket, and Lemonia took the wheel while Rancis took the glassy seat besides her. The other two climbed on the longer sofa seats of blue pixels in the back, behind the globe. Cocoa sat on the seat facing backwards, on a small platform behind the float, with a catapult which could fire player's powers. She settled in the glass doors and nodded to Lemonia.

They steered the float into their game, which is now empty. Lemonia wanted to stay, but she knew that they had to go. She zoomed out of their game and into the arcade's main socket. There, Electro guarded the exit to the wires .

" Our game is fading! We drove the float out so we could escape!" Cocoa tried to act scared and anxious, and it worked!

" I will take a look." replied Electro in a robotic voice.

After he left, Lemonia saw the opportunity and shot straight into the wires.

The days in there weren't good. The players had to stop and give the float energy, and also avoid other internet users. How much time they have been in there, nobody counted or cared. But their friendship and tactic understanding improved during the days. Finally, they went down.

" I think we're here!" yelled Rancis, " Look! I have all this equipment now and we are zooming down!" The internet was nothing like they've ever seen. Glass roads and tracks carried avatars and floats, and website buildings loomed across the area. They searched a map and studied their surroundings. " Where could we possibly plug in our game?" muttered Rancis," Aha! We go to this searching website called um, searchy.cn."

"Alright. Directions please" replied Lemonia.

A few seconds later, they arrive at Searchy. It was a book-shaped building with some words on it. Billions of books were stacked in the bookshelves, which were the walls.

"Here we are! Searchy's website, all is solved!" cheered Cocoa.

In the middle of the website sat a small tree sprout, and on his front chest a nametag read 'Searchy'.

"Hello, Mr.Searchy we..." started Butter

" Wikipedia? WeChat? We Com? Wee-wee funny videos? Weak? Weaken? Weakened? Weakest? Weakfish? " Said Searchy rapidly.

" Where would we plug in a new game so people would see it on the internet? SEARCH!" Yelled Mellowdy.

Searchy trembled, then replied, " I found two results for your query, isn't that interesting?", he continued, " You could send an email to the internet cleaning department; they don't clean anything, trust me. Or you could plug it in at Game Centre, just across Twitter, besides Facebook."

" Thank you !" Said Rancis, who already set up a map, " let's get going!"

Behind that very website, a female voice whispered to herself, " Plugging an old useless game to use up gamers' time huh? Just you wait and see, jokers."

This particular voice's owner was Nooooooooooooo, an evil internet janitor who was the avatar of Clean The Internet. Org. Her job was to clean all useless or already forgotten games or websites or pop-ups or anything forgotten already. She was the color of roses, a robot and held a scanner in her right hand and a vacuum in her left hand. She raced after the racer's float, with them not knowing.

Following that, Nooooooooooooo caught up to their float as Cocoa realizes that she was after them.

"Uh, guys? I think a janitor robot is after us, and she doesn't look happy, or forgiving, or nice." she said, " and she's closing in!"

Without time to get permission, she fired puff balls at Nooooooooooooo, who wasn't even able to get out of the way when the puffs struck.

Lemonia looked at the mirrors and saw what has happened. She yelled to and Butter, " Tell everybody to use their powers through the plug! Cocoa would choose and fire!"
Cocoa aimed and fired a hot boiling pie ball, melting Nooooooooooooo's system, but she quickly recovered.

"How is that even possible!" yelled Rancis, "She's regenerating on her own programs!"

Lemonia furrowed her brows, " Everyone hang on! Cocoa , stop for a second!" then she glitched through the Twitter building, leaving Nooooooooooooo clueless.

With a quick scan, Nooooooooooooo noticed their location, " Not on my watch, dinosaurs!"
Nooooooooooooo picked up speed, and crashed into their float.

BOOM!

The racers were all quick, jumping down as they plucked out the globe.

In the globe, the other racers did a two layer leap and hopped into Butter's hands.

Butter headed towards a float's station's narrow roads and blocked the road with a gingerbread man. She passed it to Rancis as she took up speed and headed back to game center. Smart as she was, Nooooooooooooo didn't just wait. She saw the globe and was after it. She started her vacuum, but simultaneously Lemonia took the ball, glitched and successfully plugged in the globe!

"NO!" yelled Nooooooooooooo, she couldn't unplug a thing(because of her code) after some furious screaming, she went of to other victims.

And this is the story of Celebration. Turns out young people love this game. Even though the gamers call them "Retro" but everybody agreed it means old but cool.

"I won't brag , but we are trending! "

The End of the Dinosaurs (Part II)

HD Beijing School (JinZhan Campus) , Zhong, Zoe – 13

Quick, light steps, accompanied by a rustling of feathers.

The agora was lit with the light of a thousand fires flickering in the twilight, their orange hue contrasting with the dull sky. Stars twinkled far away, barely visible beneath the matted clouds. Gusts of wind brushed the customers' scales and feathers alike, extinguishing five fires and causing at least two dinosaurs to roar in exasperation. Yet, despite the misery and fatigue that accompanied a long day of work and labor, dinosaurs chatted and gossiped and cursed the Nuggetnese in the humble market square, happy to purchase some herbs before returning to their respective dens. Beneath the lighthearted and mellow gossip loomed the impending possibility of war with the Nuggetnese. Unspoken fear and uncertainty hung heavy in the air, casting a shadow over the market's vibrant façade.

Ovina glanced at the shoppers, making sure that she was not seen.

Exhaling, Ovina checked her surroundings a final time to confirm that there was no one there. In a flash, she raced to the nearest market stall, stuffing some mollusks in her mouth.

Finally. Food for the children. She left the stall, bouncing on one foot to avoid detection. Quickly, lightly, she heard the incessant chatter of the marketplace become quieter, quieter, until she could hear it no more.

Unfortunately, it was clear the dinosaurs in the market could hear *her* very well.

Snap. Her left foot crushed a brittle little branch, while her right foot hung suspended in the air awkwardly. In an instant, four pairs of eyes stared right at her frail body, while five pairs perked up in suspicion.

“*Ovina!*” she reprimanded herself, but it was all too late. She could already hear the cacophony of insults and slurs that were always hurled at her and her only.

“Egg-stealer. What are you doing here?” growled a Diplodocus, who was strangely aggressive for a herbivore and ostentatiously arrogant for a species resurrected only seventy years ago.

“N-nothing. J-just observing,” whispered Ovina, pretending to ignore the stinging comment about being an egg-stealer. Her kind was always stereotyped that way – selfish, heartless, loathsome for something that was not true. And yet, Ovina's neighbors treated her and her children like criminals, hurling insults at them and refusing to let them into private events.

“Right. Go back to where you came from, egg-stealer!” snickered another dinosaur, throwing a rock at Ovina, leaving a bloody indent. Holding back tears, the oviraptor dashed away on powerful legs, the wind biting at her fresh wound.

“And don't think about coming back, thief!

Carefully removing the thick layer of ferns that concealed her den, Ovina entered her crude sanctuary, opening her mouth to reveal the stolen mollusks from the market. “Hey, kids. Look, food!” she announced, her jewels’ eyes gleaming at the promise of a meal.

“Food! Food!” her children cried, stomachs nearly drowning out their cheers.

“Finally, I’ve been starving for *days!*” remarked Ovox, her youngest son. Forgetting to turn off the rickety television – an extraordinary discovery made by a certain Stegosaurus – Ovox pushed his brothers and sisters to get the first bite of those fresh, scrumptious mollusks and be the first whose stomach was filled. Ovina smiled, handing him a single mollusk.

“More! More!” complained Ovox, but Ovina told him kindly yet firmly that he could only have one. She then dismissed her child, splitting the remaining mollusks between her other children.

As Ovina placed the final mollusk in her oldest child – Ovet’s– trembling hands, her own stomach growled to remind her of its emptiness, chastising her for not taking just one more mollusk from the market stall. *Too late to go back and snatch another one.*

Ovina stared at the television as it broadcasted a live meeting between two heads of state and representatives of influential institutions.

“For long, the threat of a volcanic eruption has controlled us, manipulated us, stopped us from reaching our full potential,” the Troodon said, looking directly at the camera. Ovina gulped, remembering the scientist’s fascination with destruction and creation. “Yet, today, I proclaim that we have learned how to control volcanic energy. We have learned to harness nature, and for this, I call for a toast.”

The characteristic voice of the Head Scientist of the Research Institute rang clearly through the television static, every word crisp and audible.

Though her children paid virtually no attention to the broadcast and were instead play-fighting on the ground, Ovina listened intently to the Head of the Scientific Institute for Dinosaurs, who was giving a speech about a discovery, his eyes gleaming like a maniac’s.

There was a smattering of polite applause from the audience, followed by dead silence.

A bated breath, followed by giggles of pure delight from her children.

“Us dinosaurs would have conquered nature sooner or later. We have reached the *peak* of evolution. We are perfect creatures. We have resurrected our ancestors from the Jurassic Period.” He nodded to a Diplodocus in the audience. “We have invented the television and learned to harness electricity. And now, it is time for us to harness Mother Nature’s deadliest weapon against us, the catalyst of our so-called destruction.”

The crowd was truly and genuinely at unease now, whispers rustling through the crowd like fallen leaves. What exactly were the scientist’s motives, and what would this groundbreaking discovery cost?

In a flash, the leader of Nuggetland, the leader of an enemy nation, grabbed the microphone from the Head Scientist, his eyes livid. He was an imposing Tyrannosaurus Rex who had seen many battles in his lifetime; he treated his battle scars as trophies. Ovina flinched as the camera zoomed in on his angular face, since it would force her to look straight into his beady black eyes. “And we will not hesitate to harness volcanic energy to destroy certain groups who refuse to give up their territory. The magnitude is large enough to eradicate at least an entire continent, for your information.”

With that, the T-rex stormed off the stage, his assistants scurrying after him, their scattered praises barely caught by their microphones. Certain nations would be destroyed. Certain innocent lives would be lost.

Translation for those who could not yet understand her distress: Certain dinosaurs and her family needed to run.

A decision made in a split second is usually scorned and dismissed as reckless. Perhaps Ovina should have considered the facts for one second and found a better way to address the problem. Yet, in the midst of imminent death, there was no time to think. Ovina hoped the cold, biting wind would carry her somewhere far away, where she was not an outcast in a group of outcasts and she could be free from the shackles of war.

She clenched her three-fingered claws, a message barely escaping from her mouth. “We leave at midnight, children. Get ready.”

Yes, they would leave at midnight to escape the war.

Shrouded in darkness, Ovina crept through a nearby forest clearing, the outlines of the abandoned market barely visible in the midnight mist. Although she was nervous about leaving with no promise of returning, she felt a strange sense of tranquility as she stared at the market. At least the past was behind her now. At least no one would bully her for a lie anymore. Taking a deep breath, Ovina looked up to the sky, spreading her enormous wings. Her children and she would vanish without a trace, away from the world. No matter the cost, she would protect her family.

The next day, when her neighbors would converge in the market square to discuss how they would seek refuge in a nearby land, they would find their so-called “Egg-Stealer” had vanished without a trace. They would cheer and celebrate, but not for long. The market would be abandoned, with the vendors desperately rationing food and vegetables. Ovina smiled at the thought of that.

For the next couple of days, Ovina alternated between forests and wastelands, trying to find a tranquil place to set up camp. Her initial burst of energy slowly faded into resignation, and that resignation slowly faded into helplessness. The boom of a volcanic eruption seemed to follow her wherever she went, its creator taunting her. “Oh, you thought you could escape! Ha!” Or perhaps it was just a hallucination, a “reward” for endless days of fatigue and hunger.

The creators of the weapon were intent on eliminating every dinosaur who lived, friend or foe. Every single day, Ovina pleaded with the scientists and leaders behind this wretched project to spare her and her innocent children.

No, they would not listen. Not to a single voice in a cacophony of thousands.

Sooner or later, the volcanic bombs would swallow her and her children. Their lives would be swept away in the crossfire, and there was nothing they could do about it. The war had already begun, and the consequences were

clear.. As the distant rumble of certain death grew louder and clearer, Ovina glanced one last time at the only joys of her life, her gems. Their innocent lives would be cut short by a war, their life taken away by a weapon made by dinosaurs to destroy dinosaurs.

Taking a deep breath, she lifted her head to the sky.

“Us dinosaurs have reached the peak of evolution, the peak of technology. And yet, here I am, consumed by a weapon that dinosaurs made to kill their own kin. Let this be a lesson. We are perfect creatures, yet discrimination and war have eventually engulfed us, turning us against one another. Let this be a lesson, future generations. We never reached our full potential because we failed to set aside our differences and work together.”

The sky turned black, and fire engulfed her.

New Tales of China's Dinosaurs

HD Beijing School (JinZhan Campus) , Zhou, Bella – 14

The story begins on a rainy night, with a damp smell permeating the air. Alexander hurriedly ran onto the last bus with his soaked backpack on his back. He is a second-year archaeology student, and working until midnight every day has become his daily routine. Alexander's life was not easy, and since he was eight years old, there has been almost no easy time in his life. His parents work out of town, and their monthly contact is just an envelope containing money. He has to take care of his sister every day except go to school.

Despite growing up in such a harsh environment, Alexander never gave up on his studies and finally received his college offer at the age of 18. And when he was about to choose his major, he had a big argument with his family. The desire to quickly earn money to support his family had always been Alexander's motivation for learning, but jobs with broad employment prospects and good money were not what Alexander liked. He seriously thought about his life for the first time and finally chose archaeology as his major. The reason is because of passion. But truth quickly slapped him. Facing thousands of newly enrolled college students, Alexander is like an empty paper in the archaeology department. He dares not think about the path he is pursuing. But now he has no other choice.

The next morning, Alexander came to the classroom exhausted. There are a round stone on the table. It's a dinosaur egg fossil. Alexander was surprised that new student like them rarely had the opportunity to see fossils. He scrutinized the stone that was billions of years old. He touch the fossil by one's feelings. At the moment he touched it, white light flickered in front of him. When he wakes up again. He is already lying on the damp ground

Where is it? Tall trees, surrounded by volcanoes. This is a place he is all too familiar with. Jurassic period. Alexander stood still, thinking that this was a joke played on him by someone. At this moment, the Triceratops slowly emerged from behind the grass. Alexander screamed in fear. Triceratops suddenly poke in English, 'What are you?' Alexander didn't realize who was speaking for a moment. But now there's nothing in front of him except this Triceratops. "I am human, and I came here without knowing what happened." "Alexander replied. Human? "" I haven't heard of it. "" But your body doesn't look like a dinosaur living here. "Alexander recounted what he had experienced and how he could now understand Triceratops. He begged the Triceratops to take him to a safe place. He knows staying here will only become dinner for carnivorous dinosaurs.

The Triceratops sighed in disappointment and followed suit. Took him to a small cave. I need to return to my tribe, and I can't bring something like you of an unknown species. Just stay here and wish you good luck. Alexander sat in the cave pondering, often fantasizing about traveling back to the Jurassic period. But now his task is go back. At this moment, a loud roar suddenly came. The heavy footsteps pushed in bit by bit. Alexander quickly hid behind a large stone and saw a large Tyrannosaurus through the gap. Fortunately, the Tyrannosaurus rex quickly left and seemed uninterested in this cave. After thinking about it, Alexander came to the conclusion that in order to go back, he needed to touch the dinosaur egg again. So what chance is there for him to come into contact with dinosaur eggs. Fortunately, the Tyrannosaurus rex quickly left and seemed uninterested in this cave. After thinking about it, Alexander came to the conclusion that in order to go back, he needed to touch the dinosaur egg again. So what chance is there for him to come into contact with dinosaur eggs. The eggs of gentle dinosaurs are easier to touch, and coupled with his ability to communicate with dinosaurs, he found Triceratops again and asked if they could use some of their eggs. Triceratops The showed mercy towards this young man and finally agreed to let him touch his dinosaur egg. He took one last glance at the Jurassic behind him, and although it was rare to come here, he had to go back. But now he touched the egg, nothing happened. He was very confused. If he couldn't go back, what else could he

do? Suddenly, he realized that the egg he had touched at the beginning seemed to be a Tyrannosaurus rex egg. It's over, Alexander only has this word left in his mind. How can he touch the eggs of the Tyrannosaurus rex. Probably died before getting close. Triceratops came over to comfort him, 'Actually, Tyrannosaurus rex's eggs are not that difficult. Their eggs will be buried under sand to absorb heat and hatch.'

Alexander, who reignited hope, crouched in the place where Tyrannosaurus rex might appear. I waited for a long, long time just for a Tyrannosaurus rex laying eggs on the beach. I don't know how many days have passed. Alexander saw a Tyrannosaurus rex on the beach. Alexander, who reignited hope, crouched in the place where Tyrannosaurus rex might appear. I waited for a long, long time just for a Tyrannosaurus rex laying eggs on the beach. I don't know how many days have passed. Alexander saw a Tyrannosaurus rex on the beach. After burying the eggs, the dinosaur mother left. Alexander realized that this was his chance. He worked hard to push aside the sand, hoping to find the buried egg. But at this moment, the mother Tyrannosaurus rex seemed to realize something was wrong and turned around to walk back. At the last moment, Alexander grabbed the egg with his hand and shouted to Triceratops, 'Goodbye brother.'

Another burst of white light flashed, and Alexander suddenly woke up from the bus.

Dinosaurs with a Difference

HD Beijing School (JinZhan Campus) , Zhu, Julianna – 13

I am a dinosaur, and I always will be one. In school, I stand out like a sore thumb, the only dinosaur among a sea of human children. My lack of good grades, my pariah status with the teachers, and my uncool way of looking and behaving only further isolate me. Dinosaurs, it seem, are the butt of jokes, and I am a punching bag famous for my softness. My parents, oblivious to my social struggles, reassure me that loneliness is a small price to pay for being myself. But I want attention and connection, not the solitude of a *Tyrannosaurus rex*!

Bullying is a daily ritual; a game to them but a torment to me. It is only when an outside teacher sheds light on the issue during an assembly that I realize the gravity of my situation. I had thought the bugs in my lunch, the thrown objects aimed at me, and the one-sided games of tag with about ten people trying to catch me at once were just a part of school life. However, I realise that these experiences are not just surface-level issues; but indicate a more profound problem of self-esteem. It feels as if I am rejecting my own life and everything about it. I struggle with feelings of hopelessness and sadness that go beyond the momentary challenges. This inner unrest makes it difficult for me to find joy or meaning as if I was battling an underlying emptiness that affects my sense of self and place in the world.

One day, the pressure becomes too much to bear. In a moment of desperation, I charge into the classroom, ignoring the usual barrage of objects. I seek attention – any attention – even if it is fear. I corner the ringleader, my sharp claws meeting his flesh, leaving a mark that shocks the school into silence. I am only semi-conscious at that time. The police is called by someone in the class, which all screeches and sprints outside to watch me being led away, a dinosaur removed from humans to keep him from harming them.

At the police station, my parents' anger is palpable. They accuse me of ruining their lives, of squandering their investments in my clothes, food, and education. My mother, once a promising pianist, lamented the life she could have had, blaming me for her perceived downfall. Their words cut deeper than any physical blow, and I retreat into silence.

The weight of their disappointment is a burden too heavy to bear. Each breath is a struggle, every muscle cries out in pain, and my mind plays tricks on me as I am lost in a sea of despair. In the dim light of my room, I let chaos erupt around me, transforming my surroundings into a vivid representation of the inner tornado I am experiencing. The walls, once a calm shade of blue, now seem to pulse with the energy of my emotions, while clothes lay strewn across the floor, symbols of my disarray. Papers flutter in disorganisation, each crumpled page echoing my restless thoughts. Shadows danced in the corners, mirroring the confusion and unease that churns within me. This physical chaos becomes a canvas, illustrating the depth of my struggles and the turmoil that feels both suffocating and liberating. Each object in the room bears witness to my distress, creating a vivid landscape of my mind's discontent.

But surrounded by the darkness, there is a glimmer of light. My mother, despite her own pain and disappointment, shows a side of her that I have rarely seen. She comes to my room when my noise has diminished a bit, and sits down on my bed, just beside me. We talk for a long time, beginning with just small and unimportant things. Her patience and kindness are a lifeline, a beacon in the storm. She helps me navigate the treacherous waters of self-doubt and isolation, teaching me that my worth is not defined by the scales that cover my body or the claws that extend from my fingers. I feel much better after that chat.

I go back to school after the few days I spent at home. I walk into the classroom and apologize to my classmates sincerely. I feel as if my rough and hard skin of a dinosaur is fading away, replaced by the smooth but speckled surface of my true skin; as if my claws are shrinking back into my human fingers, and red hair growing out of my little head; as if, all of a sudden, I am becoming more human.

With her support, I begin to find my voice, to stand tall not as a dinosaur but as a boy, a boy who is different but not lesser than anyone not once a dinosaur. I learn to embrace my uniqueness, to see the beauty in my differences, and to understand that I am no monster, no freak of nature, but a boy with dreams and aspirations, just like any other.

In the end, I discover a truth that resonates deep within my soul: 'I'm no Dinosaur. I am a normal boy all the way. No different than the others.' It is a revelation which changes my life, a realization that allows me to step out of the shadow of my dinosaur identity and into the light of my humanity.

The Chronicles of the Time Traveling Trio

HKCCCU Logos Academy, Chan, Lok Hei – 12

“Grandpa! Grandpa!” Sammy yelled, her voice quivering, “Y—your Time Machine! It started running all of a sudden! It’s sucking everything near it through the portal!”

Tam, putting on his rusty pair of glasses, squinting to faintly see the bright swirl of white, purple and orange. The nearer he and Sammy got to try and stop it, the more they were slowly dragged towards the portal. Before Tam could reach the “stop” button, their feet lifted from the wooden floorboards of the attic, and before they knew it, they were traveling to the unknown.

“Aghh!” They screamed in unison, falling onto the ground, careful of their surroundings as they get up. “Where... are we?” Sammy asked, her head throbbing.

Tam groaned, reaching for his glasses as he looked around, “I think we are in the past! Maybe the 20’s? There aren’t any holograms or flying cars around, only self-serve ATMs and ancient Teslas.

“Yo—you mean we are 70 years in the past? We are in 2020?!” Sammy shrieked in fear, ignoring the nearby people staring at her in confusion.

“It appears so,” Tam said, with a sigh.

As they tried to find ways to get back to their time, with futuristic technology and things we can’t even fathom would be possible, Tam and Sammy stumbled upon an old friend.

“Excuse me, my name is Tam. Tam Lee. I am trying to go to Kwun Tong. May I ask where the nearest hover-ship station is?” Tam asked a nearby stranger. He looked in his mid-30s, with jet black hair and fair skin.

“Uhh, hover-ships? There are only MTRs and bus stops here. I’m Ben, by the way. Ben Chan,” he said with a smile.

“Ben?” Tam thought. “Oh my god, Ben!” he screamed, giving Ben an extremely concerned look.

“Yes ... that’s my name. Am I supposed to know you?”

Indeed, Ben and Tam were colleagues and best friends who worked together as dinosaur fossil scientists. However, Tam unfortunately lost Ben while on the hunt for more fossils to investigate. This incident happened over 30 years ago, and after this incident, Tam was devastated, so depressed that he quit his job and retired early. Seeing him, even though Ben did not recognize him, made him burst into tears.

“Sorry, it’s a long story,” Tam said, wiping the tears off his cheek.

He told him all about the time traveling, and the fact that they used to be best friends. Ben found it hard to believe at first, but slowly with the genuineness of his voice, he believed Tam and agreed to help. Ben also shared that he and his team recently found an 8-million-year-old Titanosaurus fossil. And with Tam’s futuristic technology, they might be able to bring the Titanosaurus to life.

Tam was skeptical, but agreed to return the favor, bringing Sammy along. They were walking to the lab, and then introduced Tam and Sammy to the whole team. They twisted the story, a little bit though: they mentioned that he was a smart engineer who found a way to invent a machine that turned things to life. As they introduced them to the fragile, precious fossil, he carefully aimed his life gun, and blasted a strong light of dark and light green, and behold: the mighty Titanosaurus was brought back to life.

Its roar was louder than anything ever recorded in history, deafening every single person in the same room. They had to give it medication, to calm the dinosaur down before it could accidentally kill any scientist’s couple. The scientist went out to get things to tame the dinosaur, while others kept lookout. When Ben and Tam came back from the shopping trip, they were horrified. The Titanosaurus escaped its chamber, and was now roaming the streets of Kwun

Tong. Everybody on the street was grabbing their phones to take a video, while frantically running away from a Titanosaurus' deadly footsteps. Ben and Tam had to find a way to control and tame this mighty beast, while keeping Sammy safe.

They tried everything: feeding it lots of meat, trying to befriend it, and even chaining him down to the ground, but nothing worked. They were hopeless, but then Sammy had an idea. "It loves chasing people, right? Well, what if we get police officers, and get them to lure the Titanosaurus into a strong cell in a zoo or something, and then we'll figure the rest out!"

"Not a bad idea, but we find a bunch of policemen?" Ben and Tam said. A lot of people were calling the police at this point, so it actually wasn't that hard to find a few to help with the plan. The police ultimately agreed to help, getting ready to shoot it down when necessary, but trying not to do so, since this was an extraordinary phenomenon. Sammy's plan worked! The policeman successfully got a Titanosaurus into a strong cage in the local zoo, and Sammy, Ben, Tam, and their scientist team were greatly rewarded for this amazing historical find.

They were known as "the mighty history trio" and they kept finding more and more dinosaur fossils, but they wouldn't dare to use the life gun ever again.

If you are wondering what happened to the Titanosaurus, it was currently being taken care of by expert zoologist and biologist, getting fed properly, even getting cleaned. However, they could not find ways to breed the specific dinosaur, because their offspring was also gigantic inside, and might be extremely hazardous and deadly if it got out of hand. Eventually, they would figure out a way to bring dinosaurs back in a safe manner, but for now, it was time for Sammy and Tammy to go back to their time. They spent months building a new time machine, set the settings to 2100, said goodbye to Ben once again, and reluctantly jumping into the purple and orange portal.

The Legend of the Heroic Eagle

HKCCCU Logos Academy, Lui, Chi Hang – 12

One day in Liaoning, a Chinese farmer happened to stumble on a pile of bones. Regretfully digging up his crops which were wilted, he didn't know that his misfortune would turn into one of the most interesting discoveries of all time. The farmer, in his anger that more crops had to be thrown out, dug until he hit bones. "What are these things?" the bewildered farmer asked himself. He had no idea what those peculiar objects were, so he took them to the scientists in the 1900s. But even they couldn't identify them.

After 103 years, the scientists of 2003 had identified the bones as an eagle. But it was not a normal eagle. It was a male eagle that apparently knew martial arts, following the footsteps of a kung fu master, and later accompanying a young man with only one arm. In fact, he roamed China with the young man when the Han and the Mongols were waging war against each other, and joined the young man, who was named Yang, to be one of the most powerful kung fu masters ever. But before becoming a legendary warrior in China, he had been known throughout cultures.

Earlier, he had been known as two gods. The Mayans deemed him Kukulcan, while the Aztecs called him Quetzalcoatl. As the eagle was feathered and had a known habit of exterminating serpents, the Mayans and Aztecs knew him as the Feathered Serpent.

The scientists discovered that the eagle's favourite beverage was hot chocolate. The Mayans made him god of life, while the Aztecs made him god of learning. The eagle introduced chocolate to the Mayans and Aztecs and soon cacao beans were used as currency. But Hernan Cortes conquered the Mayans and Aztecs, so the eagle fled to Egypt.

He saw people wearing striped loincloths pulling carts with blocks on them. A man with a blue and gold headpiece was observing the construction of the pyramids. Suddenly, he saw the eagle. He hollered, "Capture that bird for me!" and pointed at him. The guards, wielding their spears, stepped forward ready to take the eagle.

The eagle flew, brandishing his claws and blinding one guard. But eight guards reacted almost immediately, breaking his wings. "Take him to the palace," said the pharaoh. When the eagle was able to see without hurting a lot, he noticed that he was in a chamber with a man leering over him. He took out a wand and a staff and started chanting in Egyptian. Then, he took out a dagger and prepared to sacrifice the eagle. Suddenly, Horus was standing in the centre of the room. The god said, "This eagle is my symbol, how dare you insult me by sacrificing him to me?" Horus took the injured eagle to the palace of the gods, where he cared for him. The eagle accompanied the war god for several millennia and battled demons, but the time came for him to go.

"Lord Horus, the Macedonians are invading!" a god said. Horus was getting weaker by every second, as Egypt was falling. More and more people were slain, and the Egyptian gods were getting weaker. Even though Horus had told him to flee, the proud bird thought "These are just mortals, I bet I can eliminate them all." So, he swooped down from heaven and attacked the nearest Macedonian. Unfortunately, his familiars immediately struck with their weapons. The eagle barely got out alive. As the soldiers had wounded him eons before, he wouldn't be able to fly again. So, he hijacked a divine ship and flew away.

The ship took flight and all was peaceful until the flags of the ship burst into flames. He saw the hieroglyphics on the boat which read "Ra". He was panicked when he saw snakes with wings spitting fire beside the boat. The snakes believed that it was Ra on the boat, and rejoined their master. Demons attacked the ship, but the fire snakes of Ra kept them at bay. The boat went on until it landed on a piece of grassy land. A group of surprised Chinese soldiers immediately surrounded the wooden boat with weapons in hand, so the flying snakes of Ra spit fire onto a few soldiers, and they retaliated by hurling their weapons and armour. Even though the snakes were skilled fighters, the Chinese soon took the upper hand, and soon they were up again, pointing their remaining weapons at the eagle.

Wounded by Egyptian soldiers long ago, the eagle was no longer able to use his wings as a weapon. He shut his eyes, awaiting death. But it never came. He saw a muscular man wielding a sword that was as black as night, massacring soldiers left and right. The mystery man swished and slashed his sword until there were only three. One was decapitated before he even knew what was happening. The second ran in front of the swordsman, clashing his sword with him. The poor man was cut in half. The third ran to the eagle, hoisted his spear and prepared to stab the eagle for revenge. Luckily, the swordsman saved him just in time.

The weakened eagle was brought to a cave and he woke up feeling refreshed. He stood up to see no one at all. He went out the cave and saw the swordsman slashing dummies with his sword. "I see you've awoken," said the man. The eagle stayed with the swordsman for eighty years. From that, he knew that the man was called Dugu. The eagle didn't understand Chinese, but Dugu had learned English so he taught the eagle.

Dugu was talented in both fist and sword fighting. He knew that the eagle was defenceless, so he taught the eagle a new kind of martial art to attack and defend with a beak. He fed the eagle snake eggs, which would boost the eagle's kung fu. The eagle learned the swordplay of Dugu. One time, Dugu went to Huanghe, and stood on slippery rocks. He leaped from rock to rock, and swiped, slashed and stabbed the air with his sword. The eagle was terrified that his friend would slip into the current and be swept away. But Dugu was too good for that.

Many years passed. Dugu, on his deathbed, passed the eagle his sword, and passed away. The eagle stayed in the cave, but he kept on practicing his kung fu, braving the slippery rocks near the deadly current of Huanghe. He kept on practicing until he was very skilled. But he was alone.

Until one day, a young man named Yang came to the cave. He was skilled with a longsword, and knew exceptional kung fu. The eagle was elated to have a new companion, and gifted Yang the black sword that Dugu had used, and taught him the sword moves Dugu used. Unfortunately, Yang had to leave, having to go back to the city. And the eagle was alone again.

The eagle had come back from a risky workout teetering on the rocks when Yang walked in angrily. That's when the eagle noticed that he had lost an arm. But Yang refused to talk. As Yang seemed to be staying permanently this time, the eagle took more snake eggs for Yang to eat. He stayed for six months until he heard that the Mongols were invading China. The eagle still held a grudge for the soldiers who "welcomed" him to China. But he thought of Dugu, who would have died for his country. So the eagle packed snake eggs, and set off for the last city of China with Yang.

With their kung fu, it took them two days to reach the city. Trooping in the city, Yang unsheathed his sword from behind his back and he leaped into the battle fray, sweeping his blade at Mongolian troops. The Chinese hurled their spears at the Mongols, but more kept coming. Soon, the Mongolian troops had taken the upper hand again. The eagle sliced into the nearest Mongol, but there were too many of them. The Mongolians suddenly raised their bows and arrows, shooting as one. The eagle was shot. The pain and agony were hard to bear. It was like someone was twisting daggers in his gut. Blood dripped from his feathers. Out of his eye, he saw Yang fall. It was the last thing he saw before everything went black.

The monitor the scientists was watching on went black. During the broadcast of the eagle's life, a few scientists had screamed. Several had cried. And more had been mortified, not believing that this was true. They felt sadness for the patriotic death of the eagle trying to defend China, and also respect for this hero and his companion, Yang. A monument was made for the eagle in China. The scientists grieved for him, and wrote a document of his story, which I have now put in this story to let the world know, and pay respect to him, may he rest in peace.

Travel the Past Dinosaurs

HKSYCIA Wong Tai Shan Memorial College, Ng, Ching Tung – 12

Hello! You might wonder why I'm here. I am Kellika Reddison, one of the students in college. I was not a fan of History because of all the timelines and historical names I needed to memorize. I didn't know some famous people in History so nobody wanted to have group discussions with me about that subject, especially that jerk name Damien. Damien is the class bully, acting like he is the king of the classroom all the time. He loves receiving large amounts of attention and admiration, especially from the girls. However, the only female victim he bullied was me, calling me a "good target" for his "population rates". I hate him so much, not worse than Luka at least, who is a History nerd who always yaps about things, like people nobody knows about. She also talks with me like I am her best friend forever, but it only made me remember how badly I failed everything based on History. Miss Leung, being a nice teacher she is, tried her best to teach me the basic ways to study History, even adding extra lessons after school to help me improve, but I wasn't interested, to the point of almost falling asleep on the desk every lesson. I thought all of them would never understand the difficulties of learning history, thinking I would still fail this subject in the future... until all those thoughts, all those words have no meaning to me once I touched the mysterious crystal ball.

It was History-learning day. All of the Form one students arrived at the Hong Kong Science Museum with their History teachers to learn more about the dinosaurs around the world, mainly from China. The guides led each of the classes to different areas, calling them an adventure. To me, it was more like torturing my small brain than a fun adventure. The guide who was leading my class introduced the Mamenchisaurus Sinocanadorum, the dinosaur with the longest neck being fifty feet long. "No wonder it had the longest name..." I thought with a frown as I inspected the dinosaur. They weren't on Earth anymore, so why did we still need to learn about them? I thought it wouldn't get worse until Miss Leung suddenly said with a smile, "Oh, snap! I almost forgot! There will be a quiz two days later about dinosaurs!" That wasn't something I was expecting. A quiz?! Oh no, I didn't want it at all. Miss Leung told us that we would write as many dinosaurs' names and facts as we could, which I was bad at. I was sweating after she said that, not sure if I could survive through that. However, the guides were smiling. They were enjoying the moment of shock and fear a bit too much. Guess who was squealing out of excitement about that quiz? Luka, that History nerd. She was the only one who wanted to show off her knowledge about dinosaurs through that quiz. I shot her a glare which silenced her. I didn't understand her love and interest for History, especially dinosaurs. Miss Leung laughed at our expressions and reminded us that it counted as a bonus mark too. My eyes lit up at that good news. Now that was a good deal! Damien smirked at that and mocked me, "Well, would you look at that! The noob wants to get those bonus marks! Oh wait! I forgot that she can't even remember simple dates!" I wanted to debate back at him and make him change his mind, but he was telling facts which I couldn't deny. All I could do was give him an eye roll, feeling my heart shattering at the impossibility of getting them.

When I arrived home, my parents weren't there, waiting for me. They were always busy with businesses, of course they would leave me here. I dropped my bag on the floor before going to my gloomy room. I felt like being in my own bubble, all alone and safe. Out of nowhere, I saw something glowing brightly through the darkness. Curious, I went to the direction and shoved everything aside to reveal the object. It was a dusty crystal ball covered in spider webs. Inside, there were models of dinosaurs and meteors on the ground. It was given by my dear old grandpa on my third birthday before he passed away from old age. Since then, I had never touched or shook it until now. I shook it gently, thinking that I would see meteors rising and falling as I shook. All of a sudden, I heard a voice calling for me, asking why I did this. I felt my fingers slowly getting sucked inside it along with my body. I dropped it to stop the effect, but it didn't work and sucked me back into somewhere unfamiliar.

I opened my eyes slowly, looking up at the bright sky. "Where am I?" I muttered as I sat up and rubbed my head. My eyes wandered around, wanting to get a clue about the location I was now. There was a sign standing alone, revealing the place's name: "Dzungaria area of China". I stared at the sign, blinking a few times to check if I was hallucinating. I wasn't, I really got here. When I stood up on my feet, I heard footsteps approaching towards my direction, making me jump in fright and try to get to the nearest tree to hide like a prey running away from predators. I felt something on my foot which made me tumble over and land onto the hard ground. Once the footsteps stopped, I knew I was doomed. I stayed in the same position, flat on the ground embarrassingly. What should I do now that I was stuck between fighting back or accepting my fate until I heard a familiar voice. "Are you okay, kid?" It was Xu Xing, one of the famous paleontologists, along with his crew. I stared at him in awkward silence before asking what year it was. "It was the year 2006, silly!" He even introduced himself and his crew kindly while checking and bandaging the wounds with some bandages. Wait, 2006?! There was no way I could time travel back nineteen years from the past. I thought it was just a myth! "Umm... Hello? You seem stunned there?" Xi Xing asked, waking me up from my Wonderland. "I want to join your research!" I blurt out, sounding more like a demand than a question. I thought it would be a perfect opportunity to learn something before the History quiz. Fortunately, he and his crew mates ignored my sudden rudeness and agreed! We went highs and lows, searching for dinosaur fossils. Finally, we found a fossil of the Guanlong named by Xu Xing himself. Based on its size and bone features, it was a medium sized early tyrannosaur, around four meters long, with a large, distinctive but fragile head crest which could be for attracting mates or for recognition. We had a discussion about its possible uses, but once I was about to reveal some of my thoughts, something dragged me and threw me to another place which I didn't recognise again...

I tossed and turned on the cold, rough ground and the pain on my knees. I couldn't stand up without staggering, but the marks on them reminded me about the first journey. I sat up carefully to prevent touching the healing wounds. "Gosh... When will I find an exit? I'm tired already..." I ask myself out of frustration. I felt the wind hitting my face as I thought about this so negatively. I should continue going before I complain more. My eyes went towards the sign which was in front of me, standing tall and proud. I was somewhere in the Shishugou Formation. Did I have the knowledge to end this time traveling thing? Not sure, but it wouldn't be possible without any understanding about time traveling. The footsteps were heard again, but this time I was too lazy and weak to hide with those bandaged knees. However, they didn't approach me or give me a glance. Instead, they were so focused on digging something from one area to another. I saw one of them using an old, crumbled paper to note down the details. I put on my glasses to get a clearer view of the notes, investigating it secretly from the spot. I read the date which made my jaw drop... It was the year 1987, far from the year 2025! Before I could adjust myself to the shocking information, I was transported to another timeline again...

It was a different place this time, unlike any journeys which I always landed on the natural ground, I arrived at a building filled with different collections of cones and papers flying around like butterflies. They were all current investigations about a dinosaur named the Sinraptor in 1994. There stood two people, Philip J. Currie and Zhao Xijin, who were concentrating on their own conversation, mainly about the dinosaur. They even spent all their time describing and creating drawings of it according to their minds. Wait a second... I could just draw the actual picture of it. It would make History easier to study and memorize! I was such a genius! I sneaked up behind them to steal a sheet of paper and a pencil. I was very good at stealing things like a professional thief that I got the items without getting caught! I sat on the floor and moved "my" pencil onto the paper, even writing the meaning of its name and its size. "It came from the Latin prefix 'Sino', meaning Chinese, and 'raptor' meaning robber. Standing nearly 3 meters (9.8 feet) tall and measuring roughly 7.6 meters (25 feet) in length..." was all I wrote about. I was about to give the finished work to the paleontologists when I felt someone hitting my head hard enough to knock me out. The last thing I heard before I closed my eyes was "You foolish girl... You shouldn't change History like that... It is illegal here..."

When I gained some consciousness, I wasn't surprised about the location I was in. It was the Junggar Basin of Xinjiang I learned from the internet. However, I didn't know how this place was related to the other journeys I went through? I stretched my painful back and my healed legs. Those unexpected arrivals of places gave me great pain in my head. I saw a person looking into the bones which he explained that they belonged to the *Tugulusaurus*. The person I was talking about was Dong Zhiming, a Chinese paleontologist who had long been engaged in vertebrate paleontology research at the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology and Chinese Academy of Sciences. Seeing him again gave me a hint of hope, since he was the one who gave me the confidence in learning History through his determination, to the point of everyone calling him "the King of Chinese Dinosaurs". Through those admirations, I didn't forget to ask him the year I was in. He simply answered that it was 1973 while trying his best not to miss any information about the *Tugulusaurus*. He muttered out the information to himself, but it was loud enough for me to hear. I learned that the generic name referred to the Tugulu Group. The specific name was derived from Latin *facilis*, with the meaning of "easily moving", referring to the agility of the animal as indicated by its "delicate bones". He even collected the other details through a holotype, IVPP V4025, which were in layers of the Lianmuqin Formation dating from the Barremian–Albian. It consisted of a partial skeleton including four partial tail vertebrae, much of the left leg and part of the right, the first fingers of both hands, and a rib. The femur had a length of about 215 millimetres, 8.5 inches. The left first metacarpal was very short, showing that it was only 26 millimetres, 1 inch. The skeleton represented the only remains of the species that had ever been discovered. I was so fixated on his words, not wanting his words to end. That wish was broken when I felt someone shaking my shoulder...

"Wake up, sweetheart!" My mother yelled, shaking my unconscious body repeatedly. "What? What just happened?" I mumbled and groaned, putting my hand on top of my head. "Oh, thank goodness you are still alive, sweetheart! I was worried sick for you!" She started scolding me for not taking care of myself while she was working, but I wasn't focused on her words. Instead, I was focused on the crystal ball which was broken into millions of pieces, letting the dinosaur models out. I guess it was all a dream... those paleontologists were just my imaginations until my mother pointed at the bandages on my knees and asked, "Hey... where did you get those injuries from?" That was the question I couldn't explain because I was far away from the glass shards. At the same time, the bandages looked like they had been there for years, looking a bit dull. Therefore, I lied to her by saying that it was just an accident on my way home. You guys know that it wasn't the truth.

Two days after that incident, it was the day of the History quiz. I didn't study for them, just like usual. However, I couldn't leave the test paper blank without any words at all! "You know what, forget those thoughts..." I muttered once the timer started counting the numbers into my ears. I used all the things I learned from my dream, including dinosaur names such as the Guanlong, the Sinraptor and the *Tugulusaurus*. When the quiz ended, I prayed in my mind, hoping I could get at least three bonus marks as encouragement. What I didn't know was that I would get a surprise the next day...

The next day, Miss Leung gave out the bonus test results to us. When it was my turn, she only smiled at me with a hint of approval in her eyes. "Congratulations" she said to me, the volume was almost a whisper. I didn't know why she was reacting like that until I uncovered the amount of bonus marks I got. That was when my eyes widened to the point of them being the similar size as bouncy balls. "FIFTEEN MARKS?!" I screamed, hardly believing my accomplishments. I didn't know my dreams were all facts. Damien, my bully who liked to mock me, looked at the red numbers written in bold words on my paper, then at his. He only got six because of his unclear introductions "This isn't fair! She was supposed to be a noob at this! How does she get higher bonus marks than me?!" he yelled at Miss Leung, suspecting that I was cheating to receive the highest score. Miss Leung sighed at Damien's attitude before proving that I didn't cheat by saying that she didn't notice any devices or papers in her drawer. That was when Damien started to throw a tantrum, falling onto the floor and rolling around it like a child who didn't get what he wanted. I watched him acting like this which made him look hideous and embarrassing. I couldn't lie, he got his own taste of his

medicine for judging me horribly. Then it was Luka, who ignored me because of my lack of understanding about her love for History, was as shocked as Damien. Instead of throwing a tantrum about it, she started squealing and asking questions about the dinosaurs endlessly. This was the first time I felt popular and wanted by someone in History that I almost cried in joy. That was when I heard familiar voices in my head, encouraging me to become just like them and don't give up. Those voices were the History paleontologists, Xu Xing, Philip J. Currie, Zhao Xijin and Dong Zhiming. I couldn't help but thank them in my mind.

Now that I knew there were fun and interesting ways to learn History, there was still a question stuck in my head after that day... Were those just dreams? Did I really travel back in time?

The Maj

HKSYCIA Wong Tai Shan Memorial College, Poon, Shun Wong – 12

A Majungasaurus, the most dangerous predator in Madagascar. It was a cold blood dinosaur.

They even eat their similars! but it is not just cold-blooded .

Once upon a time, there is a majungasaurus and also a dangerous predator in the forest. The water and food is enough food for all the dinosaurs in the forest. The majungasaurus family lived here happily . But a volcano explosion killed the male majungasaurus and the other dinosaurs in the forest . Just the

Female majungasaurus alive and her son survived .

They needed to escape from the forest they lived in before they ran and ran , came to the desert and found food for their dinner , there were just a few bones for them , of course not enough ! So they kept looking for food and slept in the desert , finally , they succeeded ! They found a big corpse and ate them . Suddenly , a trumping sound outgoing , it was another majungasaurus coming . The female majungasaurus was very angry with him , so they fought with each other , but they all have a powerful biting power . The majungasaurus (female) finally won for the food and the corpse of the other majungasaurus can eat for a few days..

A few days later , they found that there were a lot of velociraptors there and stole their food. The female majungasaurus roared but they still did not run away .

They decided to run out of the desert , they ran for a long time. Under the sunshine , they may have had a heat stroke and will die . When they thought they would die , their mother saw a flower was standing in the sand. They quickly ran and saw a big forest near the desert .

They went inside and thought they were saved , but there came a roar , then a Giganotosaurus came out because of the battle before and the size. Giganotosaurus bit her neck and finally she died, the Majungasaurus wanted to protect her children from danger and sacrifice herself.

The little Majungasaurus were sad and hopeless . When he was sitting near the river a velociraptor spotted him. It thought the little majungasaurus was poor so it adopted it . A few years later , the majungasaurus had already grown up to be an adult . One day when he was looking for the prey , the Giganotosaurus was drinking water , then the majungasaurus rushed to the Giganotosaurus and bit the Giganotosaurus neck . Finally , he killed the Giganotosaurus and help his mother for revenge. Finally , he became the king of the forest.

New Tales of China's dinosaurs

HKSYCIA Wong Tai Shan Memorial College, Serpunja, Susang Nina – 12

As beams of sunlight filled the apartment with a warm glow, the chirping of birds could be heard outside. The golden hues of the morning light, paired with a cozy blanket, created the perfect start to the day, until the beeping of an alarm clock ruined it all. Insufficient sleep, coupled with the annoying noise, was the worst way to begin the morning. Or was it?

A lanky man with sunken eyes and slightly messy hair commuted to work via bus. "Hey! Why did you push me?" an older man shouted angrily. "Get out of my way!" an elderly woman yelled back. A heated argument broke out on the bus, with passengers watching eagerly to see how it would unfold. Annoyed, the bus driver intervened, scolding everyone.

Bored, the lanky man turned to gaze out the window. Suddenly, panic set in. "I've missed my stop," he thought, dread filled his head. "I can't be late or else my boss will fire me!" Negative thoughts raced through his mind as he scurried to get off at the next stop. He rushed over to his workplace, barely making it on time.

"Ryan," a stern voice called. He turned to see his boss, arms crossed, and disappointment smeared on his face. "This is the third time you've arrived at the last minute. Any more of this, and you will receive a pay cut." The boss's words gave him a sense of dread, and Ryan nodded, retreating to his desk.

"I wish our company was as successful as the others," Ryan thought to himself, mindlessly scrolling through his computer. "First, they fired Jonas, then Vivian, then Amanda. Am I next?" Just as he was spiraling into despair, his phone rang.

"Hello! Is this Ryan?" an excited voice asked.

"Yes, it is," Ryan replied, still feeling groggy.

"Well, it might sound crazy, but I think I found dinosaur fossils!" the man exclaimed.

A stunned silence followed. "Are you still there?" the man asked. Ryan Paused. "Just last week, someone else found dinosaur fossils, and now you've found some too?"

"Yep! I can send you a sample if you'd like."

An idea struck him. If his company could utilize these dinosaur fossils, the media would swarm, and they could even earn extra cash. Intrigued by the idea, he agreed. "Okay, I'll message you my address later. I need to get back to work now." The call ended.

A week later, a parcel arrived at Ryan's apartment. Butterflies fluttered in his stomach as he opened it. There it was in all of its glory, a dinosaur fossil! He carefully closed the parcel, excited to bring it to work the next day.

As he walked to his desk, excitement bubbled within him. These were the first dinosaur fossils found in Jiangxi. With the help of a few coworkers, he convinced his boss to approve laboratory testing for the newly discovered fossils.

Three weeks later, shocking news arrived. “This species of dinosaur has never been discovered before. We have decided to name it *Sinosauropteryx*. Our tests also revealed that the *Sinosauropteryx* had feathers,” the scientist announced.

The revelation sent waves of excitement through the office, and soon, word spread to the public. The news made headlines, and palaeontologists scurried to investigate and inspect the fossils. This revolutionary discovery went on to change China forever. Going from a normal Asian country to an international sensation for paleontologists and scientists.

As the news spreads, some people think it is propaganda and start making their own theories while others are in disbelief of what happened, whatever the response was— at the end of the day, the discovery will still impact the course of history of China forever.

The Last Dinosaurs

Hong Kong Taoist Association Tang Hin Memorial Secondary School, Li, Sum Yuk – 14

"Mike, look at the murals! How extraordinary are they!" A paleontologist named Sam pointed at the murals on the wall of the cave, he didn't know why they were there, but he was surprised.

"The animal on them looks like a dinosaur!" Another paleontologist said.

"It's amazing!", said Sam.

"I remember a story about dinosaur which is told by my grandpa, the story's details are similar to these murals," said Mike suddenly.

"Really? Tell me!"

"That all began with human's selfishness."

"Many years ago, when people were still living in caves and thatched houses, there was a kind of special animal. They were strong and tall, but kind and gentle. These animals had a unique technique—they can summon weather as they wished. They summoned sun to provide light when wanted to hunt. They conjured rain for crops to grow. However, such powerful strength could not be used without the expense of their own energy. Therefore, they seldom used it."

"It was a harsh time when people suffered from extreme weather like drought and heat. They begged these animals for dews from the sky so that they could farm. They even offered fruits and food they liked to show their gratitude. As the animals offered help to people, and people gave them what they wanted, their relationship became closer. People later named them as dinosaurs."

"After that, people and dinosaurs would always help each other. In summer, people gave different kinds of fruits and taught dinosaurs how to use rocks to make traps, dinosaurs helped people collect things at very high places. In winter, dinosaurs caught beasts for their furs, then gave them to people because they would use them to make clothes. Their friendship lasted for decades until one day when a catastrophic flood hit the land."

"People could not survive as the water filled everywhere. They cried. They yelled, and escaped but the chilly water broke their hope. All the crops were damaged. Nothing more than a barren land was left after the flood. A large number of people died, the people left were threatened by fear and hunger. In contrast to the people in sadness, the dinosaurs were more comfortable. Because of their huge body and thick skin, they were not seriously harmed. People asked them for help. They wanted the dinosaurs to summon sunny weather for them for two months so that they could build new thatched houses and find new caves."

"However, they refused. As the dinosaurs thought this action would make plants die and it was unfair for the other animals because too much sunlight would harm them instead. They did not answer to such request, no matter how the humans begged."

"Since then, the friendship between the two species no longer existed. People taught their children that dinosaurs were vicious dragons who were selfish and evil."

"Humans were worried that the rainy weather would make the woods wet, so they cut down trees in two days and put them in several high-relief caves. They killed all the animals which nested on the trees, ate them, and skinned them."

“The dinosaurs witnessed all these. They felt angry and tried to stop humans. However, they were ignored every time. Their friendship was broken.”

“A volcano erupted at where the dinosaurs lived. The sky was covered by ash, scalding magma could flow to anywhere. Most of the dinosaurs were covered by magma and ash. They died in pain and helplessness.”

“Although this was a desperate hazard, there was a lucky one—a dinosaur egg.”

“A month passed, a little dinosaur hatched. He reached for fruits and clear water in a forest nearby. With enough food and water supply from the forest, the little dinosaur lived happily but lonely.”

“Once, when the little dinosaur was finding food, he accidentally fell into the water. He was afraid, and the sky had become dark very soon, he tried to climb up but failed.”

“‘Anyone here? Help me please!’ He cried for help. The sound attracted a girl. She found him, and comforted him gently. Then, she lent him a branch, and pulled him out. When she saw his appearance, she was shocked. ‘You are a dinosaur!’ Yelled the girl.”

“‘Thank you, but why are you so scared?’ asked the little dragon. ‘My parents told me dinosaurs are the most dangerous animal in the world.’ The girl thought this little dinosaur was not as evil as her parents said. The little dinosaur gave some fruit to the girl, though he was confused about what she said.”

“They met very often in the following days because the girl wanted to pick some flowers for making birthday gift for her mum. The little dinosaur always helped her. At first, she was still afraid, but after some days, she thought he was a kind dinosaur, she changed her mind. They became good friends soon.”

“However, it was noticed by the girl’s father. He scolded her, but she didn’t break their friendship, and let the little dinosaur go back to the forest because it was dangerous that he was caught by humans.”

“The little dinosaur went back to the forest, he finally knew the reason why dinosaurs were hated by humans. At that time, he felt unfair, he did nothing bad to humans, but they disliked him. Luckily, he had a friend who could understand him. He could not forget the time they had together, so he always peeped at her, and put fruits in front of her house secretly.”

“The girl felt upset, and missed the little dinosaur a lot too. She could always find the fruits she liked near her house. She knew who had put them there, but she was ordered to stay at home, otherwise she would go out to find him. As they always played with each other before, she knew that he was a kind dragon. She decided to meet him again.”

“Unfortunately, they could not.”

“A drought came, the rivers and lakes dried. The people could not survive. The sunlight was too bright, high temperature made crops died and the people tired. The girl’s family was also facing this problem. Her grandpa was ill. His health was getting more worse because he was dehydrated. Suddenly, the girl’s father remembered the little dinosaur, he asked the girl to find him, but she didn’t. She told her father how important he was to her. She knew what her father wanted to do.”

“Nevertheless, the drought harmed the humans too much, they anxiously needed rainfall. The little dinosaur saw what happened, he noticed that the girl would die very soon without enough water.”

“Therefore, he went to find her, told her that he had decided to summon rain. But she refused, ‘You cannot do this. It consumes a large amount of your energy. In the past, the dinosaurs did this in a group, so they could do this safely.’

However, you are the only dinosaur in the world now. It will drain your energy.' 'Don't worry, I know what I should do.' He didn't change his decision."

"The next day, he went to find the leader of the humans. At first, the people were vigilant of his coming as he was a dragon. But when he told them he would like to help them summon the rain, they kept silent. Yes, they needed water, a lot of water to survive. Therefore, they were extremely delighted."

"Meanwhile, the girl saw all the people wear a big smile on their faces. She felt a growing sense of unease. She asked one of them, then, she got this terrible news. She ran to the place the person said as fast as she could. At that moment, she saw the sky was turning dark, rain started to fall, and her friend's body on the ground."

"She waded through the puddles to her friend, he lied on the ground. She tried to wake him up, but it was futile. The humans were celebrating the rainfall. The crops would be saved!"

"She went home with daze and sorrow. She could not stop recalling the time with her friend. When she was depressed, she went to the cave where the little dragon had lived, and carved their story on the wall."

"So, that's the beautiful mural here." said Mike.

Fossils Here, Fossils There

Kowloon True Light School, Agustin, Ezra, Jeezelle – 13

“Breaking News: A new species of titanosaurs has been found in Jiangxi!”

Wyatt stared at the television screen, wide-eyed. Ever since he was a toddler, he’s been obsessed with dinosaurs, digging up books in the library. Likewise, his twin sister, Lexi took a keen interest in fossils. They set foot in every history museum in China their parents could bring them to.

“Lexi, come over here!” Wyatt called out to his sister loudly, his eyes glued to the screen. Lexi perked up curiously, setting her bowl of cereal down and turned her sight to follow her brother’s.

“They found a new species of titanosaurs? How?” Lexi asked, astonished.

“Some paleontologists were digging when they found the fossils,” Wyatt explained, smiling widely. “They’re going to be put up for display in the Jiangxi Provincial Museum in a few weeks. We went there before, remember?”

Lexi just nodded, too stunned to speak. New fossils to research and write about in her journal? She was over the moon!

Wyatt rolled his eyes fondly at his sister’s silent excitement. He chuckled. “Let’s ask Mum and Dad if they can bring us during the Lunar New Year holiday!”

“Sure thing!”

The twins rushed to their parents in the kitchen, and after minutes of begging, they agreed to bring Wyatt and Lexi during the holiday.

For two kids always buzzing with energy, the wait felt like a lifetime. But the day finally came.

Arriving at the parking lot, Wyatt and Lexi could already see the top of the museum building peeking out from the trees. They squealed in unison.

“Forgetting something?” Their dad asked as Wyatt and Lexi began to walk away without even saying goodbye.

“Bye, Mum and Dad! See you later!”

“See you too, kids.”

In the distance, their parents drove off. Wyatt and Lexi walked to the museum.

“I can’t believe we’re actually going to see the fossils! Hopefully it isn’t too crowded,” Lexi said. “Speaking of which, there’s barely anyone around.”

“Perhaps they’re all inside the museum. We’re only on the way to it right now, not actually in it,” Wyatt suggested. Lexi pursed her lips in thought.

When they arrived at the entrance, there was a huge crowd! They had to push through, only to see police tape surrounding the area and police officers guarding the entrance.

“Stay behind the barricade tape!” A police officer yelled. The kids stumbled back.

“What’s going on?” “Let us through!” “We didn’t come all this way for nothing.”

Wyatt looked around. Nothing seemed to be wrong. “Miss, what’s happening?” he asked a woman, wearing her police uniform, and the badge on her cap proved she was an actual police officer.

The woman looked a bit surprised when she heard Wyatt, but her expression immediately softened when she saw the little boy.

“A group of people stole the fossils from the display case just a few hours ago. We saw them through the surveillance cameras and where they drove off. I’m heading with my team to look for the suspects,” she explained professionally.

The twins frowned. They were excited to see the fossils, but there was no way to see them now! Who knew if the police would be able to retrieve them?

“Miss, what’s your name?”

“You can call me Officer Chen.”

“Officer Chen, can we come along with you and your team to find the fossils?” Lexi asked hopefully. “Me and my brother waited for a very long time to see these fossils and...and our parents aren’t picking us up until 5pm!” She pleaded.

Bringing these kids would be dangerous, as they could get severely hurt. But at the same time, they were so little, and they didn’t have any guardians at the moment.

“I’m sorry, kids, it’s extremely risky, and—“

She stopped once she saw the kids’ puppy dog eyes. She sighed, running a hand through her hair. “You two really aren’t going to give up, huh?”

They shook their heads. “Can we come?” they asked.

Officer Chen reluctantly nodded. “Alright. But only because you kids are alone. You stay close, okay?”

Wyatt and Lexi cheered excitedly. They entered the police car with Officer Chen and another cop.

“Where are we heading to?”

“To Dazhou Road. That’s where the culprits are.”

Lexi giggled. She was feeling so excited already!

When they parked at Dazhou Road, the police officers were huddled up in a group with the kids right beside them. They walked through an alleyway.

“They’re here, aren’t they? Alleyways are notorious for crimes,” Wyatt said quietly to the officers. One of the officers nodded.

“They’re going to profit off the fossils and make tons of money.”

They followed the police officers closely. Eventually, they had to split ways. Wyatt and Lexi went with Officer Chen. They snuck into a building secretly.

“From here on, you kids stay quiet, and stay by my side. I’ll protect you,” Officer Chen said worriedly. For some reason, she was feeling nervous, despite her years of being a police officer. Something about this place was making her feel uneasy.

Wyatt and Lexi were already hugging each other as they walked, slightly scared yet excited. They could hear people talking as they walked through the halls.

Officer Chen opened the door to the storage room and immediately found the fossils inside two plastic bags. Whoever stole them didn’t hide them in a very good place. She took the bags.

“We have to leave immediately,” She said to the kids. Wyatt and Lexi peered at the bags. They could see the fossils through the clear plastic.

Just then, an alarm started blaring throughout the whole building. The lights turned red, and people started leaving the rooms. Wyatt and Lexi gasped. Officer Chen immediately picked them up, making a run for it.

Her heart thumped as she heard the footsteps of people chasing them.

“Get back here!” Someone yelled angrily and loudly. Wyatt looked and saw an angry group of men. His breath hitched. Lexi just held onto Officer Chen.

Officer Chen saw the exit, but several people started surrounding it. Her eyes widened.

Stopping, she set the kids down, and put the bags in their hands.

“Go,” she told them.

“But you—“

“Go, now!”

Wyatt and Lexi’s heart dropped, but there was no time to ask question. They ran, even when their legs started to cramp and they felt like they couldn’t breath anymore.

They only stopped when they saw the family group of police officers in the alleyways, and they started crying.

“Officer Chen is still in the building!” Lexi hiccupped, tears streaming down her cheeks. They entered the police car with some police officers while others went into the building to find her. When they came back to the museum, they saw the staff carefully putting the fossils back inside the display cases and the crowd cheering.

Wyatt and Lexi felt numb, and after inspecting the fossils for a while, they stayed with the police officers.

“Kids,” Officer Chen walked up to Wyatt and Lexi, smiling. Their eyes were red and puffy.

“It’s me.”

The twins looked up, shocked to see the officer who had saved their lives! They noticed a few wounds and bruises on her body. They grinned widely and hugged her.

“Did you catch the bad guys?” Lexi asked innocently.

“Yes, I caught them. You two were so brave, you know that?” Officer Chen comforted the two kids, kneeling and hugging them back. They all breathed a sigh of relief. Everything was okay.

She accompanied them to the museum to see the fossils together. Their eyes gleamed looking at the fossils.

“That’s the new species of titanosaur, right in front of us!” Wyatt exclaimed. Officer Chen chuckled. “You kids really like fossils.”

Near 5pm, Wyatt and Lexi were already waiting in the parking lot for their parents, Officer Chen still with them.

“Thank you for making our day a whole lot more interesting, Officer Chen,” Lexi looked up gratefully.

Their parents’ car pulled up. Before entering, the twins hugged Officer Chen again.

“You’re very welcome. Maybe you two could become paleontologists one day, with how dedicated you are to these fossils!” She teased them. The kids snickered and nodded. Officer Chen watched them enter the car and

waved goodbye. For the rest of the drive back home, Wyatt and Lexi rambled on and on about their day, leaving out the part where they almost got killed.

Though, there was one thing, other than the fossils, that they were definitely not going to forget; Officer Chen.

"She said we could be palaeontologists," Lexi told Wyatt. He nodded too, remembering what Officer Chen said.

"I think we should," Wyatt replied, grinning. Lexi smiled back. "It's official, then."

The two continued to talk, about fossils, about their day, about Officer Chen, about their dreams—anything. They knew their life was set on an unmistakable path and their destiny was changed forever.

Mind Your Dinosaurs

Kowloon True Light School, Cheng, Yat Nam Adelyn – 14

There were no dinosaurs.

From when I was young, I've always had a fascination with dinosaurs.

Growing up, I was surrounded by lush green trees towering above the world, sprawling up into the skies, hiding just away from the cement towers behind them. The grass beneath my feet was a constant companion no matter where I roamed. The creek was just some fields away, and the never-ending gurgle of flowing water was to become a defining characteristic of my early childhood.

The constant juggles in life and the growing pains of growing up would eventually banish dinosaurs to the back of mind, until they become seemingly a figment of my imagination, or were they fiction altogether?

Then there were the dinosaurs.

Before they would vanish into the thin air of adulthood, I would see them, albeit occasionally, going about their peaceful, prehistoric, cretaceous lives. A Sauropod would raise its long, long neck, nibbling at the crown of the trees, shaking its head as it tugged off leaves. Some would raise their heads, bellowing at the sky.

The sky! Many flying dinosaurs, which I soon learned the name was Pterosaurs, would streak across the sky gloriously in a grand formation. I often dreamt that I would be among them, with the world beneath me, high up in the sky!

That was the childhood wonder I grew up with, an evergreen oasis in a corner of my mind I thought would last a lifetime. Everyone said I gazed at everything as if I was witnessing the birth of planets and stars, as if I was seeing beautiful things, telling me that they too, wish they could one day see whatever spectacle I reflected in my eyes. Then I would get called back to the farm to help. If the farm was isolated from the rest of the world and the cities, then I was akin to a single pebble among a vast ocean of nothingness, just me and my pure imagination.

But it was magic. It was magical in the way that everything sparkled, emerald-green enveloped me, and beautiful streaks of sunlight created jewels in the sky. I loved everything, from the little squirrels to the deers to the gigantic, fictitious dinosaurs I would always see.

When my family moved into the city, I didn't leave them behind. I learned everything about dinosaurs, scavenged every inch of the early internet for information, the libraries were never not a priority. Mary Anning? My role model. I studied hard, aiming to get into a good university so I could keep learning and studying and *thinking* about dinosaurs. I had simple goals. I achieved all of them.

Around a few years before I graduated with a shiny degree, the old family farm was finally taken back by the government to use as residential land development. It was discouraging for my relatives still there, but my family was able to help them swiftly find footing in the city. And honestly? We all saw it coming. Nobody was surprised. As much as I had connections to that place, the childhood memories were as distant as I physically was from home. I now lived and studied in different parts of China, only going home to visit my parents.

Then, right after I actually graduated, the news came out.

Dinosaur fossils. Back home, in Jiangxi.

A new species of titanosaurs, quickly named with the generic name (as opposed to a lengthy scientific name) of Jiangxititan, very self-explanatory. Discovered in Ganzhou, a city in Jiangxi, the Jiangxititan was part of the Sauropoda. Objective facts.

Personally? I was absolutely thrilled. Ganzhou. *I lived there. Sauropods? Bells are ringing.*

More reports started trickling in. Paleontologists are suggesting it's actually non-titanosaurian now, they're trying to group it in based on the fossils. As much as I was itching to join in on the action and chase a long-cherished albeit faraway childhood dream, there wasn't much I could do as a fresh graduate.

So, I waited and waited. Until the right opportunity presented itself. An offer I could not refuse.

An old professor who helped me on my graduation thesis reached out to me, in hopes of convincing me to join an excavation team just south of Beijing. It was early September, and a lead researcher of his had to rush home for some sort of family emergency. The weather had just turned perfect, with the heavy rains from the previous summer season washing up new material, exposing plenty of fossils. At such a critical moment, losing one single researcher could really take a tow on the pace. I didn't need any convincing, after the influx of Covid, getting restarted on digging is difficult for anyone, let alone a newbie like me. If it wasn't now, it's never.

I met up with several old school friends in Beijing. It was a short trip by car to reach a certain area set aside just for the discovery of new dinosaur fossils. It's rumored to have an extremely diverse ecosystem of dinosaurs back in the early Cretaceous. There are many sayings going around about how they're so well preserved. Volcanic eruptions, collapse of land, earthquakes— all likely and could be backed up by evidence. Sounds like a challenge to me.

Such well-preserved fossils from over 90,000 years ago, maybe even more. On the rocky car ride, despite the views flying by, I poured all my attention onto the pictures of the first two fossils unearthed at the exact site we were headed towards. Almost the entire body of the dinosaur was impeccably preserved, the most uncanny thing? It felt so peaceful. They looked like frames of a dinosaur laying down for rest, to sleep, that got frozen in place and time, only remembered as a brief flash of history. There was no struggle in their final moments of life. So, how did it end?

Dinosaurs of China, what new tales would you reveal to me?

There was no rain, there was no wind. The air was eerily still. Our pickaxes and shovels hastened the pace.

I walked around the perimeter, indecisive about where to start. The air might be still, but it was bone-chilling nonetheless, the grey skies stretched above. Was there a storm incoming? The cold weather had blanketed everything in greyness. Everything felt tight and pressing.

I spotted a patch of dirt right in front of the curtain of trees, bending down, I got to work quickly. Hours stretched on forever, I occupied myself with my thoughts, my hands working incessantly, maybe I was even muttering to myself at one point, how could I not? Feeling the rapid approach of another presence, I set down my tools temporarily and looked up defiantly.

Chirp, chirp chirp?

My eyes widened, my heartbeat accelerated, and I forced myself to breathe.

Flee, you fool, was the voice ringing in my head. But how could I? When the one thing that has been my calling since childhood, is the one thing that shaped me *and* my life. My soul felt frozen in place, *just like the dinosaurs.*

Dinosaurs.

Chirp.

“Hello there, boy.” Words escaped my mouth breathlessly, and my eyes sparkled. I felt a sort of hunger entering me. Not the cravings for food, but the sort of hunger for finding something new.

Chirp. It cocked its head to the right, three more appeared right behind it. All of them, including the first one, were babies.

“Hey, beautiful, how are you?” My throat tightened as I outstretched my hand, my voice higher than usual.

I came looking for ancient fossils.

The first one, the closest one took a little step towards me stepping on the dirt, making a mark. Its glossy eyes stared into mine with such childlike wonder that was all too familiar.

“Oh, no, don’t do that. People are gonna see you,” my words barely a whisper now. I tore my sight away from it painstakingly and looked into the dense forest beyond, is there more in there?

I looked back into the dinosaur chick’s eyes. I saw stars, I saw galaxies far away, I saw myself. The me that chased my dreams so relentlessly I forgot what it was like to truly be amazed. I’ll have to let it go, don’t I? This young dinosaur—

Baffling, I thought.

Extinct for millennia. Now, very much alive right in front of my eyes. I don’t want to dwell on the specifics, I don’t want to think. I just marveled.

I left quietly.

I never told anyone.

I never told anyone I saw a real dinosaur; I went back to the car empty-handed. I would call it the day my life changed, or the day all my hopes and dreams came true. Or the day nothing happened, because technically, nothing was supposed to happen. Yet, I secretly hoped the dinosaurs, no matter of present or past, would continue to forge new tales. I would too, never give up doing what I truly love.

In the end, I didn’t say a word.

There were no dinosaurs.

Tales of the Dinosaurs Mysteries

Kowloon True Light School, Chung, Ni Fu Gwyneth – 12

In a small classroom in China, Mr. Chan stood at the front and told them about fossils. "China has become a big place for finding fossils. During the 1990s, the first feathered dinosaur had been found by a farmer." His voice was monotonous and flat with no emotion. Mei, the Form 3 student slumped onto her desk, bored and restless.

While her classmates leaned forward, excited to hear about ancient dinosaurs, Mei frequently looked at the clock, willing it to move faster. "Just five more minutes," she thought, laying her head on her arm. She longed for a quick moment of peace before the class ended.

In an instant, the classroom fell silent. No rustling of papers nor soft whispers. Mei sat bolt upright in bed, racing heart pounding inside her chest. Something was seriously off. The classroom lay in disarray, desks overturned, and papers scattered over the floor while the windows stood wide open, allowing a cold, biting wind to seep in.

"Hello?" Mei called out, shaking, as she rose, the chair scraping across the floor. There was silence. The room was suddenly washing in a wave of panic as her gaze scoured the room. Where was everybody? The air was heavy, almost like it weighed on her. Then, a low, growling sound echoed down the hall—a sound so strange and eerie, it ran chills down her spine.

What's going on? she thought, clutching her desk for support. Some kind of joke? Deep down inside, she knew it wasn't. An instinctive, heavy fear was welling up in her chest. The shadows cast in the room were like dark living things twisting and churning, seeming to watch her. Her trembling hands grasped for the door handle as she prepared herself for whatever might be on the other side. Little did she know, the far-off past she had slept through in class was awakening, and it was as real as life.

"Oh, if only I hadn't ignored the lesson!" Mei muttered to herself as she swung the door open. It was quite a different hallway altogether: dark and spooky, with flickering lights casting odd, distorted shadows on the walls. Lockers stood open, their contents spilled haphazardly onto the floor. The growl came again, louder this time, echoing through the empty hallway.

"Is anybody there? Mei called out, her voice cracking with fear. The silence that followed was deafening. Taking a deep breath, she forced herself to move forward, her footsteps echoing ominously. Just as she passed the science lab, a loud crash startled her. Heart pounding, she hesitated before peering inside. The lab was a disaster—broken glass sparkled on the floor, tables were overturned, and the air smelled faintly of chemicals.

But it wasn't until she saw the deep claw marks in the floor and walls, as if something had torn its way through the room, that really caught her attention.

What's going on?" she whispered, stepping backward. Then, she heard the slightest whimpering. Her better judgment notwithstanding, she stepped inside and followed the faint sound to the corner of the room. She caught her breath. There, in the shadow, trembling, was a small creature unlike anything she had ever seen. The scales glistened weakly in the flickering light, and his huge, round eyes were filled with fear.

"Are you... a dinosaur?" Mei asked, her voice barely above a whisper.

The tiny creature hesitated before nodding, its eyes wide and pleading. "My name is Tiko," it said in a raspy, trembling voice. "I've been hiding. The darkness... it's awakening."

"The darkness?" Mei echoed, her mind spinning. "What darkness? What's happening?"

Tiko looked around the room, as if he was waiting for something, or someone, to burst through the door at any second. "Fang," he whispered. "He's gathering his hunters. They found a way to break through the barriers. They want to take this world for themselves.

Mei's heart raced. Fang? That name sounded familiar. Suddenly, her mind flashed back to her doodled history book. Mr. Chan's lecture echoed in her ears: "China has quietly become the global epicenter of fossil-hunting. Sinosauropteryx, meaning 'China dragon bird,' was the first clearly feathered dinosaur discovered..."

Tiko's voice snapped her back to reality. "Fang was once a leader, but his greed consumed him. He'll stop at nothing to take control. We need to warn the others—before it's too late."

Mei's head spun. Dinosaurs were real. And somehow, they were in danger. Despite her fear, she felt a strange sense of responsibility. "How can I help?" she asked, her voice steady despite the chaos around her.

A gleam of hope flashed in Tiko's eyes. "We need to find the others. If we unite, we might stand a chance."

"Then let's go," Mei said, with determination burning inside her chest.

Together, Mei and Tiko navigated the darkened school, moving cautiously through the wreckage. The hallways were littered with overturned lockers and claw marks, and the faint growls in the distance kept Mei on edge. When they finally reached the courtyard, Mei gasped. A group of dinosaurs—real, living dinosaurs—was huddled together, their expressions a mix of fear and confusion.

"Tiko!" a large Triceratops called, relief washing over its face. "You're safe!"

Stepping forward, her voice was firm. "We do not have much time. Fang is building an army, and we need to stop him."

The dinosaurs exchanged uneasy glances. A Pterosaur flapped its wings to try to calm the group. "We've been in hiding for so long," it said. "But maybe... maybe it's time we fight back."

Tiko nodded. "Together we can stop him. We cannot let Fang take our home.

The group murmured in agreement, their fear giving way to resolve. Mei felt a surge of adrenaline. "Let's create a plan. We'll find the others and prepare for Fang's arrival."

As dusk fell, the courtyard filled with dinosaurs of all shapes and sizes—raptors, Pterosaurs, Triceratops, and more. Mei stood at the center, her heart pounding. "We must be brave," she said, her voice steady. "We're stronger together."

But before she could say more, a shadow loomed at the edge of the courtyard. Fang came up, his dark hulking figure looming over them. His pointed teeth glinted as he sneered. "So, you think you can stop me?" he said in a low, growling voice full of malice.

Mei stepped forward, the fear in her heart replaced by a firm determination. "We shall not let you take over. This world does not belong to you."

Fang burst out laughing, the cold sound lingering within the courtyard. "You're only a child; what are you capable of doing?"

In an instant, the battle began. Dinosaurs ran toward Fang as his roars reverberated across the night. Mei weaved through it all, organizing groups and lending her aid where needed. "Distract him!" Tiko shouted, leading a sub-group of raptors to attack Fang from behind. Pterosaurs dived from above, pecking at him to grab his attention.

The battle continued, and soon Mei was standing in front of Fang. "You don't have to do that!" she yelled. "You don't have to be alone."

Fang had hesitated; confusion flickered across his eyes. "Why should I trust you?" he growled.

"Because we're stronger together," Mei said, straightforward. "Together, we can build a better future."

Chaos died away for one silent moment. Fang looked at the dinosaurs now, faces upturned to his, hopeful rather than hostile. His hostility ebbed, slowly. "Perhaps," he whispered, the word husky with repentance. "Perhaps it is time for a change."

And so, the shadows of the past began to lift as understanding and unity began to shine through. In unison, Mei, Tiko, and the dinosaurs forged a new path where all creatures could thrive in harmony.

With the help of Fang, they created a sanctuary. Together, they built some makeshift houses, searched for food, and looked after each other from further threats. It gave Mei much satisfaction as the community became much stronger day by day.

As weeks passed, time went on, and the dinosaurs became accustomed to Fang; he joined their ranks. They shared stories, laughter, and moments of joy that Mei never imagined could exist between such different creatures.

She would often think about that drab lecture from Mr. Chan's class when suddenly the past had leapt to life as it never did for her before. Dinosaurs weren't just those beings of history but part of her current life, friends, and allies.

She stood in the courtyard one afternoon under the sun, surrounded by her new friends. Mei felt grateful; she had learned that sometimes the most unlikely occurrences can lead to the greatest adventures. Together, they were not just surviving; they were thriving. In the middle of their close-knit community was where Mei found her purpose. Whatever challenges lay ahead, she was prepared to face them head-on, knowing they would do so together.

New Tale Of China's Dinosaurs

Kowloon True Light School, Lau, Po Hei Clara – 13

90 days, 5 hours and 32 minutes. It has been 3 months since Theo left home, shipped off to Fujian Province alongside his friend, Flint. There, he had but one goal in mind, "Dig it till you find it" With a chisel in one hand, and a shovel in the other, Theo was determined to discover any fossils of the dinosaurs that once lived.

Walking by the locals of Zhenghe County, endless plains, large bodies of water and farmlands surrounded Theo and Flint. They were tired, they wanted to get this over with quick and easy, so they could go back to their families. Theo was never one to like walking for long hours and examining small fossil fragments. He preferred to be inside, looking at a microscope to reveal the fossil. Flint liked scavenging, but it's been 3 months, and they're tired. With a loud sigh, Flint turned to look at Theo, "You think they'll let us go back if we still haven't found anything after this week?"

Theo shook his head,

"They'll just send more people in to help us." He put his hands in his pocket, "It's either that there aren't any fossils here, or we're just horrible at looking for them." Flint chuckled at that. Looking up, he pointed at a mountain, instructing Theo to follow him up.

Up the mountain they went, huffs and puffs of air were heard, beads of sweat rolling down their temples until they reached the top. They could hear the sounds of a small stream, attracting them to go see. Around the stream of water were dark, crumbly rocks. Sedimentary rocks surrounded the river, the sight was beautiful, yet they had no time to waste to admire it. Hastily grabbing out a geological map, Flint hummed, telling Theo that there were possible rocks here from the Jurassic period. Their mere focus was on the ground now, Flint was occupied looking at the sedimentary rocks, each of them had a rugged texture, as if something was poking out. The sound of the cold steel of the chisel was heard, slowly exposing the surface of what's inside.

"Found anything?" Theo walked over, observing Flint's gentle yet precise movements chiseling the rock, removing each layer of the rock. A gasp came out of Flint's mouth, his eyes staring widely at the rock on the ground.

"FINALLY!"

He yelled, his eyes gleaming with joy.

What was originally a rock, was now a revealed fossil. Blowing the dust and sandy remains of the rock, he placed the rock in a field jacket, covering the entirety of the fossil with plaster. Theo picked up the fossil, putting it in his bag gently.

"Seems like today might be our lucky day." He smiled, his spirits lifted now. They looked further into the distance, seeing that this small stream led to a cave, dark and deep it looked, it was like it was luring them in. They knew this place was a spot with many Jurassic fossils hidden, so the only way to find them was to explore deeper.

Theo and Flint's eyes had been glued to the ground, meticulously scanning the rocky ground for any possible fossils. And they had found quite a few. The more they picked up, the more it seemed like they were placed there on purpose, as they noticed it was leading them to the cave. Perhaps it was a coincidence, they thought, a child that was bored moved the rocks to lead to the cave. Their footsteps echoed once entering the cave, the sounds of their clothes rustling more prominently than ever before, Theo took a flashlight out of his pocket, turning it on to venture into the cave. Layers of limestone were on the cave's walls, the harsh and lumpy texture of the walls invited them in as they walked deeper into the cave.

After walking in the never-ending cave for a bit, Theo spoke exhaustedly,

“It seems like there’s no point to continue further.”

“Yeah, but we still have to. Who knows what we’ll find here?” Flint optimistically said, his desire and spirit to explore still alive.

Theo exhaled deeply, before taking another step forward.

“THUD!”

Theo’s hand moved rapidly, using his flashlight to see where the loud noise came from, he slowly moved back. Flint kneeled down, hands coming in contact with the ground. Trusting his intuition, he reached forward, and felt a rock, two rocks, then three rocks! The grainy and rough feeling of the rocks seemed to be limestones. Flint picked them up and continued walking, until he stepped on another rock, a corrugated rock underneath his shoe, he picked it up and gave it to Theo. And he threw it, it landed with a big thud, and then a clatter of rocks were heard.

The ground suddenly felt shaky and unstable, Theo’s flashlight fell out of his hand, causing him to fall forward, hands on the ground. Flint’s rocks fell out of his hands, falling onto the ground. Theo picked up his flashlight, feeling the rapid shaking of the ground, the low rumbling sounds, Theo grabbed Flint’s arm, dragging Flint with him as he ran despite the difficulty to stand. They ran deeper into the cave, where a number of kerosene lamps were hanging on the walls of the cave, and the shaking ground stopped. Both of their hearts were pounding out of their chests, there was a runnel of sweat trickling down their foreheads as they examined the area. There were two pathways, Flint took the lead and walked to the left without a word and Theo followed him. A faint crackling sound was then heard, intriguing them even more.

After walking for what seemed like an eternity, they saw a rusty, metallic ladder leading down, Theo’s flashlight shined down, trying to see what was down there, but he couldn’t, so they climbed down.

Once they were down, the first thing they saw were blue and grey feathers scattered on the ground, they were large, long and fluffy feathers. When they looked up, both of them let out a piercing scream. Numerous dinosaurs were inside of what seemed to be melted tree sap, preserving them entirely. Seeing the dinosaurs in such close proximity and detail made their blood run cold, as they looked nothing like they assumed that they looked like. And the third thing they saw was a waddling Fujianvenator, its wings spread wide yet it couldn’t fly, it ran towards them, every step making the ground shake again. Theo’s hand reached deep into his bag, scrambling for his camera, his hand shaking as he took it out. The quick shutter sound of his camera and a bright flash, flashed the bird-like dinosaur back, causing its grasping fingers to reach for them, but instead grabbing the ladder behind them. Theo and Flint ran for their lives, their heart was beating so fast they could hear it, Theo shakingly held up his camera, taking photos of the preserved dinosaurs. They felt the large bird yell, calling for them, the sound was deafening. Its talon gripping onto Theo’s bag, and then pulling it. Theo fell back, his legs couldn’t move as fast as his brain before the bird had pulled his shirt, tearing it apart. He could feel its sharp talon almost cutting his skin. He sprung back up, running towards where Flint was at, already back up where they came from, he screamed at Theo, distress and fear for his friend, he knew he was no match for that bird, yet with just a little bit of faith left, he grabbed some rocks on the floor and threw them at the bird, hopefully weakening it. His hands moved faster than his brain before he saw that the bird’s eye was bleeding, his lips quivering looking at the sight. Theo was up the ladder by the time the Fujianvenator was hurt. He was panting but there was no time to calm down, he held tightly onto Flint’s hand before dashing off, finding his way back to get out of the cave.

Flint was still in disbelief when they were out of the cave. Staring at the sight of Theo gasping for air, the only words that came out of Flint’s mouth were random blabbers of “thank you” and “what just happened”, his head was trying to form a coherent thought yet he couldn’t, his head was blank. Tears watered up in his eyes, he sniffed before smashing his head into the crook of Theo’s neck, hugging him.

"I...can't..believe we survived that." His arms holding onto Theo's shoulders.

Theo gulped before speaking, "I don't think I can ever go on another trip after this." The two corners of Flint's mouth lifted up, letting out a broken laugh as he cried. Theo patted his back, leaning into the hug.

Theo looked down at his camera, his hands still shaking and his heart still pounding out of his chest, he inhaled deeply,

"Let's go back now."

New Tales of China's Dinosaurs

Kowloon True Light School, Tin, Lok Lam – 14

"Please don't leave!", she said, tears streaming down her face.

"I'll be back soon. I promise.", Von said to his daughter as he held her tight.

Von was a paleontologist, one who was about leaving for a trip to Jiangxi to find fossils. He was told about how China was less well-explored by people in the same field. He thought that maybe, just maybe he will be able to find the next species of ancient fossil. It was nearing Christmas. Although it would be a shame to miss this chance to spend time with his family, Von thought it would be much more of a shame if he missed out on finding the next species of dinosaur buried within the ground.

As Von arrived at a site where not many fossil hunters go, he went straight to work. He kept on digging and digging...After two days of almost non-stop work, Von saw something buried in the rock, something he had never thought he would find.

What he saw looked absolutely huge. The bone seemed to be from the neck of an astonishingly huge dinosaur. Von excitedly and carefully dug out the rest of the bones. He was correct. The bone was indeed gigantic. As he placed the dinosaur bones onto the table under the shade, hiding them from the sun, Von got a good look at what he just discovered. He dug more than 7 bones, surely that could tell him a lot about this species of dinosaur, Von thought.

However, he wouldn't have much time to uncover what this dinosaur really is.

As Von touched the cleaned fossil for the first time, he suddenly lost consciousness.

Von woke up to the sounds of loud roaring. Roaring that he had never heard before. It was dark, he looked up and didn't see the night sky, but instead, the stomach of a dinosaur. The area around him was so green, contrary to the grey buildings Von is used to seeing.

Von looked back down, and what he saw made him question every single decision that led up to that point. A Sinosauropteryx.

The Sinosauropteryx hit its beak on Von's leg. "Help, I lost my family..", Von heard from the creature.

He didn't just hear a dinosaur speak right?

"Are you...actually speaking?"

"Well, yeah. Could you help me please? I have to obtain food for my family, so I never spend time with them. However, now my whole family dislikes me and they left me!"

Von was still in shock. Well, he should have been shocked the moment he saw he was under a dinosaur's stomach. Von still had to find a way back to his timeline too.

"You know what? Fine, I will help you with your problems."

Von and the Sinosauropteryx agreed to travel until their bodies couldn't anymore. They travelled far and wide, and never once gave up. Von saw how the world looked like. There weren't buildings, just trees and rivers. A world where humans hadn't used the world's resources yet.

After travelling for as long as the sun rose three times, the Sinosauropteryx said, "that's them! That's my family!"

Von let out a sigh of relief. The duo landed on the ground, where the Sinosauropteryx's family was and the Sinosauropteryx immediately began speaking.

"Why did you leave me?"

"You never spend time with us! You're always out finding food, we almost never see you! I bet you don't even want to see us. That's why we left", one of the family members said.

The Sinosauropteryx stayed quiet for a while, his family member's words echoing in his brain.

"So...you want me to stay with you guys more and go out for food less?"

"Exactly."

Von thought, "I get it now. So quality time is important for family."

As that thought disappeared, Von woke up at the site of where he found the bones of the huge dinosaur.

"I guess some things just never change..."

I should go home.", Von thought.

Man or Beast? A New Tale of Dinosaurs

Kowloon True Light School, Wong, Hei Nam Kayce – 14

I am a creature. One with feathers glued upon every inch of skin, one that fed upon the remains of meat, one that hunted and tore flesh apart as smoothly as a leaf was flowing in ebbing waters.

As my progenitor finally wandered back in the nest, it nuzzled its head against mine. Soft yet prickly feathers started tickling my senses, I tilted my head against its, trilling as a nonsensical warmth filled me, as if my appetite for smaller animals had dwelled and quenched. I had been warmed. I had been filled.

In a world full of mayhem, there had been this unspeakable, indescribable connection between me and this particular creature, one of my own kind, a tinge of familiarity, as if my own instincts wanted to recognise this one as someone whom I could let my guards down with. A shelter, someone I can hide away with, someone that I can trust to protect me, it isn't an exaggeration when I say I *trust* this one. It provided food for me when I was a feeble child, it provided me warmth when I needed it, it let me finally let out a sigh I never knew I held — in a world where you either hunt or be hunted, I knew I could have the mindset of 'the hunted' in this scenario.

A safe haven.

When my progenitor stopped rubbing its head against mine, it went outside for a while and dragged a body of a more or less, dead, animal. It nodded its head towards the body whilst staring into my eyes, as if itching for me to feast on it. I let out a soft, annoyed growl — I've always preferred hunting on my own, it wasn't so much that it gave me a thrill but more of an instinctive urge, whenever my progenitor did this, it felt as if it thought I was still a hapless infant instead of a grown creature. I needed no help.

Brushing it aside but still reluctantly eating my fill, I stepped out of the cave without a word, it turned its head and took a small step forward as if in an attempt to stop me, but ultimately decided against it. As the blaring wind hit my feathers, flowing through them. I flapped my wings and outstretched them, finally soaring through the skies — it felt good to be able to stretch my wings, to feel the wind hit my face. The bustling environment icked me. I saw some taller creatures with long necks slowly munching on trees, I never understood them but I only briefly glanced at them whilst trying to zero in on a vulnerable target, I knew I couldn't overpower them, after all. No creature of my kind was going to take the risk of taking on a creature that big and tall — it was threatening, in a way, how they towered over us, how we seemingly seemed so, so small in comparison, how even with wings, it seemed as if we didn't have weapons of our own.

I let out a gasp in surprise when the taller creature suddenly whipped its head back, almost like an attempt to attack me, just narrowly missing my neck. I let out a loud trill, and it looked back, pupils wide.

It looked.

It was the first time in my life that I realised how silent eyes are.

My fight or flight instincts suddenly activated, in a desperate attempt to flee or be *hunted*. I flapped my wings like my progenitor taught me, big, make yourself as big as possible, fast, be as quick as flowing rivers.

Suddenly, a dam was constructed, as if concrete was falling on top of each other. The flowing water halted. Flowing waters bring life, stagnant rivers create a swamp.

Soon after, my silent eyes appeared lifeless. I sank into the soils of this land.

I am a human being, one with skin covering each inch of my body, one with immeasurable intelligence and wisdom.

At least, that's what my mother would say. She always exaggerates her words but, I knew that in her eyes, I was still a little girl. Someone vulnerable and weak to the horrors of this world, someone to be protected, cared for in every respect. It's overbearing, but somehow I understood why. The affection towards being cared for, the fulfillment of being the victim of their pride, it's all so implausibly *warm*. As if my belly had been full from my mother's iconic lotus root and pork soup — hearty and somewhat burns.

I knew that in a world full of chaos, I could trust my mother at the very least. Perhaps, even if I was in a world that had the ideal of 'a dog-eat-dog world', I would still choose to trust my mother. It's an unwarranted and naive choice, but something in me tugs at the thought of not doing so.

Following my mundane life, after coming back from school, I sat down at my desk and started pulling out my homework. Sitting face-to-face with Chinese History homework was something that immediately got my attitude down. My heart sighed a little at the thought of having to do hours of essays. Whilst contemplating whether I should procrastinate or not, my mother came back home from hours of harsh labour and patted my back, the imprints of her hands still on my jacket. It's a silent exchange of words, but I've never minded the silence of our home. It was not unwanted, in fact, it was quite comforting.

My mother finally uttered her first sentence of the day, "Why are you just sitting there?"

Annoyance immediately started growing in my chest, flinching as if nails were scratching on a blackboard, as if damp shoes were screeching against wooden floors. I stood up with my hands clenching at the textbook and went to my room.

It was weird, our emotions, I mean. I hold so much love for her but she irritates me more than anything else. It was as if, because of the intense emotions I feel for her, everything was magnified, whether that be a positive emotion or the other end of the spectrum. I sighed as I sank into my bed sheets, I *knew* that I should do my homework, I knew my mother meant the best for me and that no malice was laced in her words — but in the end, I couldn't bring myself to even look at it.

I found myself looking forward to the next day, even though I forgot that we would be visiting a museum.

The next day came in a flash. It was like fate, the one thing I dreaded the most yesterday was right in front of my eyes, Chinese History — well, not *exactly*. It was a museum on Chinese dinosaurs and we *were* learning a lot about the history of Chinese traditions and dinosaurs in general. As I mindlessly and quite frankly, disinterestedly looked at the fossils of the dinosaurs. I felt myself somewhat pulled at a certain one, it was one with feathers and a long beak, with a tail that somewhat resembled a raccoon's. It was called a *Sinosauropteryx*.

My breath hitched when I saw the fossil, I felt pained for some reason and couldn't bear the look of it any longer than a second. I left that exhibit as soon as possible.

After our short museum visit, I found my interest for dinosaurs growing. I didn't know what possessed me to do so, but the moment I arrived home, I opened my tablet up to research *dinosaurs* of all things. The more I read, the more I realised something. For some reason, with every article I read on the stories of dinosaurs, the angrier I grew.

Why is it that dinosaurs were depicted as something so violent, even *monstrous*?

In Chinese tradition, dragons were hailed as a higher being, but they were truly derived from dinosaurs. They were used to describe *emperors*. Something powerful, something that reigned over the world with an iron fist. Things that roamed the earth as if it was their divine right to rule.

A monster, they said. A killer, they said. Rulers of the earth, they said.

We are not dinosaurs. Dinosaurs are not human. But can we truly say that? When dinosaurs ruled the earth in the same exact way that humans are currently. While dinosaurs hunted for their survival, some humans hunted for pleasure. Can we truly say that dinosaurs are more monstrous than humans?

A ruler, they said. A dog-eat-dog world, they said.

How can we have the audacity to call another creature a monster?

My silent eyes scanned through the text.

I realised humans can never understand the wrath of being classified as a *monster*.

A New Tale of China's Dinosaurs

Kowloon True Light School, Wong, Yuen Lam – 14

"Dave, it's time for bed," she yelled out.

Once she entered his bedroom, he was already in bed, reading *The Only One Left* (dino ver.), as she was about to tuck him in. He asked, "Mom, where will we go when we die?"

"Oh sweetie, why would you ask such a thing?"

"Well, in the book both of the parents died, but it didn't say where they went after that. Mom, do you know where they will go?"

"Oh, well.... they will go to a place named, deaven."

"Where's deaven?"

"It's a place up above the brown sky, a place between this universe and another."

"Ohhhhh, well how d-- "

"Honey, it's late, you should really be asleep right now, I promise I'll tell you more tomorrow. Now, go to sleep."

With a gentle flick, she turned off the light, and the room was enveloped in soft darkness. A new adventure was about to unfold. Dave squeezed his eyes shut, letting sleep take him.

Suddenly, he found himself stepping through a mysterious red door that appeared out of nowhere. The moment he crossed the threshold, he was transported to a shadowy realm, standing in a vast emptiness, surrounded by nothing but a small, old-fashioned desk that materialized before him. Upon the desk laid a piece of paper brimming with math questions, each one more daunting than the last. And next to it was a walkie-talkie. Multiplication – Dave's worst enemy. The mere thought of it made his stomach turn, memories of countless hours spent calculating math equations flood through his mind. Yet, the undeniable curiosity of this place intrigued him. What would happen if he managed to solve these problems? What adventures awaited him on the other side of this challenge? With a deep breath, he leaned closer to the desk, ready to face what laid ahead.

"Okay, I got this. Just remember what Ms So taught us. 3 times 8 equals 24. 9 times 8 equals 72" The questions proved increasingly difficult. Eventually he got stuck on the final question. "Ugh! What's 11 times 12? I don't know how to solve this." A voice comes from the walkie talkie. "Stuck on a question?" "Yes. How do I solve this? Please help." "If you want to solve the question, you need to think creatively," the voice replied, encouraging him. "Remember, sometimes the answers lie beyond the numbers themselves."

Dave frowned, confusion swirling in his mind. "What do you mean?"

"Math is like a puzzle. You have to look at the bigger picture. Try breaking it down. What is 10 times 12?"

"Uh, that's 120. But..."

"Exactly! Now add 12 more. What do you get?"

Dave's eyes widened as he grasped the hint. "Oh! That's 132!"

Finally finishing the last question, the desk began to glow, illuminating the dark void around him. The desk turned into a magic carpet and the walkie talkie turned into a scarf.

Dave gets on the magic carpet. And it starts levitating and flies away. Flying higher and higher up to the sky until they hit the barrier going to another universe. As that happens, Dave's body slowly turns transparent, revealing his bones. And eventually he ended up squeezing between the soil.

After what felt like an eternity of concentration, Dave finally completed the last math question. As he wrote down the final answer, the desk erupted in a radiant glow. The once-ordinary desk transformed before his eyes, its legs curling as it morphed into a magnificent magic carpet.

Beside it, the walkie-talkie dissolved into a vibrant scarf, swirling with vibrant colors. Dave felt an inexplicable connection, as if it were a trusted companion guiding him on this journey.

With a mix of excitement and curiosity, he climbed onto the magic carpet, it began to levitate, gently lifting him off the ground. It soared upward, gliding effortlessly through the air, flying higher and higher up to the sky.

As they flew past the upper barrier, a strange transformation began; his body started to gradually become translucent until only his bones were visible, like a ghostly figure, slipping into another realm.

Then he starts to panic, "where am I? It's too tight here. Help! Is anyone on the other side?" After a while, Dave starts hearing a loud banging noise coming from above. Slowly the noise grows louder and louder. "Woah! Look what I found! Is this a fossil?" "Oh my! We have to take this to the lab."

As the voices above grew clearer, Dave felt a rush of panic. "No, wait! I'm not a fossil!" he shouted, but his voice was muffled, lost in the soil. The tightness around him was suffocating, and he struggled to breathe.

Just as despair began to sink in, he remembered the magical scarf that had transformed from the walkie-talkie. "Wait!" he thought, pulling it close. "Maybe it can help me!" He focused on the scarf, imagining it granting him the strength to break free. As he clutched it tightly, a sense of warmth radiated through him.

Suddenly, the ground above him trembled, and with one mighty push, he felt the earth give way. Light burst through the soil as he was propelled upwards. In an explosion of dirt and grass, Dave emerged into the bright daylight, gasping for air.

As he stood up, brushing the soil off of his transparent skin, he realized he was surrounded by a group of human adults frozen in shock. Their expressions full of fear, as they backed away cautiously, they took in the sight of him, a real dinosaur.

Completely in shock, one finally calmly spoke up. "What are you?", stepping forward, curiosity overtaking fear.

"I'm... I'm Dave," he stammered, his heart racing. "I just came from another universe I guess. I'm a dinosaur. I am assuming you all are?"

"We are humans." The humans replied. "This is impossible. Dinosaurs are extinct. They don't exist. We've been trying to find fossils and learn more about them. This is crazy, how are you alive?" The human asked. "Well there is a whole other universe full of dinosaurs, considering I came up from the ground, I think maybe an underground dinosaur universe." Dave replied.

The human's face lit up with a bright smile as he extended his hand, saying, "Would you like to learn more about our world? We can share stories about our universes!" Just as Dave was about to reach out and reply yes, another voice suddenly pierced the air.

"Dave, wake up! You're going to be late for school! Come on, get up!" The familiar call jolted him back to reality.

New Tales of China's Dinosaurs

Po Leung Kuk Choi Kai Yau School, Chan, Evelyn – 14

I'd always feared I'd have to meet Baba again like this, after four years torn apart from my motherland.

Why, why, why?

The rhythm of blood throbbed in my temples, and my eyes stung from the sandalwood incense as I halfheartedly listened to my mother's eulogy for Baba's memorial. Suddenly, the awful bitterness when she mentioned my father's name disappeared when she spoke of her late, divorced husband. They were replaced with pain and regret and an unspeakable sense of sorrow I couldn't quite put my finger on. Grief spilled out of her like ink from a broken cartridge, as the enunciation of every word she spoke sagged with emotion.

The aftermath of the ceremony was held together by a pregnant pause. People gathered in the comfort of the church hall. I stayed outside, letting the autumn rain drench me in its melancholy. The pitter-patter of the rain reverberated in my ear. Northern China was unforgiving with its transition from summer verdure to ashen winter, its brittle wind bringing an unflinching chill to her heart. The spirit of once vibrant leaves met the ground holding souls and broken bones.

I fidgeted with the tendrils of ebony hair that fell across my face. Even that reminded me of my father, the obsidian colour of his eyes and hair which were quite the opposite of the blue of my mother's eyes and her wispy, golden hair. Unusually cold droplets trickled down my face. You'd never have guessed that I wasn't crying if it weren't for that. But the truth was, I couldn't remember the last time I succumbed to so much emotion. I've spent the last few weeks so thawed and vulnerable and exposed with my heart conditioned to the ache only felt once in a lifetime.

Only 56, a fire so wild, too early to be extinguished...and a dinosaur breakthrough, they say?

And with this I turned down my head, closing my red-rimmed eyes, hiding from the piercing glares as if I were a criminal victim to the gallows. When I flickered them again, I was alone, sitting in the doorway of a memorial service, black dress drenched in rainwater and salty tears.

The air hung heavy, permeated with the scent of aged paper and leather, a thousand whispered stories clinging to the shelves that lined the walls from floor to ceiling. I'd begin seeking solace in my father's study after his death, slowly piecing the fragments of his legacy. His legacy remained stubbornly elusive to me, for my mother whisked me away from his care to America the day I turned 15. But memories came washing over me as I threaded my hands over his palaeontology books. Suddenly I was a petulant young child, Baba trailing his fingers over every word as he tried to tell me how dinosaurs had roamed the earth long before humans were crafted from the hands of Nuwa.

I scaled the shelves, fingers running over the threaded spines, stopping when my gaze fell upon a familiar title. Baba's journal. With unprecedented excitement, I drew the volume out meticulously, plumes of dust waltzing across its pages, the colour swept away by the sands of time. It was bound to leather so dark it seemed to absorb the meagre light. Each entry was a window to his work throughout the years, painstakingly written, ink flowing across like a stream tumbling rapidly over the river bed.

Unbeknownst to me, gleaming days bled into darkness as I fell captive to memory, the dim light of his study engulfing me into his embrace. I remembered.

When I was five, engulfed in his embrace. Filled with childlike wonderment as he unfolded his discoveries about the newly unearthed Fujiaventor, gifted with wings but cursed to live their days on the ground. "Why couldn't it fly?" My question hung in the air, my chin resting on my hands. Baba laughed. But he never told me why.

When I was ten, hearing my parents battle with words as sharp as scythes, enough to cut through their hearts, and mine. Screaming and fighting replaced the laughter that used to fill our house with infectious joy. I was foolish enough to live for the hope of it all, drunk on blind optimism as my family fell apart. Was it my fault, I wondered. But they never told me why.

When I was thirteen, swept away to a country worlds apart from the chiselled walls I called home, the succinct syllables of my mother tongue, forced to fit into a mould of American society. I sacrificed my identity for another, wondering why I couldn't be happy. No one told me why.

When I was eighteen, desperately waiting for my college admissions letter, hope brimming inside me as I told of my dreams of following in my father's footsteps. My mother's eyes darkened, her curved lips drew taut. She never told me why.

Those questions plagued me like darkness as my fingers flicked through the archaic book, like linen sized with starch to touch. My eyes widened in surprise as a slip of paper fell from its crevice between two pages. Chinese characters written in delicate strokes of obsidian black, tapering off at the end of each slash.

when the dinosaur spread its wings and soared
did it fear the ground, the earth, the floor?
did they think: flight or fear?
did they see Death, coming for a life to reap?
or did they drink on the highest bliss?
not a fire yet to be extinguished?

There was something so evasive about the way Baba had described his love for dinosaurs, as though he were channelling the spirit of creatures lost in obscurity. It was as if his voice were reverberating next to my heart, tinged with warmth as he read those words aloud under the slant of pale light from the study lamp.

I clutched the paper to my chest, its weight like a talisman against the storm brewing within me. Waves will continue to erode the shore, sands of time will wash away all that is left – but I couldn't allow myself to shun Baba's legacy to the abyss of oblivion. I turned the paper around, hoping for something more, to feel his presence upon me once again – met with hasty strokes, unusual for a perfectionist like him.

"The Fujiavenator – did it embrace the thrill or fear its fate? Every fossil tells a story, a whisper from the past itself. The fujiaventor's skeletal frame restricted it to spread its wings and soar, but it didn't encumber its will to live. And I want my child to know this: the spirit of dinosaurs thrum vivaciously within you, an unquenchable thirst for freedom. For the world is yours."

I could almost hear the gentle ebb and flow of his voice, the bubble of his laugh. From him, I could touch a world filled to the brim with aspiration, dreams and hope. That was how I could mend the hollow ache perforated by grief, replaced with passion and purpose. A seeker of truths, just like Baba had been, to take the paths he once walked. To unearth the stories washed away to the streams of time. To breathe life into his legacy frozen by fate. I would not fear the fall and passionately pursue the flight.

The answer finally dawned upon me. Now I know why.

I emerged from the dark chambers of my past, the crumpled paper crinkled in my grasp. My mother's silhouette stretched across the room, her hand reaching for the mahogany door. Darkness plagues her bleary eyes flickering with exhaustion, and a haunting vacancy is all that stared back at me. I search for the curve of her smile, the crinkle at the corner of her eyes that embraced me as a child, finding none.

She seemed to want to speak, but instead she let her gaze linger over me, and I found my heart bleeding flesh all over again. I take her cold hands into mine, my voice steady despite the hurricane brewing in me. "I want to stay," I told her.

She winced, brows furrowed tight with pain. Tears started again without sound or movement as worry lines framed her mouth. A question lingered on her lips, but silence swallowed it – she chose to cup her hands in my face. "He...would have been proud," she spoke in a hoarse whisper.

"Your father – Baba's," she chastised herself slightly for letting her words slip, "his dedication created a chasm between us. We ended in a quiet tragedy because we were all but a flame bound to be extinguished one day. He left to board his ship into a horizon promising a different dawn, and I couldn't hold him back."

Her mouth turned up a fraction of an inch. "But you can be the wind sailing his dreams. Do what I couldn't do. I believe in you."

My compass, my anchor, lay in the foundation of my own family. I promised the heavens to embrace the flight, to soar and let his spirit guide his dreams home.

New tales of China's Dinosaurs

Po Leung Kuk Choi Kai Yau School, Cheng, Emma – 11

A shadow casted over the deserted rocky ground. Perched high on a mountain stood a massive feathered creature. Its sharp amber eyes staring down at the world. Opening its mouth, it screeched. Instantly, a flock of smaller and featherless bird-like animals, the Pterosaurs gathered above the feathered creature. Aligned neatly in rows in the infinite sky.

Looking proudly at its army, it gave a small growl. Baring his teeth, it roared, echoing across the desert. Like a signal, the flocks of Pterosaurs flew off into the distance. The feathered dinosaur stared at them in admiration and pride. As it ran off to follow his tribe, the wind behind them whispered. *There will be a time, where the world needs you most. Just follow the sun and let the unexpected lead your tribe to victory.*

“DRRIIINGGGG!!!” The alarm had once again marked the start of school. A young Chinese girl rubbed her eyes and dragged herself off her bed. The sound of the phone rang disturbingly. Grudgingly, she took the ringing phone and answered, “Hello?” She mumbled. “Excuse me miss, but is Mr. Li currently free?” A man said from the other side of the line. The girl blinked and told the man to hold. “Papa! A man is looking for you!” she called. A man appeared with an excited look plastered on his face. “Finally! I’ve been expecting him.” He took the phone from his daughter and mumbled something. “Of course! I’ll bring my daughter Maya. Thank you so much sir!” Hanging up, he cheered, “I’ve done it Maya!” He continued, “The fossils of the Sinosauroptryx will be displayed in the museum!”

Maya was happy for her father, “That’s great! Are you going to take me to the museum after school?” Her father smiled at her, “Of course!” Then he looked at the clock and joked, “That is, if you’ll make it to school at all.”

Their car skidded to a stop, as Maya hopped off. When she saw the Sinosauroptryx. Maya was shocked. The Sinosauroptryx was like nothing Maya has seen. It was about the size of a velociraptor, but instead of tough skin. It had feathers. Nudging her, her dad smirked, “A pretty decent discovery made by your papa, isn’t it?” Maya nodded, still gazing at the particular dinosaur. Suddenly a man in a business suit approached them. Murmured something to her father and gestured to him to follow him. Patting Maya’s back, he urged, “Go explore, I’ll be back in a bit.”

A ray of bright sunlight shone through the small gap of the window. Curious, Maya followed the streak of light. Looking through the window she saw the ray of light continue to stretch endlessly. Feeling a sudden jolt inside her. She had no choice but to follow it.

Past the parking lot. Crossing the garden of the museum. It led her into the small huddle of trees beyond the garden. The ray of light then came to a halt. Confused, Maya asked herself, “What was the point of that?” About to turn away to return to the museum. A small rustle was detected. Flinching, she turned back. Maya, unable to hide her fear “Hello?” she whispered, trying to hide the quiver in her voice.

Atlas, a feathered creature came from behind the bushes, acknowledging the girl’s expression as it softened its eyes. “I come at peace, Maya.” the Sinosauroptryx said. “I’m so sorry, but I’m Faeyi. The descendant of my mother’s tribe.” Faeyi explained. Maya widened her eyes, “I’m dreaming.” The Sinosauroptryx circled around her, then gave Maya a firm prod with her foot. “Oww!” Maya grunted. Faeyi grinned, “See? I’m real” Then her expression turned dead serious, “Only you can see and interact with me. No one else. It took years of searching, but when your ancestors call. You have to answer.”

“Ancestors?” Maya asked. Faeyi explained, “The tribe is a group of exotic ancient dinosaurs led by a leader. My mother, Glamir has past the leadership to me.” Faeyi continued, “A few centuries ago, a prophecy was

sent to me. It passed on the message saying the world depended on an unexpected person to make the tribe's destiny." Maya was surprised, " But that still doesn't add up. What happened to the meteorite that I thought wiped your kind from the world?"

Faeyi gritted her teeth, " It was supposed to. Until I realise what the prophecy meant." She said, " Something has minus the damage from the meteorite. Something that messed up the timeline. Without all the dinosaurs gone. This can affect humans and their coming future."

Maya's heartbeat quickened, " How much time do we have left to settle things?" Faeyi answered, " Not much. It took me enough time trying to reach for your help. I suppose fifteen minutes left. This is why I need a human's help. Listen, there is a scroll in the museum, find it, tear it and everything would stay the same. The time would run normally, but you only have fifteen minutes." Maya froze, then rushed towards the entrance of the museum.

Pushing past people, time slowed. She looked everywhere. Climbing behind counters, checking the bathrooms. She ignored the shouts from the staff. She had no time! Looking at the clock. It ticked. Five minutes passed and no luck. She reached the ancient Greek section. Pillars, no. Displays, no. Scroll? "Nothing." She panted. Finally she reached the dinosaur exhibit. She saw her father. Looking at Maya in confusion, seeing her sweating and panting. But before he could stop her. Maya saw a piece of paper sticking out of a dinosaur egg for display. The time ticked. 5 seconds... She ran. 4... Reaching her hand out. 3... Lunging at the eggs. 2...Snatching it. 1... with a firm rip. The scroll was separated into half. A tugging sensation swirled around her. Then it ebbed away. The faint outline of Faeyi's body appeared in front of her. Mouthing the words " Thank you" Before disappearing into thin air.

Carved Secrets

Po Leung Kuk Choi Kai Yau School, Chow, Samantha – 11

The humid March air clung to my skin, a damp shroud of suffocating heat. I slouched in my armchair, fingers racing between two keyboards, the faint hiss of an energy drink punctuating the quiet hum of electronics around me.

Suddenly, the shrill chime of the doorbell shattered the stillness. I muttered under my breath — it was 2 AM. *Who would come knocking at such an ungodly hour?* With a reluctant creak, I opened the door to find a middle-aged woman in a flowing white velvet dress, clutching a bouquet of white roses. Her bloodshot eyes glistened under the soft glow of the hallway light, and tear-streaked cheeks shimmered like a haunted reflection.

“I need your help,” she whispered, her voice barely more than a fragile thread.

I stepped aside, welcoming her into the faintly illuminated room. Abruptly, she blurted out, “Have you heard about MH370? My husband, Paul, was on that plane...”

“This was his last voicemail,” she said, her voice breaking. She clutched the phone like it was the only thing tethering her to him. “I’ve listened to it a thousand times, and I still don’t understand... but I know it means something.”

A man’s voice crackled through the static of the recording: “Ashley, I will show the world the mystery of the feathered dinosaur. If something happens to me, don’t worry, we will meet again.”

My heart quickened, my eyebrows arched. A man was out there—or had uncovered something extraordinary. I guided Ashley out of my sanctum, urging her to meet me at the site where Paul was last seen before vanishing.

By the next evening, we found ourselves standing in the Shandong Tianyu Museum of Nature, a labyrinth of glass cases and softly illuminated displays. The air was thick with the faint musk of aged leather and decay, and the shadows of ancient skeletons loomed like silent sentinels over the exhibits. This place feels alive with secrets, each artifact waiting to tell its story.

We headed toward the Dinosaur Zone, hoping some clues might linger among the shadows. As we walked past the guards, snippets of conversation floated through the air. “The ghost prowls this museum every night...” I caught one guard’s words. *Ghost? What kind of tales are they spinning?*

“Excuse me, has anything unusual happened recently?” I asked one of the guards, my curiosity piqued. The guard’s gaze flickered, his jaw tightening. “No,” he muttered, but the word hung in the air like a poorly told lie. *His shifting stance betrayed his fear—or stubbornness.*

“Tell me,” I demanded, holding out a wad of cash.

The guard snatched it quickly before responding. “About a month ago, we noticed something bizarre. One man acted strangely, almost like a ghost. He came in every day at 6 AM and stood transfixed over there.” He pointed to a shadowy corner. “He just stared at the artifact, skipping lunch and dinner, until one day he stopped. That was on March 7th.”

A cold chill crawled through my bones. “Do you have a picture?”

He handed me a blurred image from the CCTV. *My heart raced.*

Ashley's eyes bulged, “That’s... Paul!” She sputtered, her voice cracking. *This is more than a coincidence; it’s a thread weaving through time.*

The guard led us to the spot, where a rough fossil lay under a glass case. As I laid my hand on it, the smell of decay filled my nostrils. I felt small protrusions on the surface—etched in, not natural.

Peering closer, I caught my breath. In tiny letters, it read: *Aboard the MH370 to know the truth. (Paul 1934)*

“Paul wrote this in 1934? That’s 79 years ago!” Ashley exclaimed, her eyes wide, the first flicker of hope illuminating her face. *Suddenly, a thought struck like lightning. What if MH370 had somehow sent Paul back in time, into 1934?*

That night, I scoured the internet for unusual occurrences in Shandong in 1934. My eyes widened at a particular case: “In early July, a dragon had fallen from the sky.” Intrigued, I read on. A photograph from the Shengjing Times showed a crowd of villagers clustered at the edge of a murky lake. In the shallows, the skeleton of a monstrous creature jutted from the water like the ruins of an ancient shipwreck, its jagged bones clawing toward the surface.

These were real dragon bones from 90 years ago! Spellbound, I printed the picture to show Ashley the next day.

When I revealed it, Ashley gasped, her eyes shimmering with disbelief. “This is Paul,” she said, pointing at a slim man in glasses and a business suit, distinctly different from the others. He held a large piece of paper covered in drawings.

At first glance, the drawing appeared to be a dragon with outstretched wings, exuding an aura of ancient mystery. But then, a thought began to form in my mind. *What if this creature was not a mythical dragon but a feathered dinosaur? The sharp beak and piercing eyes resembled those of a dinosaur rather than a dragon. The wings, too, could easily be imagined covered in feathers instead of leathery membranes.*

Could it be that the legendary flying dragon and the feathered dinosaur were, in fact, one and the same? Was this what Paul was trying to tell us?

"As Ashley held the photograph, her sobs quieted, replaced by a fragile smile. For the first time in years, she had a piece of Paul—a piece of the mystery he had dedicated his life to. I watched her, wondering if the answers we had found were enough—or if I would spend the rest of my life chasing the truth of what really happened to MH370...

New Tales of China's Dinosaurs

Po Leung Kuk Choi Kai Yau School, Lan, Mischa – 13

The night air was filled with laughter and anticipation as the villagers settled on the soft grass, ready to listen to Li's grandmother, AnXia, and her tales.

"Gather around, everyone!" AnXia called, her voice warm and inviting. "Tonight, I will tell you about the legendary dinosaur Sinosauropteryx!"

The children leaned in closer, eyes wide with curiosity.

"What's so special about the Sinosauropteryx, Grandma?" Li asked, bubbling with excitement.

AnXia smiled knowingly. "Sinosauropteryx is one of the first feathered dinosaurs discovered! It lived during the Late Jurassic period and was known for its beautiful plumage. Picture a giant creature that resembled a giant bird!"

"Wow!" exclaimed a younger boy, mouth agape. "Did it fly?"

"No, it didn't fly," AnXia replied, shaking her head. "But it could run fast and had feathers that kept it warm. It was small but fierce and clever!"

Li's imagination soared as he pictured the vibrant feathers of Sinosauropteryx glistening under the sun.

"Did it have any enemies?" he asked eagerly.

"Of course! Like all creatures, it had to be cautious of larger predators. But it was smart; it could hide among the trees and use its speed to escape," AnXia continued, her voice becoming more animated.

"What else can you tell us?" another child piped up.

AnXia chuckled. "There are tales of brave explorers searching for fossils of this magnificent creature. Its fossils are rumored to lie in the fields of Jiangxi. Who knows, maybe one of you will find it!"

At those words, a thrill ran through Li.

"What if I found one?" he mused. "What if I discovered something amazing?"

AnXia smiled encouragingly. "If you work hard like your father, my dear, you might. Your father spends long hours in the fields, tending crops, finding something new every day—be it a rare flower or a hidden stone."

Li nodded, inspired. "You think I could find a fossil if I dig deep enough?"

"Absolutely!" AnXia affirmed, leaning closer. "The earth holds many secrets. With patience and determination, you can uncover them, just like your father does."

The children around the bonfire listened, their imaginations ignited by AnXia's tales.

"Maybe we can all help!" one girl suggested eagerly. "We can dig together!"

"Yeah!" another chimed in. "We'll be like real explorers!"

Li grinned at his friends, excitement surging at the thought of an adventure. “Let’s do it! We’ll search for fossils every day after school!”

AnXia laughed heartily, her eyes twinkling. “That’s the spirit! Remember, every great journey begins with a single step.”

I.

Years later, as Li worked on the farm, he reflected on AnXia’s tales of dinosaurs and fossils. He recalled how his father toiled tirelessly in the soil, always searching for something extraordinary hidden beneath the surface.

“If I work hard enough, maybe I’ll find something amazing too,” Li thought.

With each strike of his spade, he felt a sense of purpose. Then, he hit something hard beneath the surface.

“What’s this?” he murmured, curiosity piqued. Kneeling, he brushed away the dirt, revealing a delicate spiral shell fossil glimmering in the sunlight.

Li’s heart raced. He lifted it to eye level, and to his astonishment, a mystical glow began to emanate from the fossil, pulsing gently like a heartbeat.

“This could be massive! I need to find someone to help me investigate this,” he exclaimed, excitement surging through him.

“What if it’s a dinosaur fossil? This could change everything for me!”

Before Li could react, a rush of energy enveloped him, and the world around him blurred. The edges of reality softened as if he were peering through a mist. Staggering for balance, Li felt the earth erupt in a chaotic spray of dirt and debris.

Voices of the villagers echoed, distorted mutters spiraling around him.

“What’s happening to Li?” one voice cried, filled with concern.

“He’s losing his balance!” another shouted urgently.

Confusion and panic rippled through the crowd as they called out, their cries merging into a chorus of worry.

“Someone help him!” a woman pleaded, her voice breaking as she strained to see through the chaos.

“We need to get him back!”

Confusion washed over Li as the energy engulfed him. He felt himself drawn into a vortex of swirling colors and sounds. It was as if he were being pulled into another realm, a place where time and space lost their meaning.

When Li finally regained consciousness, he found himself lying on the ground, disoriented and bruised. His body was covered in abrasions and cuts. The cuts marred his skin, some deep enough to reveal angry red flesh beneath, while others were shallow but still oozing with dirt and grime. His arms bore scrapes that looked like jagged lines drawn by a careless hand, and bruises bloomed in various shades of purple and blue, each one a testament to the violence of his fall.

As he struggled to push himself off the ground, he felt the sharp sting of pain radiating from his wounds, a reminder of his vulnerability. He opened his mouth to speak, but no words came; what could he possibly say in such a broken state?

The sun, once a warm embrace, was abruptly eclipsed by a shadow that crept across the ground, ingurgitating the light around him. This shadow was not just any ordinary shade; it had a distinct shape, tapering off into a long, sinuous tail that flicked back and forth in a sluggish motion. As Li stood there, the realization struck him like a bolt of lightning. This creature, with its vibrant feathers and sharp teeth, was the very embodiment of the tales his grandmother had shared around the bonfire when he was a child. The Sinosauropteryx—he could almost hear AnXia's voice recounting its story, describing how it was one of the first feathered dinosaurs, a marvel of evolution that roamed the earth long before humans existed.

"This is it," he thought, his heart pounding in his chest.

"This is the dinosaur Grandma spoke of—the one that could run fast and hide among the trees." He remembered her words about how discovering such a fossil could connect him to ancient wisdom and honor his family.

But before he could fully process this connection, the Sinosauropteryx crouched low, its gaze fixed on Li as if sizing him up.

Just as the creature lunged forward, ready to pounce, a blinding light enveloped Li once more. He felt himself being pulled away from this prehistoric world, the vibrant colors and sounds fading into a whirlwind of brightness.

"Not again!" he gasped as everything around him swirled into chaos.

II.

As Li slowly regained consciousness, the first thing he noticed was the concerned faces of the villagers surrounding him. Their expressions were a mix of worry and relief, eyes wide with questions as they knelt close to him.

"Li! Are you okay?" AnXia's voice cut through the haze, filled with concern. She reached out to touch his shoulder gently, her hands trembling slightly.

"What happened? We saw you fall!" a neighbor exclaimed, pushing forward to get a better look.

"Did you hit your head?" another villager asked, glancing nervously at the scratches and bruises marring Li's skin.

"I... I'm fine," Li managed to say, still dazed. "I just... I had the strangest experience."

"Experience?" AnXia pressed, her brow furrowing.

Li took a deep breath, gathering his thoughts as he looked into the eyes of those who cared for him. "I found something in the field—a fossil," he began, excitement creeping back into his voice despite the lingering confusion. "It glowed, and then... I was transported to a world filled with dinosaurs."

The villagers exchanged incredulous glances, some whispering amongst themselves. "Dinosaurs?" one of them repeated skeptically.

"Yes! I saw one—it was incredible!" Li's voice rose as he recalled the vibrant feathers and fierce amber eyes of the Sinosauropteryx. "It was just like Grandma described in her stories!"

AnXia's eyes widened with recognition and pride. "The Sinosauropteryx? You really saw it?"

“I thought I would never come back,” he said, his voice filled with wonder. “But then I woke up here, surrounded by all of you.”

As he spoke, the children gathered around, their eyes wide with amazement as they absorbed every word.

“Can you tell us more?” one child asked eagerly, bouncing on their toes.

Li smiled at their enthusiasm, feeling a sense of responsibility to share what he had experienced. “Of course! Gather around,” he said, motioning for them to sit closer.

“The dinosaurs were magnificent,” he said passionately. “They moved with such grace and power. And there was something magical about being so close to them.”

“And who knows,” Li concluded with a twinkle in his eye, “maybe one day we can uncover more fossils together—just like Grandma told us!”

In that moment, surrounded by family and friends under the fading light of day, Li knew that he would continue to seek out mysteries hidden beneath the earth—just as his grandmother had always encouraged him to do.

New Tales of China's Dinosaurs

Po Leung Kuk Choi Kai Yau School, Wu, Joycelyn – 12

I awoke to the sound of my brother dragging a tree. Food. I started chewing the bark off. It's been a while since we've seen each other. Since our parents divorced, we've had different surnames and lived apart.

"KunYu, HuiMing is here." The mamenchisaurus JinWu liked so much caught my eye. I forced myself to respond. "Hello, HuiMing. Nice to see you."

"Hey there, KunYu. I was hoping to find some interesting company today." A moment hung in the air, our gazes locking briefly. I noticed the slight tension in his smile and returned a polite nod, my expression neutral.

HuiMing chuckled lightly, but there was a hint of something sharper beneath. "Just trying to make the best of it, right?" I glanced away, pretending to be interested in something else, but not before catching another quick look from HuiMing—just a flicker, but enough to remind me.

"Let's see what we can do to pass the time," JinWu suggested, eager to ease the moment. "Sounds good," I replied, keeping my tone light, though I was still staring at him.

From the corner of my eye, I saw a Lufengosaurus walking by. "What's a Lufengosaurus doing here?"

HuiMing's head snapped up, eyes fixed on the creature. Before I could process it, he charged at the Lufengosaurus. "Hei Rongjian, what are you doing here?"

The Lufengosaurus remained silent. "Seriously, your clan's reputation isn't great," HuiMing said, frustration evident.

"Look who's talking. Your clan isn't exactly flawless," Hei Rongjian shot back. HuiMing smacked him. I tried to break up the fight, unsure of what to say or why they were clashing. Then I noticed JinWu stepping up beside HuiMing. In a rush, I grabbed both my brother and HuiMing by the neck.

"Zhu JinWu, what were you thinking? And HuiMing, knock it off. Drink some water and come back. JinWu, you go with him. No objections." I sent them off and attempted to talk to Hei Rongjian.

"You're Hei Rongjian, right?" He nodded, silent. "Just so you know, I think HuiMing is a jerk, but he's my brother's best friend." That earned a slight smile from him.

"You can talk, you know? Why were you two fighting?" He hesitated but finally spoke. "Our clans have feuded long before we were born, so we were raised to hate each other."

"Woah. That's rough, but why?"

"Who knows? We don't have a choice."

"I'm Cha Kun Yu, Zhu Jin Wu's sister." He nodded again, and we sat in awkward silence. Suddenly, I heard HuiMing yelp in shock. Rongjian reacted immediately. We sprinted toward the sound.

What I saw rendered me speechless. A plesiosaurus had emerged from the water, glaring arrogantly. A ring of water tightened around HuiMing's neck. If it weren't for the dire situation, I would've rolled my eyes. Rongjian looked panicked but stepped up bravely.

"Greetings, could you please let my acquaintance go so we can discuss this civilly?" Just as I thought HuiMing was about to be strangled, the plesiosaurus released him.

"I am MiaoQing, youngest daughter of the Chang clan, and your friend has invaded our territory."

"Really, Hei Rongjian? That's the best you could do?"

"Well, a thank you would suffice," he replied.

"Not the time!" For once, I was grateful for my brother. "We sincerely apologize for the intrusion, Lady Chang."

I tried to sound sincere. She took a deep breath. "No matter. Address me as MiaoQing; we are of similar age. And you are?"

"I am Cha KunYu, here are my brother, Zhu JinWu, his friend Huang HuiMing, and Hei Rongjian." I caught HuiMing shooting a brief thankful look at Rongjian. MiaoQing scoffed.

"Well, I was expecting something else, but you'll do. A huge asteroid is set to crash into Pangea today. My clan learned about it from the signs in the water. My family has retreated to a nearby underwater cave, but I came to warn you. You're the destined controllers of fire, earth, metal, and wood. I can already see who is who."

"Oh, would you just tell us—" HuiMing interrupted.

"Obviously, as one of the only grounded members, KunYu is earth. You're the embodiment of fire. Rongjian is wood, and the boy over there is metal." A loud rumble rang, followed by a bright light in the sky, radiant yet seemingly deadly.

"Oh gods. We don't have time. I'll evacuate the seas. HuiMing and Rongjian evacuate the forests. KunYu and JinWu evacuate the land."

I focused on my father, recalling his voice, my brother's touch, and my mother's presence—they kept me grounded, as MiaoQing said. Next to me, Rongjian sprouted trees, HuiMing glowed with flames, and my brother manipulated metal. I was amazed. The earth shook beneath me, responding to my call, followed by another rumble from above. We moved quickly to save as many as we could. I saw flaming debris falling from the sky, and just as Rongjian was about to be hit, HuiMing pulled him away. I smiled; maybe they would finally get along. We gathered long-necked sauropods and small feathered dinosaurs that rushed into an underground hole I had created. I sealed it, knowing there was little hope left for anyone else. As debris crashed down, the last thing I saw were my friends, whom I had known for only half a day. I held onto my brother tightly.

We woke in a brilliant palace of gold, seemingly above the clouds. Across from us stood LongWang. "Rest, my children; we shall honor your sacrifices. From now on, the rivers running across Pangea will bear your names. The Yangtze River, Chang Jiang, after Chang MiaoQing. The Yellow River, Huang He, after Huang HuiMing. The Pearl River, Zhu Jiang, after Zhu JinWu. The Amur River, Heilongjiang, after Hei Rongjian. And the Red Lake, Chagan He, after Cha KunYu. Let Chagan He be forever red, the hue of sacrifice and blood spilled."

Then my vision blacked out, and my eyes never opened again.

Secrets in the Journal

Pui Ching Middle School, Fok, Ho Yee Kalie – 12

Hidden secrets are simply right under your nose, my dear Aisha. We humans are just too busy to pay attention to them." Nana told her. Those words were the ones that engraved themselves into Aisha's mind when she was cleaning. But what she hated about cleaning Nana's room the most this time, wasn't because of how dusty the whole room was, but instead was the fact that they were cleaning up to find a spot to place her urn.

"Next to the vase?"

"No."

"How about on her desk?"

"And have people knock over it? No."

"The shelf next to her favorite books?"

Aisha pondered. That wasn't a bad spot... "Sure, Ma."

The moment her mother set the urn, a soft thud caught Aisha's attention, then something hit her foot. It didn't hurt, although the impact caused a bit of throbbing as she looked down to pick up an aged leather book.

"Oh, sorry, honey. I must've dropped something there. Could you help me pick it up?" Her mother was adjusting the urn, too fixated on whether the urn would look good under the lighting of the window to care what exactly dropped on the floor.

Aisha nodded, and curiosity piqued when she decided to flip through the journal. This was wrong, but...Nana can't exactly scold her, can she?

The contents inside fueled her interest even more. The words on the first page were delicate, with their loopy handwriting and how curved the 'L' and 'y' were in 'Lindsey'. This was Nana's journal.

"Aisha?" She jumped at her mother's words, distracted enough to not have heard her. "I'm trying to ask you whether or not this angle is right. I'm thinking of showing the little flower patterns on the bottom, but the reflection of this emerald right here is just too beautiful to just move to the side. And what was that that fell?"

"Oh...nothing." That was when Aisha decided: This was going to be the first secret she's kept from her mother.

The moment Aisha heard her bedroom door close back, she sat up from her bed. She could see the small moving shadows that shone through the door gap at the bottom, then the small quiet 'click' of the door next to her room. Her parents couldn't hear her now, and she pulled out Nana's journal from under her pillow, flipping through the first few pages.

Distinct drawings were on each yellowing page, with the loopy handwriting she recognized (and inherited) beside them describing different features of —

"Dinosaurs," Aisha murmured to herself. This fueled her interest, how each scale seemed to be visible to the naked eye, how the drawings captured the different aspects of each creature. The feathers...the scales...not the bones Aisha

had to study in school or were engrossed by in books, these drawings adapted the skin and flesh of said dinosaurs, their vibrant colors and lined sketches of foot prints of shapes and sizes.

One raptor-like dinosaur caught her eye: The one that had 'Guanlong' written on the top. That must be its name. She hadn't seen it in her books or even heard of it in her Dinosaur Club. It bore feathers on its arms and on its back. No scales, it seemed. A vibrant emerald green (Hey, just like the urn!) clashing with a yellow undertone, striped with magenta. It had a crown on its nose like the Dilophosaurus would, only it was singular instead of double. she'd remembered 'guan' meant 'crown' in Chinese from her tutor. Maybe that's how it got its name. But then how did —

"Aisha! You're going to be late! I thought you wanted to go to the field trip!" Aisha groaned when she heard her father call her, jolting up as she heard the words 'field trip'. She had completely forgotten her class was going to the International History Museum today. The journal was loosely clutched in her hand when she got up, she must've fell asleep halfway through it. Frantically, she grabbed her backpack and shoved the journal in her bag, dashing to school.

"Late again, Aisha," Mr. Johnson shook his head disapprovingly, and gestured to the bus where most people were already seated. "Just go and take any free seat."

Aisha heaved a sigh, and got in the bus to find an empty seat next to the window. Sitting down, her eyelids grew heavy, and with a few nods against the glass, her head leaned on the window to doze off and catch up on the sleep she missed out on when woken up at 6 a.m. in the morning.

Aisha woke up to chatters and people getting off the bus later on. They must've arrived.

"Good morning, children! I'm your tour guide, Ms. Didi, and I'll be showing you around the International History Museum. Remember, stay in line, and no using your phones to play video games — I see a phone over there — But photos are allowed. Now, shall we begin?"

Aisha ended up daydreaming about 70% of the tour, checking her watch whenever she was bored. What she was excited for was the dinosaurs, not how humans in the Stone Age managed to survive, or how Egyptians made mummies. The whole museum was a squared-donut shape, which she found quite amusing, as in the centre was a garden people would use to relax, and where her long-awaited dinosaur fossils were displayed. After a boring talk on the evolution process of humans, they were finally, finally, finally moving on to her beloved dinosaurs.

The class set foot on the luscious green grass, the sun shining over them with just the slightest of wind. This was a paleontologist's favorite weather condition (And she would know). Dinosaur fossils of the classics: T-rex, Triceratops, Pterodactyl and more were set on platforms with supporting beams to hold the bones up, a tablet next to each to learn more about these fascinating prehistoric animals. Ms. Didi led the class to each, explaining information Aisha had long ago knew, before once again, the Guanlong she had just read about yesterday caught. Only this time, it was the fossil of the ancient reptilian.

"Ah, I see one of your classmates here has found our latest donation," Ms. Didi led the class, telling them to gather around the Guanlong as she turned to Aisha, spotting her name tag.

"Wonderful finding, Aisha. This is the dinosaur I want to tell you all about next," Ms. Didi started. "Now, this right here, is the Guanlong. It's a Chinese dinosaur, and so very generous of our friends from Southeast Asia to even spare this treasure for us to exhibit. The Guanlong was first found in 2006, and its name is based on its crown right

there —" She pointed at the tip of the nose. "—'Guan' is Chinese for 'crown', and 'Long' is Chinese for dragon." So I wasn't wrong, Aisha thought to herself.

Ms. Didi continued. "And according to experts, it is likely that the Guanlong has scaled skin, like its cousins, the T-rex." That received a reaction, people 'ooh'ing and 'ah'ing with the information that led to Ms. Did show a proud smile.

"That's inaccurate." Aisha cut in, surprising herself.

The tour guide's smile faltered. "How so, Aisha?" The whole class was facing Aisha now.

"Well, the Guanlong is feathered." Aisha stated matter-of-factly, unsure where the confidence of correcting superiors came from.

"And where did you find this theory?"

Aisha fell silent. How could she explain the journal? Her tone came out sheepish. "I...I forgot." A couple of giggles could be heard amongst the class, even a faint "Nerd!".

"Alright, then," Ms. Didi tried to regain her composure and settle the class down again, flashing her bright smile again. "I believe, that this is a nice attempt on expressing your ideas, Aisha. But I also believe, that I would trust the words of experts more than just a memory. It's still admirable that you're willing to speak up about this, Aisha, but until another group of experts find that the Guanlong is likelier to be feathered, then we should assume it's scaled for now."

That motivated Aisha.

Aisha took in the cheers and applause, the flashing cameras and the reporters fighting against security guards. 20 years later, she had done it. She was the head of that 'another group of experts'. Nana's old journal was in her hand even when she stood on the stage and gave out her speech on this Chinese reptilian. And it was only then did she notice what the last page wrote: Hidden secrets are simply right under your nose. We humans are just too busy to pay attention to them. Reminded of the only person that has supported her dream of becoming a paleontologist, but failing to see her live it, she only had a few words to mutter to herself: I did it, Nana. I paid attention.

Because she knew, if she hadn't paid attention to explore the journal, maybe she wouldn't be where she was now...

Legend of Monk Lan and Dinosaur Hua

Pui Ching Middle School, Mo, Yui Tung – 13

Dinosaurs are fierce. They cruel and they kill. But if we see them in a different perspective as the Chinese see dragons, we may see something different. If we change our perspectives, the world may be different to our original knowledge. Just like legends, they may be unrealistic, but we can always see big morals from them...

In the ancient times, when dinosaurs roamed the earth, people lived nervously every day, afraid to be killed by the enormous creatures. Not only were there dinosaurs harming people every day, but humans were also powerless against natural disasters. There was once a village named Miu, where people were all hungry and sad as there were numerous disasters. One day, one of the worst came—hailing. It killed people every day and every time they want to go out to fetch for food. In the meantime, a lot of dinosaurs always came to “fetch food” too. People were desperate. However, one day, things changed.

A monk named Lan suggested, “We need a guardian to help our people. We need someone strong and wise.” Yet, everyone was weak and hungry. Who could be the guardian then? Who or what is the strongest? Then Lan brought out a crazy method—asking a dinosaur for help. No one agreed with Lan. They all thought he had gone crazy, saying “Dinosaurs are our biggest enemy! They are cruel and they kill! How can they help us?” However, Lan was not moved. He replied confidently, “Everything is born inherently good. There is just a fine line between kindness and cruelty. Do we not kill? Do we not eat flesh? Good negotiation can make good endings. Everyone is just about miserable. Then why can't we work together for a better future? Why should we cut one another's throats? I am a monk of peace. I can communicate with wise dinosaurs, and I shall make a hopeful future for both of our kind.”

So off Lan set. Wise dinosaurs are hard to find. Most of them retired from the world to avoid troubles. Other dinosaurs just kept killing like a beast until one day they wake up and gain wisdom. The only wise dinosaur Lan knew was Hua, who lived in a cave far from village Miu. Despite this, Lan is determined to change the fate of mankind and the secular attitude to dinosaurs.

Before arriving at the cave where Hua lived, Lan had to go through a forest. The forest was filled with an atmosphere of terror. The fog there gave Lan the creeps. Suddenly, with a quick “whoosh”, an arrow flew past Lan's ears. “That is a warning. Leave our forest at once!” A voice roared. Lan replied in a shivering voice, “May... May I ask the name of yours? I... I mean no harm to you...” Hardly had Lan's voice faded away, a group of people with strange symbols drawn on their faces and arms stepped out. Some carrying a sword, some carrying a bow and arrows, and some carrying a pike. One of them pointed his sword at Lan and demanded, “I can see that you are a monk. If you have come to persuade us to follow your religion, leave at once!” Lan replied, “No, no! I am just on my way to a cave. Neither will I do harm to you, nor interfere your religion!” Hearing this, the natives were much calmer. They put down their weapons and even offered Lan food.

While eating, Lan asked the natives many questions. In addition to the way to get to Hua's cave, Lan also asked about their religion. The natives shared their thoughts with Lan and although Lan had different beliefs, he still nodded and listened very carefully when they were talking. The natives felt strange, “You don't have such belief as we have, but how come you just let us be? Aren't you monks supposed to spread your religion to others?” Lan replied calmly, “Yes, we share our religions to people who don't know about it. But we don't force them to join us. I believe no matter how different our beliefs are, we can still live harmoniously together. We live in the same world. There's no need to turn the world into chaos.” “Hmm... You have a point. We should try to tolerate people that are different from us...” The natives nodded thoughtfully.

A day later, Lan said goodbye to the natives and continued to search for the cave. After a few days of tiring trip, Lan finally arrived. The cave wall was full of tiny fluorites. The aura was indeed suitable for a wise dinosaur for permanent residence. Suddenly, a deep calm roar filled the cave. Lan could understand what Hua was saying, "Who... Has come... To seek for wisdom?" Lan bowed and answered, "My name's Lan. I ask for your power and wisdom to help the people of the village Miu." "What power... Do I have that you seek?" "Hua, I deeply admire your power of peace and blessing, and your wisdom that can save lives. Please help! I beg you!" "Very well..." Hua replied. "I can see your determination and your love to the world... I, will help you and your village."

Hua allowed Lan to sit on his back, and he carried him back to Miu in a night. Hua used his tranquil roars to soothe the people's pain. His serene acts pacified the resentment of the people. His perception allowed him to foresee natural disasters, and his wisdom was there to teach the people ways to cope with them.

Slowly, the people developed their own culture and different ways to deal with natural disasters. They became more independent, and they don't need Hua anymore. So, Hua returned to his cave, and his good deeds were told as legends. The wise dinosaurs were eventually praised into dragons with mana and infinite peace, unlike the horrible impression they gave to the people at first, because people found out that if everyone is treated equally, you can always find goodness in people or creatures that looked unpleasant.

The Time Machine with the Dinosaur

Pui Ching Middle School (Macau), Lei, Ian Hei – 12

Once upon a time, there is a man in the forest, and he has seen a dinosaur bone. Near him, there is a time machine. The man looks at it, then he sees a letter. In the letter, it said, "This is a machine that is used to travel back to the past, and it is made to see the dinosaur." The man takes the dinosaur bone and sits on it. He turns it on, and the machine starts to work. He is excited about this trip to see the dinosaur.

He went to the past and saw many dinosaurs, and he saw a dinosaur that is like the bone that he picked. In the forest, he wants to use the book to check, but he forgot that he had left his backpack in the forest. He is very sad and he doesn't have anything to use or eat. He feels hungry and he has nothing to eat. He saw an egg, and he thinks that he can eat it. But after that, the owner of the egg, the T-rex, saw him eat its baby. It felt very angry and it wants to eat the man, so it tries to catch the man. The man runs away, but the dinosaur keeps chasing him, which makes him very scared. He sees a hole, so he jumps into it to hide. When the dinosaur goes away, he goes out of the hole and sees the beautiful world of the early Cretaceous period. He sees a lot of dinosaurs that he has never seen before.

He says, "Is this the early Cretaceous period?" He sees a beautiful view he has never seen before. He sees a baby dinosaur running in front of him, and he sees there is a dinosaur bigger than any dinosaur he has ever seen. He runs faster than the small dinosaur to find a place to hide, so he tries to find things to eat and use. He starts to look for things, but he finds nothing. He feels so sad about that. At that moment, he sees a dead baby dinosaur. He runs so fast to get there, takes it, and burns it to eat. He feels happy and he is not hungry anymore.

The next day, he goes to explore the place. He sees a very fast dinosaur run past him, and he is very excited about that. While the dinosaur is taking a rest, he finds his camera and takes a photo of the dinosaur. While he is taking the photo, a little dinosaur is behind him, and he sees that the big one is the mother of the small one. The baby shouts and wakes its mom up and wants to eat the man. It is very angry that he took a photo of itself, so it wants to chase him and feels very angry. When he is running away, he suddenly sees a dinosaur with a long tail.

Then, he sees that it looks like the dinosaur that he has seen in the bone. He thinks that this is the dinosaur that people are looking for. He uses his camera to take a photo of the dinosaur. He wants to catch it, but it runs so fast that he cannot catch it. So he wants to use the time machine to go back and catch it again when it is taking a rest. He goes back to the place where he came to the early Cretaceous period.

He uses the time machine to go back to the time that he saw the dinosaur. While he is using the time machine, he suddenly sees the dinosaur run in front of him, but the time machine is already running, so he can just see the dinosaur run away. He is thinking that if the dinosaur ran slower, he could catch it.

When he travels back to see the dinosaur, he runs very fast because he wants to not lose the dinosaur again, because he sees that the time machine is losing battery. So he runs very fast to catch the dinosaur. He has caught it, but he doesn't know anything about the dinosaur. But he realizes that he forgot to take the book with him, so he wants to go back to the time machine. But when he goes back to it, it has disappeared, and he is very confused about why it is gone. Suddenly, he sees a T-rex want to eat something. He sees that it is the thing that he is looking for—the T-rex is going to eat the time machine. Then he uses a rock to hit the T-rex and wants it to chase him. "Go away from my time machine!" the man says, and the T-rex is angry and wants to kill the man. He sees a big tree, so he hides behind it. He feels very scared, but it cannot find him. However, it smells the man, so he runs as fast as he can to see if he can

go to the time machine and bring a dinosaur back to the 21st century and show the people what the dinosaur looks like. So he wants to send the dinosaur to the time machine and bring it back to show the people who don't believe some dinosaurs lived in China. So he runs the machine and goes back to the 21st century and shows the people what the dinosaur looks like, what it eats, and where it lived in the early Cretaceous period.

Therefore, he uses the machine as fast as he can and runs it to go back to the 21st century to show the people, so he can make money with that. He is excited and thinking about the money that he can make. He think he will be very rich, so he will be able to build a dinosaur museum. When people visit the museum, they will believe the dinosaur is real. However, when he goes back, many people don't trust him because they think the dinosaur is fake. Whatever he says, no one thinks that he is telling the truth, so he thinks of something that can show people and let them. The time that he sees the dinosaur and he takes a photo with it, he takes the camera and prints the photo out and gives it to the people that don't trust him.

He showed the people the photo and some of them trusted him but some of them didn't, they think he found it on the internet, but took the camera with him and showed them the photo, last he showed them the Time Machine, and all of them believed it.

Dream Again

Pui Ching Middle School (Macau), Sam, Cheong Iao Cosette – 14

It was a quiet night in 2024. Sulie, a curious and imaginative twelve-year-old girl, drifted into sleep. Her room was filled with the soft glow of nightlights. The desk next to the bed is a book she recently read which was about Chinese dragon. As she succumbed to slumber, she found herself in a dream unlike any she had ever experienced.

In her dream, she stood in a vast land filled with grass and flowers. Suddenly, everything around her darkened, with a lot of mist gathered. A majestic figure emerged from the fog—a dragon. Its eyes were like deep pools of wisdom. This was Aaron, the legendary Chinese dragon. “Aid me, Sulie,” Aaron implored, his voice resonating in her mind. Soon, Aaron disappeared, at the same time, Sulie woke.

The next day, before Sulie drift off, she began to wonder if Aaron would meet her in her sleep because she was interested in it. Not surprisingly, Sulie met Aaron in her dream. This time, Aaron said “Everyone fear me, and I suffer at their hands.” Sulie awoke with a start, her heart racing. She dismissed the dream as a figment of her imagination, but the vividness of Aaron’s plea lingered in her thoughts.

Days passed, but Aaron keep continued to visit her in her dreams. Each night, he shared more about his world—a place set in 1890, where superstition ruled and dragons were seen as mere myths. With each encounter, Sulie felt a growing connection to Aaron and his plight, and started to be sure of Aaron’s words were truth. “Humans bully me,” he explained one night, his voice tinged with sadness. “They do not understand that I am a guardian of nature. They see me as a monster.” Sulie felt a pang of empathy for the dragon. She began to believe that perhaps there was a way to help him. “I will find a way to reach you, Aaron,” she vowed.

Determined to help her new friend, Sulie immersed herself in research about time travel and the concept of multiverses, a theory suggesting that multiple dimensions coexisted alongside her own. She spent hours reading books and searching the internet, her room cluttered with notes and sketches. Despite her efforts, every attempt to find a way to travel to 1890 seemed futile. It didn’t help anything no matter she tried to hypnotize herself or bang her head to some hard object. Frustrated yet resolute, she continued to dream of Aaron, each meeting fueling her desire to help him.

One evening, while Sulie exploring an antique shop with her parents, Sulie stumbled upon a peculiar amulet. It was adorned with intricate carvings of dragons and ancient symbols. The shopkeeper, an elderly man with a twinkle in his eye, noticed her fascination. “This amulet holds the power of the ancients,” he said mysteriously. “If you seek to traverse time, it may aid you.” Then, Sulie bought the amulet home secretly, her heart racing with excitement. That night, she wore it to bed, hoping it would unlock the door to Aaron’s world.

As Sulie drifted off to sleep, she clutched the amulet tightly. In her dream, she felt a surge of energy, and suddenly, she was standing in 1890, in the heart of China. The air was thick with the scent of incense and the sounds of bustling markets surrounded her. “Aaron!” she called out, and the dragon appeared before her in the turn of a hand. His eyes were bright with hope. “You finally came!” Together, they explored the vibrant world of the past, where Sulie witnessed the beauty of nature and the fear humans had of the mythical creatures. She learned of the feudal superstitions that plagued Aaron’s existence.

As they ventured through the village, they encountered a group of humans who harbored a deep-seated fear and hatred for dragons. They threw stones and shouted threats at Aaron, his majestic form shrinking under their hostility. "Why do they fear you?" Sulie asked, her heart aching for her friend. "They believe I bring misfortune," Aaron replied sadly. "But I am a protector, not a destroyer." Determined to help Aaron, Sulie devised a plan. She would confront the bullies and show them that dragons were not to be feared. "We need to change their minds," she declared. Using the amulet, she summoned courage, and together with Aaron, they approached the village square.

"Listen!" Sulie shouted, drawing the attention of the townsfolk. "Aaron is not your enemy!" As Sulie spoke, the crowd began to murmur. Some looked skeptical, while others seemed intrigued. But just as they began to listen, the bullies stepped forward, anger in their eyes. "Get away from that beast!" one of them shouted. In the scuffle that ensued, Sulie realized they were not just bullies; they were also misguided by fear. In a moment of desperation, she raised the amulet high and called upon its power. A blinding light enveloped the bullies, and when it faded, everyone became unusually quiet, and began to listen to Sulie quietly.

With the bullies subdued, the villagers slowly approached Aaron, curiosity replacing fear. Sulie explained the importance of understanding and respecting all creatures, emphasizing that fear stemmed from ignorance. Sulie asked "When have you ever seen it hurt anyone of you?" The villagers listened, and over time, they began to accept Aaron as a guardian rather than a threat. With the amulet's help, Sulie returned to her time, knowing she had made a difference.

Back in 2024, Sulie often thought of Aaron and the village. She realized that the bond they shared transcended time and space. After a long time, she went back to his normal life and started doing what she loved. Inspired by her experiences, she began to write stories about dragons and the importance of acceptance. As she wrote, the amulet rested on her desk, a reminder of her journey and the lessons learned. Every night, she still dreamed of Aaron, who now soared freely in a world where he was celebrated rather than feared. In her heart, Sulie knew that the spirit of the dragon lived on, not just in her dreams, but in the hearts of those who dared to believe in the magic of understanding and friendship.

The Deadly Dinosaur Island

Pui Ching Middle School (Macau), Yu, Chi Lam – 15

Dinosaurs once reigned as overlords until a meteorite hit Earth, ending their era. However, have you ever imagined that futuristic technology could bring dinosaurs back for research? Please don't ask me how I know; I have been to a real one.

A year later, my grandmother passed away, leaving behind a mysterious and ancient box. While packing my belongings, I stumbled upon the box. It was engraved with a strange symbol resembling a snake biting a mouse. The box, made of agarwood, was adorned with many Chinese elements. My grandmother, an adventurer who cherished Chinese culture, had traveled extensively throughout China collecting precious items she adored. Upon opening the box, I discovered a yellow paper with symbols and a map. I cross-referenced the locations highlighted on the map with Google Maps and found it an island in the Pacific Ocean. I realized that this place might be her last wish, so I decided to journey there and uncover its mysteries.

I flew to a neighboring country and rented a small boat to the island. The island was rich in tropical vegetation and I soon got lost in it. I fell asleep under a big tree. When I was sleeping soundly, I felt something pushing me. To my surprise, I saw a monster with a small body, a protruding mouth, and sharp teeth. I was startled and screamed. Looking closely, I suddenly realized that this little creature resembled the legendary dinosaur – Microraptor Restoration. He is so bird-like that I read in a biology book that "birds may even have evolved from him."

I found it a little unbelievable and suspected that I was traveling through time. The little guy barked twice, and when he felt that I posed no threat to him, he left. I secretly followed him to a grassland here there were more and different kinds of dinosaurs.

My heart beat fast as I got closer. I saw a crazy scene. Many dinosaurs are fighting. A giant Tyrannosaurus is fighting some Triceratops. Their shouts made the ground shake. There was so much dust that I couldn't see clearly, but I couldn't look away.

Suddenly, the Microraptor I was following suddenly cried out. I looked back and saw a Tyrannosaurus Rex looking at me. The tremendous feeling of oppression made my legs weak and my throat unable to make a sound. Just as the Tyrannosaurus Rex was about to open its mouth to swallow me, Microraptor Restoration pushed me away. When I came to my senses, I ran madly towards the jungle, trying to get back to the boat on the shore and escape.

A few minutes later, I was lost again. I ran deep into the jungle and saw a very large cave with the words "National Laboratory" written on it.

I walked in and there was no one inside. The scratches on the wall told me there had been a fierce fight. In a lab report, I learned that these were replicas of dinosaurs discovered in China. Staff members performed a dinosaur ecological show on the island. Observe the living conditions of dinosaurs.

Running out of the cave, I followed the footprints back to the shore. I finally figured out why my grandma left me the box: she wanted me to save the dinosaurs.

I knew I had to find a way to protect this ecosystem and the dinosaurs, but first, I had to find a way to get off the island and tell the world about my discovery.

An Unknown Dream

S.K.H Tang Shiu Kin Secondary School, Chui, Ching Yin – 13

Xiang Qi took another sip of coffee, trying to refocus herself in order to remember some dinosaur species in the palebiology test. She looked at the ticking clock. Second by second, time was slowly leaking out of her palm. “Dangit...” She complained. Even so, she kept on mumbling different species, trying to distinguish the species by remembering their fossils. But as the more pages she flipped through, the more of the effects that’s provided by the caffeine wore off. She eventually flipped to the pages which had Chinese dinosaurs and fossils mentioned. Before she could even celebrate, she dropped to the table. Her eyes were getting drowsy. She tried to snap herself out of it but failed miserably.

Everything went black. Then a strong beam of light appeared out of seemingly nowhere. Xiang Qi found herself in a traditional short-sleeved hanfu and a pair of long pants. “Where am I...?” She asked herself. She then noticed someone is using a shovel to find something in the volcano ash. “Probably not the best idea to interrupt him...” She rubbed her eyes as the strong light was extremely painful for her. “My eyes...” she grumbled.

It’s another hard day for the farmer and part-time fossil hunter Yumin in 1996. Under the bright sun during summer and the gruelling volcanic ash that’s heated by the warmth of the sun, drops of sweat slid down from Yumin’s face. He kept on digging into the ash, getting tired minute after minute... dragging his foot in order to continue. It’s just like running on a treadmill, even though the results were sometimes worth it all, but it’s consuming energy as violent as a massacre— or a slaughter house. It just depended on how Yumin looked at it.

As the seemingly endless ash extended into the edge of Yumin’s eyes, his shovel hit something hard— “Maybe a rock? Perhaps it’s a piece of metal, jewellery? No. There’s no way. A small fossil seemed more like it. It probably wouldn’t be worth that much though. Yumin took a fern look at the fossil. “Wait a second... it’s a bit larger than usual... is it perfectly persevered...? No way! Jackpot!” The part-time fossil hunter shouted from the inside out. He bowled down before he held the fossil in his hand, and took a closer look at it. Xiang Qi looked at the situation from a distance, starting to understand what type of dream she’s probably in, unlike those fever dreams she often had. “Hmmm... Maybe it’s something about Chinese dinosaurs, but I can’t put my finger on it though...”

Yumin celebrated as he realised the quality of the fossil. Since he had prospected around Liaoning Province to acquire fossils to sell to individuals and museums, Yumin recognized the unique quality of the specimen. “This quality is unbelievably well-preserved...” He separated the fossil into two slabs, and sold the slabs to two separate museums in China: the National Geographic Museum and the Nanjing Institute of Geography and Paleontology.

As Xiang Qi blinked her eyes, she was suddenly inside the National Geographic Museum. “Woah, that was fast.” The museum seemed normal until a foreign visitor entered the museum, he snapped a few photos before leaving in a hurry. Xiang thinks something... odd. She snapped her eyes, hoping to somehow teleport right to this mysterious foreigner, just like she had just teleported to the museum. She’s then in America. “Wait, America? I swear I was still in China just a while ago... is the foreigner an American...?” She wondered but a piece of newspaper hit her right in the face. “Ouch!” Xiang Qi pulled the newspaper away from her face, and held it with a firm grip before she read it. The newspaper was printed with the words ‘New York Times’. Xiang continued to read through it. “New dinosaur discovered in China!” Xiang Qi flipped open the newspaper, skimming through pages as fast as a machine. “Everything’s still normal for this fossil until Phil Currie realised the significance of the newly discovered Dinosaur in the museum, and named it ‘Sinosauropteryx’, also known as ‘first Chinese lizard wing’.” “Wait a minute... is this about the Chinese dinosaurs in the book...?” She whispered to herself, puzzling all the events together.

But as she was thinking about what’s going next in her dream, she blinked once again. This time, she’s in a construction worker’s uniform. She looked at a worker nearby. “Holy—” She thought to herself as she noticed a large billboard screen with an advertisement on it. “Hm... I’m probably in the modern era right now... just to confirm it...” Xiang walked up to a worker that’s near her. “Sorry, but what’s the year and the time right now? I just can’t remember it.” “Though you should know that, we’ve gone through over half of the year already... whatever, it’s June 2021. we’ve

been continuing to construct the building in the construction site, working all day and night, going on just like usual.” Suddenly, a worker nearby that’s operating in a crane shouted out loud “ Hey! I don’t think that fossil–looking thing isn’t suppose to be here!” They’re not experts, but they know for a fact– that was not supposed to be there.

Eventually, they contacted paleontologists to study the fossil. And after a few days with some fossil data matching along with DNA pairing, a new titanosaur was discovered. A television that’s in the construction site. “Paleontologists in China have discovered a new species of titanosaur, opening the suggestion of the existence from a previously unknown group of titanosaurs in eastern Asia. After all the research for the fossil of the new dinosaur, paleontologists decided to name the unknown titanosaur species as ‘Gandititan cavocaudatus’. In the end, Jiangxi Geological Museum officially announced that the Gandititan cavocaudatus’s remaining fossils were found at a construction site in Ganxian district in Ganzhou, East China’s Jiangxi province on Jan 30, adding a new species to the massive collection of dinosaurs species in mainland China.” The television announced.

Xiang Qi opened her eyes, finding herself laying on the table with her book. She yawned and stretched her body a bit. “That’s a weird dream…” she said before looking at the clock. “Dangit! I’m going to be late!” She quickly brushed her teeth, changed into her uniform, took her school bag and had a quick bite out of a piece of loaf bread before she left the house.

As Xiang Qi made it on time and took the test, she’s met with a long question in the test: Is it still possible to find more fossils in China ? She pondered the question for a bit, but eventually wrote her idea down. “Even though we’ve already discovered many dinosaur species already, since China is less well–explored by palaeontologists, also meaning that maybe there’s even more dinosaur species that we still don’t know. Perhaps… the odds might be large or slim by how we view it. But no matter how slim the odds are, there’s still a possibility. We might not know now, but as they say, ‘patience is the key to success.’ No matter how excited we are, or unsure about the future, only time can tell us about the amazing stories that these fossils will provide. We’ve officially entered a new era… The New Tales of China’s Dinosaurs.”

Dinosaurs in a Metropolis

S.K.H Tang Shiu Kin Secondary School, Wong, Lok Ching – 12

In the bustling city of Hong Kong, amidst the vibrant energy, there lies a dinosaur, waiting to be found.

“Arrgh! Me tired!” Sam whined, dragging his feet along the path. “Sam, we’ve come all the way here to have fun, not to complain,” his dad ordered, trying to keep the mood light.

They hiked up the mountain, the cityscape slowly disappearing behind them. The air was fresh, and the sounds of nature surrounded them. Just as they reached a clearing, something caught Sam's eye. At the corner of their vision, there it was—a dinosaur lying gracefully on the top of the mountain!

Sam's eyes widened in amazement. He ran ahead, his fatigue forgotten. He opened his arms wide, hugging the dinosaur as if he were greeting an old friend. “This is a Sinosauropteryx!” Sam exclaimed, his voice filled with wonder. “Mum, can we please keep it?” he begged, offering the dinosaur a bite of his lettuce.

His mum, slightly taken aback, knelt beside him. “Owning a pet is a huge responsibility, especially owning a dinosaur. Are you sure you can take care of it?” she asked, her tone serious but gentle.

“YES! I'll feed it, groom it, and even train it! I'll treat it like family!” Sam said, his excitement bubbling over.

His mum looked at his eager face and then at the dinosaur, which seemed surprisingly tame. “Okay, fine. You can keep it,” she agreed with a smile. Sam beamed with joy and named the dinosaur “Feathers.”

The next day at school, Sam was buzzing with excitement. “Alright class, tomorrow is our annual show and tell. Please bring your most meaningful item to you and introduce it to our class tomorrow,” his English teacher, Mr. Matthew, announced.

Sam knew exactly what he would bring. The following morning, he arrived at school with Feathers by his side. As they walked through the gates, his classmates and teachers stared in awe. Feathers' presence caused quite a stir.

The school was a sprawling complex of modern buildings, with large windows that let in plenty of natural light. The hallways were decorated with colourful student artwork and motivational posters. The smell of freshly baked bread from the cafeteria wafted through the air, mixing with the faint scent of cleaning supplies. The playground outside was filled with the sounds of children laughing and playing, their voices echoing off the walls.

“Dude, why is there a bird in our school? Only an idiot would bring a bird to show and tell!” Leo, the school bully, announced loudly, trying to embarrass Sam.

Suddenly, Feathers lunged towards Leo, roaring loudly. Startled, Leo yelped and instinctively stepped back, but Feathers was undeterred. The dinosaur charged toward him, and in a flash, the situation escalated. Leo, feeling threatened, growled and snapped his jaws in defence. Leo glanced at his arm, a red mark was left on his arm.

“What’s with the commotion here?” Principal Wilkins marched into the classroom, his stern voice cutting through the noise. The students fell silent, their eyes wide with anticipation.

“Principal Wilkins— Sam brought a dinosaur to school for show and tell— and it bit me!” Leo wept. The entire class watched as Leo cried like a baby. “A DINOSUAR??? Oh dear, I’m going to make a phone call.”

Moments later, Wildlife Management and Conservation, Emergency services, the Military were on the scene.

Officer Chan, stationed nearby, quickly coordinated with his team to evacuate the school, and set up a secure perimeter. The school grounds were soon cordoned off, with officers urgently directing students and staff to safety while a helicopter's searchlight swept the area.

Officer Lee's voice trembled as he pointed out the dinosaur near the playground—a small, feathered beast with razor-sharp claws, pacing with a menacing intensity. Suddenly, the dinosaur let out another small roar and charged at a tree, snapping it in half with terrifying force. Officer Chan, his voice steady despite the chaos, alerted animal control to prepare tranquilizers, but the dinosaur's aggression heightened the tension. The team moved cautiously, every step deliberate, as the dinosaur's roars echoed ominously through the schoolyard.

The first tranquilizer dart hit its mark, but instead of calming, the dinosaur became a whirlwind of fury, charging at the team with jaws snapping and tail swinging violently. The officers scrambled to retreat, narrowly avoiding its deadly strikes. Dr. Wong, her hands shaking, called for more tranquilizers, knowing they were running out of time. With backup on the way, the team regrouped, their breaths heavy with fear and determination. The second dart was fired, and after a few agonizing moments, the dinosaur's movements slowed, then it finally collapsed with a ground-shaking thud.

Officer Chan, his voice filled with relief, confirmed the target was down, and the team swiftly prepared for transport. The dinosaur was carefully loaded onto a transport vehicle, surrounded by a vigilant team of veterinarians and animal control officers. As the convoy drove away, the school grounds slowly returned to a semblance of normalcy, with Sam cautiously emerging to witness the aftermath. Tears fell down Sam's face as he watched the convoy drive further and further away from Sam.

"Sam— please! Wake up!" tears went down his parents' cheek," It's been a month— I'm begging you— wake up!!!" Sam rubbed his eyes, "It was all.....a dream?" "Sam! What are you talking about? You've been in a coma for an entire month!" His mother opened her arms, hugging Sam tightly. "NOOOOOOOOOOOOOO! FEATHERS!!!!!" Sam cried loudly.

The Night of the Dinosaurs

Shanghai American School Pudong Campus, Cai, Ayden – 11

The small town of Willow Creek is nestled between rolling hills and dense forests, resembling a setting straight out of a storybook. Seriously, have you ever witnessed a night sky so resplendent with stars? It's as if someone has scattered glitter across the cosmos! As I lie in bed, gazing out my window, I can't shake the feeling that something extraordinary awaits just beyond my reach.

At twelve years old, I often feel like an outsider. My family relocated to Willow Creek just a few weeks ago, and I'm still grasping the pace of this unfamiliar environment. My days are consumed with drawing dinosaurs and immersing myself in books about them, but at night? Well, let's just say my imagination runs rampant. I find it nearly impossible to sleep as my mind races with thoughts of T-Rexes and Velociraptors. It's utterly exhausting!

One evening, I decide to explore the dusty attic of our old house. Who knows what treasures might be hidden up there? As I sift through neglected boxes, I suddenly spot something that quickens my pulse—a dinosaur toy! It's a Velociraptor, its colors faded yet still captivating. I lift it and hold it under the moonlight streaming through the attic window. "No way!" I whisper to myself as it begins to emit a faint glow. What kind of enchantment is this?

That night, after dreaming vividly about dinosaurs roaming freely beneath the stars, I awaken to a rustling sound outside my window. What could that be? My heart races with a mix of excitement and trepidation. Is it merely my imagination? Or could it be something more tangible? Compelled by curiosity, I tiptoe to the window and peer outside. "Whoa!" I exclaim as I behold dinosaurs wandering in my backyard! A colossal Brachiosaurus is munching on leaves from a tree while a nimble little Protoceratops darts around as if engaged in a game of tag. This can't be real! Am I dreaming again?

I step outside, feeling the cool night air envelop me like a comforting embrace. "This is surreal!" I murmur to myself in disbelief. Just then, two dinosaurs approach me: Raptor, the playful Velociraptor with bright eyes and an impish grin, and Spike, a gentle Ankylosaurus who exudes an aura of strength and kindness. "Hey there!" Raptor chirps, his voice light and teasing. "You look like you could use some excitement!" "Excitement? You mean like evading predators?" I respond with a nervous chuckle.

Spike chuckles softly. "Don't worry! We're not here to harm you. We're just as curious about you as you are about us." "Seriously? Dinosaurs want to be friends with me?" It's hard to fathom. As we converse, everything feels magical—until Rex makes his entrance. He's a T-rex with razor-sharp teeth and an even sharper demeanor. "What do we have here?" Rex growls menacingly. "A little human playing with his toys? How adorable."

"Uh-oh," I mutter under my breath as tension fills the air. Rex appears ready for confrontation. Spike nudges me gently with his armored back. "We need to find safety," he whispers urgently. "What do you mean?" "There's a legendary refuge known as the 'Valley of the Lost Dinosaurs.' It's rumored to be a sanctuary from predators like Rex." "Let's go!" My heart pounds as we embark on this unexpected adventure.

We navigate through towering ferns that brush against our skin and cross a rushing river teeming with curious Plesiosaurs peeking out from below. "This is exhilarating!" I exclaim as we splash through the water. As we approach the valley's entrance, Rex corners us beneath the ancient trees. "You think you can escape me?" he snarls.

"Wait! We can outsmart him!" The idea flashes into my mind like a light bulb turning on. "What do you mean?" Raptor asks, looking at me expectantly. "I've read extensively about dinosaurs! We can utilize your strengths against him!" With newfound determination, I devise a strategy: Raptor distracts Rex with his agility while Spike uses his powerful tail to create obstacles in Rex's path.

"Let's do this!" I shout as we spring into action. In this moment of crisis, everything falls into place; believing in ourselves ignites bravery within us all. Our fear transforms into resourcefulness as we collaborate to outmaneuver Rex.

As dawn breaks over the horizon and bathes everything in golden light, we celebrate our victory over Rex—until one by one, my dinosaur friends begin to fade back into the recesses of my imagination. "No! Don't go!" I cry out as they start to disappear. In this bittersweet moment, I realize how much they've taught me about friendship and the importance of believing in dreams.

Awakening back in my room as sunlight streams through my window, I find that the Velociraptor toy still glows softly on my bedside table—a tangible reminder of everything that transpired. Later that evening, gazing up at the night sky filled with stars once more, I feel a renewed sense of wonder and possibility coursing through me.

“What if it was all real?” I ponder aloud, excitement bubbling within me. With one last flicker of moonlight over my toy Velociraptor, I smile because deep down inside, I know that sometimes dreams can come true if you believe hard enough. And who knows? Perhaps tonight will bring another adventure!

Crushed Under Silence

Shanghai American School Pudong Campus, Shi, Kevin – 11

As I crash through the woods, gripping my blade, I only then realize, it's tipped with blood. Not theirs, but mine. Now I finally understand. Their words... *"you'll end here, no matter where you came from."* Now, as I smell my own flesh, I realize where I am headed. The distant memory of the fear in my past came. *I am going to realm 2.*

The sirens wail behind me as my entire world starts to fade away. I try to keep them open, but my eyelids feel heavy, and soon enough, all light has been drowned away.

"Guys! The kid's awake!" a voice shouts from below me, deep and gravelly. As more heavy footsteps emerge, I get chills down my back as I realize that I've finally made it. I've escaped earth, so where am I now? As I wake up, I realize that I'm floating above metal dinosaurs! My heart pounds as I look around. Hills all around form urban living areas, and for some reason, I'm floating in the center of a huge circular landing.

"So... where am I?" I inquire, surprising myself with a deep voice, just like them around me. As they look up, many sigh in disappointment, and as they look at each other, one by one, only then does someone reply.

"You don't need to know." An old-looking entity with ionized copper skin replied mysteriously.

"Why? Just tell me, there can't be such harm done." I ask childishly. As I looked down, I realized that everyone was grumbling with displeasure. Without a word, my platform slowly begins to sink, seamlessly melting into the ground. All this silence, especially from a huge crowd, was so eerie, and the thought of living in this obscure realm without knowing the truth seemed truly unbearable.

Two other dinosaurs come up, walking in identical stances, with their velociraptor tails swinging so wildly that it seemed aggressive. Then, they pulled me by the shoulders, eventually bringing me to the biggest hill around. "Here'll be it. Step in, relax, and enjoy." The tall one greets in a tone too friendly for our surroundings.

Another oldish dinosaur escorts me to a room, and the drills and equipment there remind me of the horrible childhood memories of going to the doctors. An intimidating triceratops therapist comes and harshly declares, "I just need one thing from you. If something happens to you, and you leave this realm, would you tell anyone about it?"

What's his motive? "Why would you ask something like that?"

He takes a deep breath in, as if he had expected this. "Go ask the boss. He's the one who's got all the answers."

Hearing this, I realize that the answers to my questions can only be revealed by 'the boss', given the reluctance to answer me by the other dinosaurs. "Where?" I asked, believing the therapist was telling the truth.

"You'll know it when you see it," the therapist replied mysteriously, "now answer my first question."

"Okay, that's obvious. I would tell someone where I came from if I somehow landed myself in another realm, right?" I asserted.

"No. You will *not* tell anyone about the things you've encountered, and the experiences you've been through here. Now, may I ask again, if something happens to you, and you somehow leave this realm, would you tell anyone about it?" The therapist slyly responds, with a grin on his face.

Suddenly, I feel a jerk of movement, as I stand up, angry about how much they were hiding. "Yes. I will not conform to what you say, because it is simply inhumane. I will oppose any attempt to erase my memories of this ugly, drab realm." I sucked in another breath, preparing to continue my rant, but was cut off.

"Wrong, I'll be nice one more time. What is your answer to my question?"

"Yes, I will talk about realm 2."

He groans in frustration, and then the pain comes.

It's a buzz in my brain, a feeling nobody else would be able to describe. Something you can't control, that's just in there, existing. If I could, I would dig my hand into my scalp to take that thing out. This will drive me insane. Insanity—that's it. There, I decided that I can't take it anymore. I open my dinosaur mouth, wanting to let out the

scream of the century. Instead, fire spits out. The therapist gasps, and I get the feeling I wasn't supposed to know how to do that. As I let out more anger, the next few minutes pass like a blur. In between my rage and fire, I hear screams. Some call help. Some despair. And some admiration.

I watch in satisfaction as this hill burns down, finally catching my breath. All around me, there is destruction, chaos, and madness. *Are you sorry, my little angel asks. The ghoul replies, my chains have been broken, my barriers destroyed. The monster in my soul has been kept away too long. It is today that I let go.* Saying this to myself, I wonder what has gotten to me. Insanity. Just like before, with the buzz in my brain, I have no control of anything whatsoever.

"Where's the therapist," I screamed, "where is everybody?" Once again, almost uncontrolled, there is a pain deep inside me, ready to well up into another ball of fire. I try to look around but suddenly, a deep boom sounds from behind me, along with a crowd of hatred.

"I said... what is the answer to my question?" A familiar voice speaks from within.

Scared, I express, "n—n—no s—sir. I—I will n—not tell."

"That's right." the therapist announces. As I regain composure, screams of protest emerge from the crowd, rambling on about the 'new kid' destroying their home, once beautiful and purposeful, but now just a mere pile of rubble.

Unfortunately, I know that this rambling wasn't just annoyance, but true hatred. Something so deep that there is no pulling them out. Something so powerful that there is no greater motivation. Something so rare that I did not know how to fight back.

And so, I ran. A moment later, I heard another bolt of lightning strike behind me, confirming I'd made the right decision. Oh, the fear. The fear of the unknown. I wanted to turn around and see what all the racket was about but then promised myself that not knowing was better than knowing.

So then, I kept running as fast as I could. For a while, things were fine; I was in good shape. But a few minutes later, tiredness swept over me, and just as I thought that things couldn't get any worse, a bolt of lightning hit my tail, lighting it on fire. Now, there is pure panic within me, and telling from their expressions, my attackers know it.

I keep on running, the fire on my tail threatening to swallow me whole. Looking at what has happened so far, I find that I have only a few minutes until it travels onto my body. *I need to find water fast!* Lost in my thoughts, I almost miss a water fountain I had run past earlier.

Phew, I think, making a U-turn and sprinting inside the entrance to the hill with the water fountain. I put my tail in the water, and after turning around, I realized that nobody had followed me in. I looked outside, and saw many scared faces, hidden behind their masks of anger.

Something weird is going on, I think, and as I turn around, I realize just what. A Dino about double my size walks down the grand staircase, but only then do I realize who this is, from the scared attackers, the swagger in his step, and his cocky attitude: **The boss.** *Perfect,* I think, *I can finally get some answers!*

So, I carefully approach him, looking up at his towering build, only then do I realize that there are wrinkles in his face. Those wrinkles, however, are not from age, but from anger. Before I can react, he takes a swipe at my face, landing a blow right beneath my eye. My blood drips like tears, and as I run for the exit, I realize it's blocked by my previous attackers, smiling at me.

He raises a claw, and just before it was lights-out, a noise in my brain interrupts me, *"go left, then get behind him."* I immediately recognize the triceratops therapist's voice, and I execute the command, buying myself more time. *"You'll know it when you see it."* The triceratops's voice booms again, then a buzz of static sounds. The boss starts turning, and at the same time, words appear on his back: *"Password?"* Puzzled, I don't know what to do. His claw swipes again, and my blood drips too. *"DNA extracted. Travelling to realm 3."* Words appear again, and this time, I'm not given a single moment to think.

I've woken up in paradise.

Dinosaurs, Game On

Shanghai American School Pudong Campus, Wu, Yuk Pak – 13

Opening my eye while my head was still on the desk, I soon realized it was break time and I've been sleeping the whole English class. Meg was just beside me staring at the blue sky outside the window.

"Wanna go out and breathe some fresh air?" I suddenly suggested, "And help me about my Chinese history work." After some seconds/ or minutes, Meg slowly departed from his seat unwillingly while yawning at the same time. We went out to the corridors and started walking with no destinations.

"Where are we Going?" Meg slowly squeezed out the words.

"Just walking around." I replied back.

We somehow end up at our Chinese History classroom when we stopped. The lights were off, and the air was full of dust. "It seems like last class was about a few years ago!" Meg suddenly brightened his mood and spoke. It is true though; the last class I took was about when I'm in 5th grade, "I don't know why but the school just stopped Chinese history class, and nobody ever talked about it since then." I added while swiping the dust off my chair. Break times over, we figured out that there is a new Chinese History classroom, which wasn't the one that we're in, we ran there in less than a minute blaming each other at the same time for not knowing where the classroom was.

"We're talking about the history of the Chinese Dragons today," the teacher started his 45-minute-long boring speech averagely, time crawled slowly through the dragons. I thought it was interesting, unfortunately, I finally picked up my book that was covered in dust and started to read. Meanwhile Meg was looking around the classroom unusually, "What is this smell? Plus, isn't now supposed to be daytime?" Meg whispered, I looked down at my watch then quickly turned my head facing the window, it was black, darkness covered the sky as well as my faint heart. I did realize the strangeness when I stepped in the classroom, the curtains were closed and weird rocks at the corners. The teacher came up to me, walking slowly, but with a sense of oppression, just when I was wondering, I appeared in a cave, Meg was still sitting beside me and the teacher was up front writing stuff on the rocks.

"What is happening?" I tapped Meg, "you didn't listen? There is a test coming up! The teacher is now explaining the rules." Just when I was about to ask where I was, a mysterious power pushed all of us outside, the sunshine and fresh air came into view, soon afterwards there was a loud roar from somewhere close.

"Ready set GO!" The teacher shouted, "the exam starts now!"

I was puzzled but everyone else started to run to the boxes at the sides, I followed them and soon realized that there are names on each one. The boxes were lined up in a circle, so I found mine within seconds and opened it. Inside was a card with the word "mission" on it, a watch, as well as a wood-and-rock spear. I picked up the card and started reading carefully, "your mission: steal the dragon eggs, Chinese dragon eggs worth 5 points, normal dragon eggs worth 3 point. Pass for 3 points, A for 5 points. You can team up with others. Field: the forest in front of you. Notice: Everyone has their own mission. Tips: THERE IS ONE EXAMINEE THAT IS STOPPING YOU TO COMPLETE YOUR MISSION. Time to complete 30 minutes. After you take the egg, come back here. Good luck Chester." I stuffed my card in my pocket and took my spear, the first thing that popped into my mind was to find Meg. When I saw his box, nothing was there nor as he, so I walked into the forest.

After piling through the leaves, I found an egg lying peacefully in its nest, it's a dragon's egg! Strangely, I didn't see any sign of a dragon nearby. Without thinking, I picked it up and ran. "BOOM!" I fell on the ground fiercely with pain in my ankles, I looked back, a rope was tightly tied to my feet. Standing in front of me was...Meg. I realized he's the one that is stopping me. "Meg! It's you! Why are we here? What is this test?" I asked him while breathing rapidly, "it's awkward to see you here, but this is a place for worriers, just like the dragons, with braveness

as well as mighty powers. Sorry my friend, but there is my last chance to prove myself. Sorry.” After saying this, he grabbed his bat and swung it on my face when I was still trying to understand what he was saying.

“Hahahahaha!” I woke up seeing the teacher standing in front of me holding a book and Meg giggling beside me. It’s obvious that the bat was the book that went on my face, I can still feel the pain and could imagine the mark. “Chester!” The teacher screamed “what have you learned today I’m your dream huh!” Well, I actually did, I felt that dragons were not that scary, it’s human nature that would hurt, friends were useless compared to desires.

Unearthing Dreams: A Farm Boy's Journey to Paleontology

Shanghai Community International School, Simon, Wybie – 13

The discovery of a young boy's journey to the realm of the ancient fossils was discovered in the diary of ichén (奕辰). The diary spans from 2011 – 2025, although not all pages were recovered

October 29, 2011

Today is a cloudy day. Father bought me this new journal because I ran out of pages in the old one. In school we learned some new vocabulary words. I didn't know any of them, who knew grade 9 would be so hard? Today we'll have to help father with the new cabbage field.

October 31, 2011

Today is a stormy day. I am astounded by the strange object that we found. When father and I dug in the field we found some bones. I think they are animal bones, but father believes they are human. He doesn't want to talk about although I'm not sure why. He's always been like this. It's frustrating but I think he's just worried.

November 1, 2011

Today is a rainy day. Together finally called the police about the bone. A policeman will arrive in a couple days to examine the bone. The officer on the phone instructed us to put on gloves and put the bone into a plastic bag. I am nervous but strangely excited about the possibility of this situation being something bigger. Father is stoic, but I can tell he's nervous.

November 5, 2011

Today is a windy day. The policeman examined the bone and said it may be human. He told us it looked like a hip bone, but he wasn't quite sure. The policeman said he would take it to examine it so we should expect an answer in 1–2 months.

He packed up the plastic bag and went off in his yellow striped police car. Me and little sister Fei-Fei feared him. Fei-Fei started crying big crocodile tears. He was so tall and thin with tiny, piercing eyes.

November 10, 2011

Today is a windy day. We got a letter from the police station much sooner than expected. They said it wasn't a human bone, but it didn't match any animal bone in the area either. So, a specialist from Shanghai will test it for any other matches and take a closer look. The bone will take 3 days to be shipped. Me and Fei-Fei are excited.

Father took mom into the kitchen to discuss it. He's anxious that something is wrong and there is a crime scene, meanwhile mom doesn't care as long as we were safe.

November 11, 2011

Today is a mild day. Father told us to clean the pig sty and remove the weeds. The entire time while working I could only think if we'll get answers soon.

Perhaps it's the old neighbor, I haven't seen her for a while anyway. Or perhaps it's a deer. Or it's a totally new animal.

November 13, 2011

Today is a bright sunny day. So much has been going on I completely forgot to write in here. They tested the bones, and nothing matched.

That's why they sent the scientists to inspect the place where we found them. I can't believe they are coming to our farm. I have been so excited ever since we got the news.

November 15, 2011

It's a rainy day, and the experts are delayed for a week. Fei-Fei and I are miserable. Father says not to worry, but I can't shake the thought: What if they don't come at all? It haunts me, though at least it's better than the ocean of work ahead.

November 23, 2011

Today is a sunny day. The scientists came. They looked tired at first, then came in and discussed something with father in the kitchen.

When they all went outside me, and Fei-Fei wanted to follow but mother told us to stay inside to do homework. Apparently, there are a lot of bones that aren't known to science in the cabbage field. Father is mad that he won't be able to harvest this year but I'm secretly glad. It is tedious, hard work which only he enjoys.

November 24, 2011

Today is a windy day. The scientists started digging and found even more bones. Father and the experts then went into the kitchen to discuss the situation. I am too curious about the secrets they are keeping to even sleep at night. I just wish they'd stop treating me as a child.

Dec 4, 2011

Today is a windy day. 3 more scientists came to dig up the bones. Apparently, they are dinosaur bones. It is so unreal that I keep thinking I'm dreaming. Today me and Fei-Fei snuck around the house right after school to watch them.

It is so fascinating to experience that it makes my head spin with joy! They found a couple more bones which was surprising to hear. From the corner a large boulder like one caught my eye, this could be hip bones. Who knew there was a whole avalanche of bones right under our feet? They handled them so delicately and with such care as if they were glass.

Dec 6, 2011

I snuck into the tent where they stored the bones. The earthy smell hit me as I entered. They were in glass cases which made them look like the richest treasures in the world. Which maybe they were. I looked closer, and I could see something. I saw a bone that looked a little bit like a human spine. But coming out if that were thinner bones. Could it be? Could those be really wings?

Dec 7, 2011

Today is a windy day. I am so happy I could sing. Today me and Fei Fei were peeking at their work one of them noticed us and waved us over. I thought we were in trouble, but he was super friendly. He invited us to watch him work.

We kneeled and watched him carefully. The bone was small and brittle. It had a beige-brown color with a couple of cracks. And marks. He told us that these bones are surround 16.5 million years old. I can't even imagine the number, that's how big it is, I asked him what dinosaur these bones belong to.

He responded, "We don't know, our team thinks it's an undiscovered species. We want to name it Sinosauropteryx." I frowned at the name: "China dragon bird?"

He chuckled "Yes, since it has feathers! This opens the doors to hundreds of new theories of what's been undiscovered. What else is still out there? We have discovered something tremendous of the ancient world".

I asked him how long it takes to become a bone digger. He chuckled and told me it is called a paleontologist and that it takes 4-6 years. I was about to ask another question when mother called me inside. Rats. She got mad and said that we shouldn't bother them while they're working. Fei-Fei started crying again but I wasn't bothered. I couldn't even listen; I was just too distracted by all the information that whirled in my mind.

Dec 9, 2011

Today is a rainy day. Mother forbade us from going out to see them and sadly they don't have any books about paleontologist. But in school they do have one book about dinosaurs although it is sadly taken, I guess I must wait. Although I am yearning to just go out and see the site, but I know not to disobey mother.

Dec 10, 2011

Today is a hazy day. I finally got the book, but I already have it finished. Maybe father will drive me to the city to get one. It is so interesting, all the facts and information. But there is so much information out there. I wish I could become a paleontologist so I can help discover the world of dinosaurs.

Dec 11, 2011

Today, Father took me to the city to buy books. The rustling and bustling overwhelms me. I got three books and learned that last year, the Asilisaurus was discovered. A large dinosaur with a long tail, legs and neck was found. The picture looks like a stretched out dog. Although finding 200 bones, no teeth were found, and that mystery only deepens my desire to learn more

May 3, 2025

Today is the sunniest of all days. I am now 27 and I am starting first ever day on site in Jiangxi. Since my childhood, more than 40 dinosaur species have been found in the province of Liaoning. Including more than 24 pterosaurs – winged reptiles. All my life has been dedicated to this art, to this craft.

Even since my childhood. Although I thought I had lost this diary where I found my passion, but I found it in an old box. How odd? I wish I could tell little me how great he would do. How many dreams we would achieve. I am a happy man.

Discovery

Tai Kwong Hilary College, Chan, Ching Hang Lucas – 12

As I woke up, I immediately headed to the river for a refreshing morning bath. Looking down on the clear crystalized reflection on the water, my small figure which was covered in orange fur, and a long, majestic furry tail came into clear sight. I leap into the icy water and relax myself. After five relaxing minutes, I climbed back on the riverside and grabbed a leaf to dry myself, while doing so, my other family members got within my eyesight, my mom, dad, and brother. We are sinosauropteryx, the very last of our kind, as the others have all gone extinct a few million years ago, whereas my ancestors survived by escaping to this island before our species went extinct. This was an isolated small island, habited only by our family and some animals. Apparently, near this island, there is another large continent. Nevertheless, the world outside the island was full of mysteries, as other sinosauropteryx had never left the island to explore in fear of death. I, however, fear not death, but fear living in a pitiful life of being trapped inside a small island like this, thus it is my dream to one day leave this island to set on a grand adventure outside the island.

During dinner, I proposed my idea to my family, hoping for their approval, however, they refused to let me leave, reasoning that they were concerned for my safety. I completely disregarded them, and in a flash of anger, I decided to depart that night. I walked slowly to the coast of the island. The strong wind blew the leaves around as I dragged the heavy tree that fell just a few days ago, which I had customized to be a sturdy raft I believed would make its way to the nearby continent. With a leap of faith, I hopped on the raft with much uncertainty, and at the same time with much confidence. As the strong wind blew the raft further and further away from the island, I heard three voices coming from the coast. "Come back home safely!". Their voices were still heard even in the strong and fierce wind.

As I navigated deeper into the crystal like ocean, my journey forward brought forth many challenges, ranging from fierce windstorms to torrential rain. Though there were many hardships and much more to come, my will and determination did not dwindle in the slightest. After probably three days, I finally saw it: solid land. Presumably, I had just entered the nearby continent. The coast of the land was covered with grains of golden sand, with the water as clear as a polished mirror. Up to the point that I could see the depths of the deep ocean. This land was more magnificent than any land I had ever seen. Though a part of me refused to leave this beautiful coastline, I still decided to stick to my original reason for even being there, *to explore*. And to visit this magnificent beach once again, I set out further down this mysterious land.

As I walked further down the beach, I noticed a large vibrant emerald forest towering over me, with the trees casting shadows on me. With every single step I took, the scent of Mother Nature filled my lungs, reminding me of my home island. As I continued to navigate my way through the lush forest, I noticed a hidden wonder, a waterfall spilling into a crystal clear lake. After wandering deeper towards the very core of the jungle, I noticed a brilliant discovery: a small burrow containing many tasty treats, and a horde of lizards. As I caught them individually, I lifted them from the friable soil to my beak-like mouth. As I finished my long awaited feast, I lay comfortably on the large tree trunk behind me, with the position where I was facing the bright, luminous moon hanging up on the sky lazily. The world outside my small trapped island was great. I pat my tiny palms on my clean white belly and slowly fall into the world of dreams.

Just before I was about to sleep, an agonizing pain pierced through my arm, and before I had time to run away, a large net swiftly swallowed me, removing any chances of escaping. Not long after, overwhelming fatigue filled my body with astonishing speed. My legs felt like they were disconnected from other parts of my body, and my arms

soon followed. Not long after, so did my head and brain itself, my head felt ever heavier as if it could fall asleep anytime. The next thing I knew, I woke up in an unknown place. It had gray walls, and it was moving. Aside from this, conversations were happening from behind the wall facing forwards. As my eyes went fully wide open, a large, tall creature approached me, standing on two legs. It had long arms, long legs, and pitch black hair on the top of its head. And it pulled out an object sharper than the stinger of a bee, with liquid dripping off of it, and inserted it in my arm.

The second time I woke up, I was in a lush green forest, as if everything was merely just a horrible dream. I walked along the wind flattened grass, which led me toward three shadowy figures. Upon closer inspection, they were my family. They didn't begin to move until I moved closer to them. What has happened though? The thought hung in my mind. How were they here? Could it be that the past two days of my adventure were just a dream? No, it felt too real for it to be a dream. Unable to conclude, I simply accepted the reality placed in front of me and walked forward.

The next two days, I slowly accepted the miraculous reality of my family just being on this island. The days were fun, just like how they were when we were back on our island. Me and my brother would play catch and hunt lizards together. Though the days were fun, I couldn't help but notice that the movements of my family felt stiff and weird, everytime they moved for no longer than five minutes, they'd stop moving and stand silently until another ten seconds when they became active again. That night, my family and I were walking down the stoney mountain steps, when suddenly, my brother tripped, and the skin on his stomach was torn apart. His wound didn't contain flesh, but rather, his wound revealed a hard cold silver colored surface. He didn't bleed blood, but black fluid. I didn't know how, but they were just replicas of my family.

Immediately, I started to run westwards, where my home island was located. I could not linger here anymore, this place, though containing beautiful terrain, was far too dangerous. Suddenly, a group of two legged creatures approached me. Four of them carried a black long object aimed at me, and another four who wore white coats. I did not know what they were, but my guts told me that they weren't something friendly. I ran for it, at the moment that I moved my limbs. Three hard objects pierced my right leg, left arm, and my back. Despite the agonizing pain running through my body, I carried on westwards. With every step I took, blood splurled. The tall figures walked away saying "Got him, Dr Enrico."

Heavy snow fell as I dragged my disheveled and hole filled body across the blanket of snow covering the landscape. The blood leaking out from my body creates a contrasting color of rose blood and pure snow. Pain and fatigue filled the entirety of my body, then I was wrapped with the sickening feeling of my legs no longer supporting me, and I fell head first onto the stone cold rock. I pondered on the question I've been having since I came to the island. If I listened to my family and didn't go to the island, would I wind up happier by staying on the island, and live a wistful life without knowing how life outside of the island is, or be happier exploring the unknown in pursuit of my thirst of knowing what's outside the island? "Come back home safely!" The phrase echoed in my brain, but the fact is, I couldn't, I couldn't come back home. My blood poured more and more, I could feel the sensation of my life leaving me slowly. The warmth of my life was being enveloped in the daunting and icy cold arms of death. The moonlight shines brightly, casting a bright yellow light upon me, with the blanket of stars that seemed to just stretch towards infinity. The cool night sky demeanor seemingly eased my pain, and I closed my eyes, with my mouth stretching to form a beatific smile. I'd rather explore the ends of the world than be trapped on an island. I had no regrets.

T-Rex

Tai Kwong Hilary College, So, Jat Tung – 13

Something was wrong. Very wrong. But it was Alex's idea to hike in the first place, which wasn't that surprising.

Jordan never wanted to come. But Alex insisted, she always did, saying they should do something meaningful. "Jordan, we're fifteen, get a life!" Alex would say. And yet, Jordan always went along with it. But there was something off today, not just today, but there seemed to always have a nagging feeling that Jordan felt everytime she looked into Alex's eyes. As if her sweet smile would always twist into a dark sinful sneer.

It had been a total of thirty minutes of trying. While hiking on the bumpy trails, Jordan tried talking about school gossip, plans for high schoolanything you can think of—but Alex didn't seem to care at all, and something was off about it.

Alex did not answer, her gaze cold as ever, unfazed, walking in front of her while Jordan was a few steps behind. A colossal rock chamber stood in front of them. Jordan stopped at her tracks, there was a feeling, a feeling that seemed to lash out of the great cave, a scream, pulling her into the unknown, the unwanted.

Stepping on some stone steps, Jordan could only manage to blurt out, "Alex?" But before Jordan could say anything else, a sudden shove made her slip and fall. Her eyes widened, the world seemed to be flipped upside down. For a brief moment she saw Alex staring at her own hands in shock.

THUD, a piercing pain hit her body.

Light flashed before her eyes. As she found herself running in a place she's never been before. She could feel rough sand between her toes. Her chest pumping and beating. Legs swollen from top to bottom, blood dripping everywhere, each drop dissolving in the sand. The place was filled with smoke, clouding her vision. She tried gasping for air; how much, she tried to scream, but the only thing that came out was a gasp.... Her body leaned against a cold stone wall. Only leaving a memory of the faint drops of rain, shattering down to the floor. It rained, LOUDER, roaring, hammering in her ears.

Another flash came before her eyes. There was a puddle in front of Jordan, reflecting her face and the ceiling of a stone cave. She was some kind of a strange creature, with beady eyes, tiny hands, and there were bite marks on her neck, swollen and red. She assumed it might have been the "her" that she is seeing last breaths. Another face of a creature stood in front of her, killing her.

Then, once more, another flash hit her face. Making Jordan sprang up gasping, gripping tight on a piece of soft fabric, which now, she realised, was a blanket. In the damp room, she looked around, it was a hospital. Coming back to her senses, she tried remembering what had come to her. First, she was hiking with her friendAlex. She pushed her. There was danger in Alex, but she couldn't remember quite why. Or maybe she didn't want to. No. Jordan needed to do something, they were both stuck in this endless cycle. Jordan decided she was doing this not just for her

own survival, but the people that were killed in countless lives. And she would not fail to keep fighting. She swung her legs to the side of the bed. Her toes touching the cool floor. Moving her right leg first, then she tried moving the other. Reaching to the door knob, she ran outside the door. She could hear nurses calling after her but they were too late, their voices were muffled by the wind. Breathless, Jordan looked around, she could feel glances from people, but she couldn't care any less.

Walking alone on the streets, she tried recalling where the cave was. Red lanterns hung above her, giving off a warm glow, as she found herself having occasional feelings of déjà vu washing over her, making everything strangely familiar. Going through the noisy bridges and streets, she arrived by stepping on the same stone steps that led her to the cave.

As Jordan went into the dimly lit cave, she could hear water dripping, one of her feet stepping on a puddle. Next to her she peered in closely as she read the words on a stone wall, her hands followed the carved patterns, with dried blood stains splattered on it. She wasn't quite sure what it was, but it was a writing, about a prophecy of life. Then, she read the words out loud, "When the timer ends with zero, the betrayer's fate is sealed." Below her was a timer that flickered blue..... five minutes and ten seconds.

Suddenly, she heard footsteps, a figure came out of nowhere.

"You knew didn't you? That you had to kill me. " Jordan's eyes filled with hatred. Her heart clenched with disappointment looking at the person who was once her best friend. Suddenly, she remembered the other face of the creature when she was in the hospital. Jordan's eyes narrowed, " It's.... you? Don't do this—"

"Do you even think we have a choice, Jordan? It's a prophecy. And guess what?" sighed Alex, her eyes turning dark, leaving nothing but darkness, " You died in every. Single. Life. One of us lives, one of us dies, the clock's ticking."

Alex's eyes glanced at the timer on the stone wall. It was a reminder of their fate that Jordan had to face. Alex came here first, and she knew what had to be done.

Pulling out a pocket knife, Alex slid the knife across Jordan's arm. Jordan winced in pain, blood poured out and the cut was deep under her skin. Reacting quickly, she pulled Alex's hair, slamming her to the wall with her other hand. Alex shrieked.

Three minutes.

"You're crazy.." Jordan said, panting between words, her feet stepping back, trying to digest what was happening in front of her. Before Jordan could react, a sudden jab hit her stomach, the knife stabbing right through her body.

"You can't win Jordan, no matter how much you try, "Alex breathed, pulling out the knife and walking to the cave mouth. Jordan, with a sudden gasp, her body hit the floor with a thud. Zero.

In her lifeless form, she curled up on the floor, her fingers trying to reach for her phone that was inches away, her eyelids turning heavy. She wanted to say something, to call for help, but blood pooled out of her mouth leaving her choking as blood splattered on the floor.

So this was the prophecy, being killed in every single life of hers, Jordan thought. In that moment, life flashed before Jordan's eyes, seeing each and every time line in front of her, each life of hers being killed again and again. In one of her visions, she trusted Alex, allowing her into her herd. But as food was scarce, Alex turned her back on Jordan, eliminating her for competition for her very own good. Jordan wanted to stop the cycle, she wanted to stop Alex, she wanted to do so much more, she couldn't die here, she just couldn't.

Suddenly, Jordan felt her body was burning with heat, as if someone had set herself on fire, burning her to the flesh every second, each limb stretching, melting apart. Scales started to form on her body, her feet gripping onto the stone floor screaming in pain. Then with a sudden stop, she opened her eyes again, looking at a puddle in front of her to see who it was...she was no longer human.

This was her fight, and she is willing to do anything to win.

A Moment Frozen in Stone

The British International School Shanghai, Low, Xin Yu Avelyn – 13

Clink, clink, clink.

The sweltering sun blazed above with an unforgiving intensity, as heat clung to me like a second skin. Gleaming beads of perspiration lined my forehead, trembling pearls that swelled until gravity claimed it. My calloused hands, roughened by years of labor, moved the hammer and pick in a steady rhythm, each strike with precision and focus.

Clink, clink, cli—

The tip of my pick chipped away at a large, hardened piece of the compacted earth. Beneath the jagged fragment of rock I had dislodged, something unmistakable caught the light—a lustrous, curved surface, etched with faint, intricate patterns. This was the moment I had been waiting for—not the lectures, the hours poring over books, the years of refining my techniques. The thrill of revelation flowed through me, replacing my fatigue with a new sense of adrenaline. Brushing away the loosened earth with trembling hands, the shape became clearer: the unmistakable ridge of a fossilised bone, perfectly intact, without a trace of dirt on it. *That's odd*, I thought. Fossils were supposed to be caked with layers of dust, a testament to its age and the millennia they had spent entombed in the earth's embrace. Instead, this one glistened in the light of the sun, illuminating its surroundings and stood out amid its lustreless scenery.

Captivated, I reached out to trace its ridges and curves with my hands. The instant my fingers made contact, the ground beneath me shifted as though it was no longer solid. The familiar desert landscape blurred and warped with the background, and as the earth gave away beneath me, I was swept under a wave of darkness.

Fragments of reality gradually pieced itself back together, distorted shapes swirling in my vision. Dancing colours flitted everywhere; a piercing beam of brilliance broke through my stupor, bringing me to my senses. My eyelids fluttered sluggishly, and the world around me swam into focus. The ground beneath me wasn't the familiar, rough texture of the sunbaked earth—it was damp and springy. I glanced up. At first, everything was a blur—a swirl of muted greens and golds, shimmering and shifting like a mirage. I blinked hard, and as the haze began to dissolve, I was met with a breathtaking sight. An immense canopy thrived across the sky, soft, ethereal light filtering through them, dotting the canopy with flecks of illumination. The leaves themselves painted the scene in hues of emerald and amber, morning dew glistening atop every leaf. It dawned on me—I wasn't at the excavation site anymore. *Where am I?*

Swish.

I jerked my head towards the sound. An impossibly large figure emerged from the shadows. My breath hitched as I took in its towering form, every inch of it radiating a raw, primal power. Its scales shimmered faintly, catching light in all assortments of tints. Its head swung towards me, its eyes resembling round, glassy orbs filled with molten lava. A ridge of bone-like spines jutted along its back; their edges tipped with what seemed like bioluminescent crystals. Unconsciously, I reached out my fingers and grazed the surface of its scales, crescent-shaped plates arranged in a vertical pattern. This specimen—it was unlike anything I read in ancient Chinese tales. Suddenly, a deep, resonant rumble started to tremble the ground—A bold declaration: I was standing in *its* space, not mines. Then, with a powerful movement, it charged.

I squeezed my eyes, arms reflexively raised to brace for impact. The hulking mass hurled itself towards me, each pounding footstep echoing in my ear. *Is this it?* I shut my eyes, bracing myself for oblivion...

Nothing happened. Stunned, my eyes cracked open, adjusting to the light; I was not dead. The ground beneath me was torn apart, deep gashes in the earth marking the path where the beast had barrelled through. It had charged right through me, as if I were a mere wisp of air.

My eyes trailed after the footsteps, and an infant, no larger than a baby kangaroo, laid sprawled on the forest floor squealing in delight. It was the splitting image of the earlier dinosaur. The infant scrambled to its feet, letting out a shriek of joy as it pressed its tiny form against its protector's towering leg. The great beast lowered its head to the infant, its rough, scarred snout caressing the tiny ridges of the smaller one's body. It nudged its young forward, their massive forms vanishing into the tangled depths of the jungle. I stared, awestruck by this show of love. It struck me—I wasn't part of this world. This was before ancient china, before their settlement, before humans existed.

Yet, as I lingered in the warmth of the moment, an unsettling silence settled in the air. Out of nowhere, the Forrest came to a standstill—there was no rustling of leaves, no gentle whisper of the wind. The stillness pressed against me, thick and suffocating.

Thud. Thud. Thud.

My heartbeat resonated loudly in my oppressive surroundings, each beat thrumming with anguish and an overwhelming sense of foreboding.

Thud. Thud. Thud.

A shift in the air caught my attention. In the distance, hazy shapes began to take form. The air grew thick with tension, an almost tangible weight pressing down on me. As the shapes drew closer, their outlines sharpened, resembling jagged rocks. Behind each shape trailed a tail of fire that lit up the sky, leaving molten scars across the light blue canvas. Meteorites—blazing with intense heat, plummeting towards the earth.

Boom.

The first meteorite struck from afar, sending a shockwave that knocked me off my feet. I scrambled to my hands and knees, eyes wide with terror. The darkening sky, once a soft tapestry of cotton clouds amidst a pale blue background, was ablaze with fiery trails. More meteorites rained down, their blazing arcs inching closer and closer. The once vibrant landscape was now a chaotic inferno. I could hear the distant roars of creatures, their calls filled with panic and terror, desperate attempts to flee from the impending destruction. This was it—the end of their world.

And then, through the chaos, a familiar cry pierced the air. Dread curled in my chest, and my body moved of its own accord, rushing towards the scream.

As I approached, I knew it was too late. Through the haze and chaos, a towering figure roared with desperation and anguish, with its offspring huddling beside it. A meteor, hurtling at unimaginable speed towards the earth, was aimed right at them. The dinosaur gathered its youngling close, enveloping it in a protective embrace. Their forms huddled together; a poignant image of parental devotion etched into history. The dinosaur lowered its head and pressed close to its youngling in a final act of love, sharing a fleeting moment of solace. A blinding flash erupted as a meteorite struck with catastrophic force, obliterating everything in its path. The ground quaked violently as a shockwave of fire and force surged outward, sweeping me off my feet. Lost in the cataclysm, my consciousness slipped away, dissolving like granules of sand in an hourglass.

Whoosh.

A warm, tranquil breeze blew over me, engulfing me in its serenity. For a moment, I wanted it to swallow me, forever holding me in its clutches, in eternal peace. But a searing light pierced through my eyelids, urging me to awaken.

"Hey! Guys, look what I found!"

A voice shattered my tranquility, surfacing me up to meet the glaring radiance. It was late in the afternoon when the sun was blaring down at full force. Gasping for air, I clutched at a solid object in my hands, my heart still racing from the vivid memory. My surroundings came rushing back—the parched, baked excavation site, the sweltering heat, the accustomed noise of hammers and picks striking away. I blinked, and realised my eyes were wet with tears. Their

final embrace was etched into my mind, so real it was impossible to dismiss. I looked down at the object in my hand—sure enough, it was a dinosaur fossil, shimmering faintly in the heat.

I stood up and walked over to where my colleague was kneeling.

“Look at this! —An infant dinosaur bone. It’s odd, though, there’s no dust anywhere”

I smiled wistfully.

“I found something too,” I said. Holding out my hand, I uncovered the luminous fossil and placed it down beside the other.

There, they laid, gleaming proudly underneath the sunlight. These tiny fragments were their story, their moment frozen in time, tangible remnants of parental love dating beyond humans. Even after eons, they had been reunited again.

Hey, dinosaur, can you see?

The Price of Knowledge

Wellington College International Shanghai, Allāyate Goni, Nora – 13

It had been three years. Three years since I moved to a different city. Three years since I had to leave everything behind. Three years since my parents' death.

I was eleven at that time. My brain could barely comprehend what had happened. I was already nicely tucked in bed, just waiting for my parents' warm words of good night as they always did. They were successful paleontologists, always excavating underground, striving to find something more breath-taking in every excavation, making each one more worthwhile than the last. Yet I waited. And waited. I waited for a very long time. Until I started to worry, because they never forgot the 'good nights'. Ever.

Suddenly, my ears picked up an unusual sound; the slow creaking of a door. We rarely had visitors, it was usually some old boss entering their late fifties, discussing some great fossil my parents' had uncovered. But this was different. I could hear my parents' voices now, and my heart almost lifted – except, they were having an argument with the 'visitor.' Now I wanted to bolt down the stairs and tell them to come up, to say good night, to tell me everything was going to be fine.

But I could not. Because their voices had risen, risen to a point that they were almost *shouting*. But the stranger must have said something unsettling, disturbing even, because my parents fell completely silent.

Nothing could have prepared me for what happened next.

The gunshot sound struck me like a slap, overwhelming my hearing as the echo rang throughout the house ominously. Then another. I wanted to scream and cry. To let out all my shock and anger. But I knew better.

Maybe I still stood a chance. I crawled under the bed covers, weeping for as long as I could remember, trying to stay silent. He must have left, because now the house was eerily quiet. I still had the urge to run downstairs, but I could not be completely sure that he had left. So, I forced myself to sleep, along with ghostly nightmares and horrific gunshots haunting me in my sleep.

Three years later ...

"Amy, honey, time to wake up!" my 'mom' chided.

I hated it when she called me that, because that is something you said to your daughter, and I was not her daughter, well – not really. She was my adoptive mother, married to another Chinese man. They were my adoptive family, ever since my parents had – left me.

I did not remember anything about my real parents; their nationality, their age – not even their names. I looked at the fragile photograph I had in my hand; it was the only thing I had from them. One half showed my parents' smiling faces, the other had been torn away. I had spent my whole life wondering what or – where the other half could be. The missing puzzle piece.

With immense effort, my brain forced my body to get up and be productive. I walked to the bathroom mirror and regarded the dark eyebags looming over my lightly freckled face.

"Another sleepless night" I thought to myself. But I knew perfectly well why I had trouble sleeping these days. Today, I was going on a school field trip to the Dinosaur Museum in our largely populated province; Shandong.

I moved here ever since I was adopted, three years ago. I had felt so lost, so scared, with no one I knew, no one to trust, just a new life ahead of me with no one to guide me. But it was not the lack of trust I had that was bugging me, it was the fact that my parents had been well-accomplished archeologists in their past lives. All the memories had vanished from my pool of thoughts, but the fossils were not part of it. They practically lived off it, and I remember I loved seeing them excavate and find a more peculiar fossil each time, pouring their hearts out into their work, striving to give me a better life.

I knew that visiting a museum full of dinosaur fossils would fill me up full of nostalgia and make me break down and start to cry. I shook off the feeling of dread and grief ripping my insides and hurtled my bag that constantly weighed me down onto my

shoulders. I walked to the bus stop, and when the bus finally arrived, I took my seat and immediately dozed off into nostalgic memories, a treat to agonizing torture.

At school, we took another bus to the museum. My head felt heavy and dizzy; I had been taking buses since the beginning of the day. The bus halted, and my eyes met the name that had been harassing my mind for so long: *SHANDONG DINOSAUR MUSEUM*.

The excited group of children streamed in through the museum doors like a flowing river. The teachers yelled at the children to come back in a wasted effort, but they had already dispersed widely throughout the exotic palace of fossils.

I observed the interesting and strange dinosaur fossils all around me, which differed from vegetable-eating triceratops to flesh-eating tyrannosaurus rexes, the whole time trying hard not to think of the subject perturbing me persistently. I closely observed a glass box containing the fossils of the Rex. Below was a plaque that read:

TYRANNOSAURUS REX – THE DEADLIEST KNOWN DINOSAUR TO HUMANKIND. The contents of this box show a fossil from this deadly creature from over 70 million years ago.

Then in big red letters an advertisement read:

VERY FRAGILE. DO NOT TOUCH

A shiver ran down my spine at the mere thought of this deadly creature. I scribbled some messy notes on the paper I was given and proceeded to the other fragile fossils laid out around the museum. As I was observing, the shiny, polished black marble walls caught my attention.

My fingers ran past the smooth surface when they caught on a slight bump. I traced back to the misshaped bulk, squinting so I could see it properly. There was a small hatch attached to a big rectangle, I pulled it, revealing a giant door to a completely different place.

I looked behind me, expecting shocked gasps and rapid footsteps from my classmates, but there was no one. Silence. I knew this was a crazy idea from the very beginning, but I really had no idea how this would affect me later, and my parents' fate, if you could believe it.

I took a cautious step into the room, my whole body shaking like a leaf. I barely had time to register my surroundings when I felt a cold hand on my shoulder. I instantly turned around, but did not have any time to figure the identity of my so-called 'kidnapper' because they took me by the waist and hauled me to what looked like a big caravan. They thrust me in, and I felt the engine roar into life, racing past the uneven floors while leaving a dense cloud of dust in its wake.

I registered all the details of the inside of the caravan when my eyes caught a torn piece of photo pinned on the caravan wall, a big red X marked on to it, as if it were a target.

My fingers trembled as I reached out to unpin it from the peeling walls; it was a picture of me as a toddler, my face bright and smiling, without a care in the world. I slipped out the photo I always kept with me from my pocket. My hands shaking, I joined the two pictures together, a perfect line forming in between the two; I had finally found it; the missing puzzle piece.

Shortly after, a million questions buzzed in my head, specifically: *Why was I the target?* My doubts were interrupted by the deep, harsh voice of the caravan driver:

"Mission accomplished, now onto Phase Two."

I knew this was it. The end of my life. It had been quite bizarre; losing my parents, getting kidnapped, being the target of a mission ... But as I was about to assume my death, the caravan driver opened the door and thrust me out of the caravan into some kind of prison cell within the span of a few seconds at most.

I was sitting in a cell (for all I knew) in pitch darkness with an aching and bruised body and a picture of me and my parents' smiling faces which did not really fit the occasion. I looked around to make out my surroundings in vain. Then I heard a voice familiar to me only three years ago.

It was my mother's.

"Amaia? Is that you?" Her voice was warm, just as I remembered it, but also hurt and full of pain. I immediately thought of all the possible things she could have been through these years.

I was in momentary shock. I could not move. My body felt hard and rigid, my mouth suddenly dry, unable to move, unable to make sound. Then the moment passed, and I flung my arms around the dark figure sitting beside me— except it was not my mom's— it was my dad's.

"Dad?" I called out in shock, relief, and amazement altogether. I let go, momentarily startled because I was not expecting that, but immediately regretted it.

I was about to go in and hug him again, but they beat me to it. They both wrapped their arms around my quivering body and squeezed it tight. After I had recovered from my daze, I squeezed their arms tight in response.

My dad turned to me in the dark: "Amaia." His voice sounded pained like my mother's, which made me want to cry all over again.

"Listen very carefully. Your mother and I encrypted a formula that gives the location of one of the most powerful Tyrannosaurus Rex's fossils. If they get it, they will use its DNA to recreate the entire race of Tyrannosaurus Rexes, eventually destroying all huma—"

He stopped reluctantly, and I instantly knew why.

I felt the cold tip of a gun pressed against my head, and it was the same harsh voice from the caravan: "The formula or the kid dies."

My dad hesitated for a second, which cost me my entire life.

I heard him pull the trigger, and then it all went black.

A Whisper of Shadows

Wellington College International Shanghai, Alfayete Goni, Arancha – 13

I have a secret that I've never shared with anyone. It lurks in the shadows, always ready to crawl out and confront me. It's a heavy weight on my shoulders, pressing down on my soul. It takes away my appetite, my energy, my desire to speak. It's not just a thought; it's a memory—a nightmare. Fourteen years have passed since I was born in Zhangjiajie, and fourteen years since my parents were taken from me.

I can't help but replay that fateful scene in my mind, as if somehow, it could bring them back. The day was November 10, 2021. My mother, in her gentle voice, asked me to get the door. Our house was so small that I reached it in one step. My heart raced as the knocking grew louder, a tension filling my chest. I unlocked the door, and with a slow turn of the handle, the metallic crunch echoed eerily around me.

When the door swung open, a hooded figure stood before me, an x3 machine gun resting on his muscular arm, adorned with a tattoo of a bull and a cobra. "The Bulls Eye Cobraz," I whispered, my lips dry. Panic surged through me, and I scrambled behind the door, my heart pounding.

Then came the bang. I heard the gunfire before I saw the horror unfold. I stood frozen, tears streaming down my cheek, as I realized my parents were gone, leaving only pools of blood behind. The hooded men shouted that my parents didn't have what they were looking for before they left, taking the only family I had ever known. That was the last time I saw them.

Now, every time I think of the Bulls Eye Cobraz, a chill runs through me. The memory is a nail dug deep into my skin, a scar that will never heal. I remind myself of the truth: they are dead, and there's nothing I can do to change that. But what did they want? What was it that my parents didn't have?

I try to think positively, turning my gaze to TaoWei. He's the only stable thing in my life, with his messy brown hair and intense black eyes that cut through my defenses. When he winks at me, my cheeks flush, and my heart skips a beat. At least I have him, I think.

Zhangjiajie, my magical hometown, is breathtaking. With subtropical forests, crystal-clear streams, and serene lakes, it's a haven. But it's more than just that. Dinosaurs roam these lands—Shantungosaurus, Ambopteryx, Anchiornis, and Archaeopteryx—guardians of our village, they embody the magic that sustains us. The five pillars of our village, each with a gem, are powered by this magic. Yet, the central pillar has never had a gem, and I've never seen one.

The Bulls Eye Cobraz knows this magic exists, and I can't shake the fear that they'll return to take it. Without my parents, I feel the weight of that fear more than ever.

As days pass, I wear a mask of smiles, hiding my terror. I'm scared, but no one can know. Fear is a weakness, something to be ashamed of. It visits me daily, draining my happiness and replacing it with nightmares. I must stay strong for Grandpa Po, who has tried to fill the void left by my parents. But now that he's ill, the responsibility falls on me.

One evening, as I sit quietly, the world shifts violently. I hear the screams of villagers, the chaos of gunfire, and the desperate cries of mothers clutching their children. My heart races as I hide beneath a blood-stained sofa, not daring to move. The Bulls Eye Cobraz have returned, and this time, they are here to destroy everything.

I peek out and see the horrors unfolding—hooded men attacking, bullets flying, and my heart stops when I spot TaoWei. He's wearing the Bulls Eye Cobraz cloak. I gasped. How could he betray me like this? My breath catches in my throat, anger and confusion boiling inside me as I realize he's one of them.

As the battle rages on, a deafening silence envelops me, and I shake with fear. I can't just stand by and watch my village perish like my parents did. "I'm fighting back, even if it's the last thing I do," I whisper to myself, focusing my anger on TaoWei.

Suddenly, an Anchiornis lands beside me, its fearful eyes pleading for help. "They might have killed everyone, but they won't lay a finger on you," I whisper, placing a reassuring hand on its trembling head. Determined, I climbed onto its back, ready to fight.

We soar through the sky, landing in the Tianmen cave, one of the five pillars. The magic is palpable here, and as I step outside, I gasp in horror—dinosaurs are dying. I can't stand by and watch. I rush toward the battlefield, fueled by a desire for revenge rather than fear.

In the chaos, I hear someone shout, "YUNYUN, BE CAREFUL!" I look up just in time to see a massive Shantungosaurus barreling toward me, a hooded man chasing it. I could run. I could step aside and let the Shantungosaurus continue running away. But instead, I freeze, as if my feet were rooted to the ground, feeling my life flash before my eyes.

Just as the dinosaur is about to trample me, a hand grasps my arm and pulls me aside. I stumble and turn to see who saved me—TaoWei. My heart races, torn between gratitude and betrayal. "I don't understand," I mutter, backing away.

"YunYun, please listen. I was forced to join the Bulls Eye Cobraz. I would never hurt you," he pleads, and my heart flutters despite myself. He extends his arm, and I place my hand over his, drawn in by his gaze. We mount the Anchiornis together, and as it takes off, I can't help but hope he's telling the truth.

We land on the central pillar, the highest one, which has never held a gem. TaoWei explains that each pillar is imbued with magic, but this one—the couples rock—holds a deeper secret. "Remember the legend? One of your ancestors carried the fifth gem in their soul," he says. I nod slowly, recalling the tales I dismissed as mere stories.

Suddenly, a hooded figure approaches, exuding an ominous presence. "Your parents didn't have the fifth gem, or at least we didn't find it," he says, and everything clicks into place. The Bulls Eye Cobraz killed my parents to uncover the truth about the legend. My anger boils over; I had been searching for answers all this time, but they were right in front of me.

"Wait, does that mean you're part of the Bulls Eye Cobraz?" I demand, my heart racing.

"Correct, except—" The man behind him steps forward, removing his hood. My heart sinks as I recognize the tattoo on his arm. It's the same as the man who killed my parents.

Grandpa Po.

I stagger back, disbelief washing over me. I had been living with my parents' murderer for years, and I hadn't even realized it. "You killed my parents!" I spit, rage flooding my veins.

"Indeed, the only reason you never saw the gem on the central pillar is that your soul took it when you were born. You were filled with love and happiness, which defeated the magic," he explains, a twisted grin on his face.

“Now you are the guardian of the fifth gem,” TaoWei adds, his enthusiasm chilling me.

“Guess we’ll have to see if what you say is true,” Grandpa Po says, stepping closer. My heart races as I realize the gravity of the situation. I have been betrayed by the two people I trusted most.

“Should I do the honors?” TaoWei asks, excitement evident in his voice.

“I will,” Grandpa Po replies, gripping my shoulder tightly. Pain tears through my heart. “Au Revoir,” he says, and pushes me off the edge.

As I fall, my mother’s voice calls to me, and everything fades to black. My heart stops, and I know I’m finally free—free to join my parents.

My World

Wellington College International Shanghai, Bi, Lyndsey – 11

It was an early morning, when I sat on the wooden bench staring at the grey sky as rain cascaded down, dark mist patrolling the air. I got up, setting off down a little path for a walk on my own. Passing by a loving father holding the child's hand, passing by a husband and wife holding each other's arms. Everyone laughed so happily and I was the only anomaly. I hurtled down the road, to my place, the secret garage on the corner of the town. I crashed into the gigantic room, collapsing onto the floor, filling my lungs with the familiar dusty smell. A few meters away, some birds were gliding in the sky, how empty and caged I was! My father said I am good at nothing and my mother's supports had long gone. At school everyone seemed to be isolating me, asking me "there is a party tonight, who's taking you to it?" but I was sure I have told them I had nobody for 10 times already! So, I just shut up and they walked away, judging me together. I slowly backed off to a corner and allowed the darkness to swallow me.

Chapter Two

The Mamenchisaurus

Perhaps it was all just too overwhelming, that the next day's morning, I woke up swinging open the door, and I saw the most dazzling view in my lifetime.

How beautiful the sky was as if it was playing with a palette! A clear, light-blue with strips of clouds decorating bits of it into candy floss! I suddenly recognize some unusual jade green in the grass. I bent down and an amazing forest unfolded before my eyes. There were trees that looked like palm trees with leaves of pine trees. Wait, isn't that a Cycad that's supposed to appear in the late Jurassic? Just as I was investigating, a head poked in and tapped me gently on the shoulder. I have been expecting this for a while. I looked back and stroked the silky little head, attempting to climb up. Inching my way up on the slippery surface, I began to notice how beautiful the view up here was, as if I were the only one who was up high and saw things the way they truly are. It was true. I have never thought about it before, but now, I see! I was different from all others with my grown-up thoughts and my tragic stories, but is that a disadvantage? A smile on my face, I slid down onto its back and let my thoughts wander away.

I sat happily and stroked its long neck satisfied. Wait a minute... how come the sky seemed further than before? In fact, I felt that even my little dinosaur went down a bit... Wait, my dinosaur went down? We are sinking! It was a deadly brown mud puddle right below our feet, oozing like a monster wanting to devour its lunch bit by bit. From far away birds hooted as if watching the most hilarious episode ever and flapped away, evaporating. Shaking my head, I focused back to my problem. Suddenly seeing something, I jumped lightly down my dinosaur and I opened myself up flat, jerking my body around. Fortunately, I landed on an enormous pile of soft grass, unharmed. But what about the innocent dinosaur?

Leverage principle! I heaved some pieces of wood as the little guy also gave the slightest tilt of its body. To my absolute surprise, it hauled itself up on to the wood. However, the wood began to have little cracks on it, and about to break! What should I do? How can I be so useless, not even being able to save the little creature that have just brought happiness into my dark, gloomy world. Now tears were forming in my eyes, I was watching it struggle as I pulled my knees up close to myself and sobbed. That was when I heard a tiny whimper from my dinosaur, as if calling me for help, thinking I was its last hope. Without a doubt I plummeted into the puddle and pulled the piece of wood that was still hanging-on underneath the dinosaur's body. Then I lied down and slowly floated back to land. Immediately I threw the stones onto the wood, putting as much weight on it as possible. There was a terrifying crack. The dinosaur seemed to rise up by an inch as it instantly tried to scamper up the wood again. I let it do it. I

trusted it. By now my hands were getting sweeter than ever. Then, abruptly, I saw the little baby head appear on land just as the wood shattered into a tiny—pieces. Whoohoo! Success!

Chapter 3

Boom!

Just as we were celebrating our victory, a rumbling sounded in the nearby land and I felt the ground began to shake. What was happening? Just as we were wondering, the ground beneath us splitted open and we were separated. “No!” I shrieked. I ran towards the crack, using speed to soar further, and I sprawled into the air just as I fell, a familiar slimy long neck came into my view, and, without hesitation, I clung on to it, and I was being held up high in the sky, and onto a silky back. With a rush of joy, I wondered: Does anybody feel the alarming rise of heat? BOOM! The eruption. The anger of the gods started to show in the faraway land, ash clouds had already started to form and the lava leak was increasing. Any time now the bulge would burst and death would finally come. Without a doubt I steered my dinosaur, it broke off into a vicious run and galloped away to land as far away from the volcano as we can be. We sprang over tall grasses and crushed hard stones. In the nearby land we could already hear deafening noises of the lava flow approaching. The sky was a gleaming blood—red color with only strips of amber lights and grey ash decorating it. The whole land near the volcano has now turned into a deadly grey, covered with ash by the pyroclastic flows. Caught by a sudden strong wind I covered my mouth as I desperately mumbled “water, I need water”. As if remembering something, my Mamenchisaurus took off into a rapid run. Then, we both saw it: A shallow pool of water. I dived into the pool, filling my lungs with the clean water. Doing a somersault with joy, I splashed around without a care just like a 7-year-old should. We have succeeded once again. Or had we? Something told me that things were just not quite right, I felt a shiver down my spine, and just as I turned around to look, I just caught a scent of dust in the air, and I knew it was all too late. An ash plume has buried us.

Chapter 4

Home “sweet” home

The dusty smell was just so familiar. My eyelids fluttered open and I brushed back my hair, realizing that I was still standing upright. I slowly bent down to examine the hard—wooden floor. This is where my things are, this was my place and it always had been. My garage! I wandered into the back yard, and saw a particularly green bush of grass. Instantly everything flashed back in my head, the clear sky, the tall cycads, the muddy pool and the raging volcano. And of course, I can never forget my Mamenchisaurus, the “little guy” who accompanied me with all those peculiar adventures but suddenly, I was standing in my back yard, with nobody to play with and nobody to greet.

Chapter 5

5 years later

It has been years since I have experienced my weird journey. I can still remember it clear as crystal in my mind. Right now, I am staring at the sky that was a dreamy silvery grey color with little drops of rain dancing their way down. And you know what? I just went to watch a movie yesterday on my own! I was laughing and crying whenever I wanted! And on my birthday last month, I bought myself a tiny piece of cake shaped in a heart. Lighting up a match, my hands clasped together and I made a wish for me and my dinosaur. Being all by myself with nobody taking care of. Am I lonely? Pitiful? Tortured? Was it so bad at all? After all, I wasn't alone, my baby dinosaur has always been living in my head.

Defining Gravity

Wellington College International Shanghai, Blatti, Amaia – 12

BANG! NOOO! AHWWWW!

I jolt awake.

The sounds of gunshots and desperate cries awoke me. I rushed out of bed with trembling legs. Fear crept inside me as I pictured the worst-case scenarios. It was like a movie but put on fast forward. I crept down the stairs, my head buzzing full of questions about what awaited me. Dreading my worst fear, my instincts pushed me further down the stairs hearing murmurings of voices saying “Take it and go...Hurry, Go faster...” The voices started to fade away. They all wore black hoddies covering most of their faces. They were easy to perceive with the bright background. Bright flames filled the kitchen that was burning down fast. It was like I was in a microwave and the heat was going to cremate me into ashes. The dark figures were murmuring even more but I wasn’t interested in what they had to say. Hidden behind the dark oak wood stairs, I could see everything. But lying on the ground was what I had feared most. Blood was trickling down her chest. She had deep wounds, and jagged cuts covered her face as well as a lacerated arm. My heart dropped. For a second, I couldn’t breathe. My heart sunk deep below my feet, deep below what I would have called home, deep below my gut and worst of all my hidden fear. I mustn’t let it out now, I thought. I had hidden it for a long time. But this time I couldn’t control it. All this fear had taken me over the limit, beyond the limit and making me stim. Whenever I was scared, my arms started to flap by my side. Fear started to climb up my throat and slowly like needles piercing my tongue.

CRASH! OWWWWW!

I sit up. I wipe my fringe off my forehead and the sweat off my face. I didn’t even think for a millisecond what or where the disturbing noise had come from. I knew it was Auntie Yue being classic clumsy self. I think about the dream I just had. It had been the fourth time this week I had that stupid dream about someone dying and that’s a little concerning considering it is Friday today. My jet-black hair was as fluffy as a pompom. My eyes darted across the room and finding a shattered glass mirror. I look at my reflection. My pale white skin makes me look like a ghost, with dirty brown marks on my face and my thin legs and arms make me look weak and poor. I grab the wiggling brush on my desk under my mirror and force it to comb out all the knots, but it doesn’t seem like it wants to cooperate today. The comb also manages to slip itself out of my struggling hands... I always knew that comb was weird. Anyway, that didn’t really bother me. I shuffled my lazy feet towards my closet to get changed. Downstairs, I found Auntie Yue with one foot on the marble table that we found on the street with ice in her hand. She smiled at me. “Hey sweetie, can you find me the bandages please?” her warm voice made me feel like I was wrapped around in a blanket. I rubbed my gunky eyes that started to be aware of my surroundings. I rushed down to the cupboard to fetch the bandages, grabbed one and slid it across the table. Auntie shoved a bowl of dry oats in front of me. My tummy grumbled and it felt like there was an empty balloon deflating inside of me. But I couldn’t be late. I pick up my dark green backpack and head out the door forgetting to close it behind me. It was a beautiful day. There were birds singing, lush green grass and the sparkling river. I ran down the mountain slope I live on and halted at the river. My eyes darted around finding a bright red canoe. I ran over and plonked my backpack inside then I slowly but steadily placed one foot after another. Once I was safely sitting in the canoe, I unwrapped the rope that was keeping me steady. I paddled a bit further away from the house, I pulled the motor, and it started to run. I sighed, relieved that the old rusty thing didn’t bail on me and leave me stranded in the middle of the river. Five minutes later, I got out of the canoe, tied it up and rushed to school.

RINGGGGGGGGG!

Class was about to start!

I ran up the staircase which led to my classroom. I hear voices, saying “Kids, quiet down, we have a ...” I rush in the room looking like a walking disaster. Mr. Wang looks at his fancy golden hand watch. Then looks at me. I could see fury trying to escape from his eyes. “Five minutes late! MIA, DETENTION!” He banged his hand on my desk as he shouted the last word. My legs shook. I was petrified from him. “Now class, as I was saying, we have a visitor that should be here any moment.” The class looked around the room with eager eyes. I looked at the large man with the briefcase walked in. “Hello, I am Dr. Ying, and I am happy to say that when you did the writing competition last month, there was a winner in this class.” His low voice sounded like a trombone. “Your papers have been sent to us judges, and we have agreed that this paper was well and truly worthy.” I peeked at Sofie, smirking to the whole class. She was an absolute teacher’s pet and had the biggest house in our village. Oh, how I hated her. “Please let me welcome the winner to go hiking in the mountain...” it was pin drop silent. I could hear my heartbeat thump in my chest. I was certain it wasn’t me when ... “Mia Li” I gasped. I could hear muffled voices in the back row. Mr. Wang was whispering something to Dr. Ying. He shook his head and said “There, there, children I know that this is hard for you but I assure you, this is well earned.” “He looked at me. “Come on now, a hike awaits you.” I looked at his like he was out of his mind. I was not just going to let this random guy take me off to the ‘misty mountains’ that was stupid. What idiot would listen to him?

Apparently, me. I lied in bed that night thinking of the tough hike. I tried to tell him that I couldn’t go because I HAD to look after Auntie Yue, but that was obviously a mistake because she just smacked me with a icepack. I was staying in a private hut in the middle of nowhere with another hut beside me with the tour guide in it.

The next morning, I woke up bright and early to the sound of birds chirping and snakes hissing. I got dressed. I was so full of the buffe last night I couldn’t eat a mouthful so I headed outside. I walked outside and stretched my legs. I rubbed my two hands together and puffed out fog. It was cold morning. Owwww!!! I looked around, an ant must have bitten my leg. The cite was dazzling. The Sunrise was beyond comparable. I felt something pull at my jumper – making it slip off my shoulders.

I saw a weird tentacle black thing grab the tip of my jumper and pull it to the side of the cliff past the metal barrier. I ran to the barrier. And looked down. What was rising was incredible. The wings were stunning, and the shining scales were dazzling in the sunlight. It had a tiny slim body the size of me. The wings looked like webbed feet and the face was incredible. I didn’t even know myself what I was looking at, but I knew it was beautiful. It had incredible wings. I closed my eyes.

I pictured it was all a dream. The boiling sun beaming against my face, freshly cut grass and warm ...SLOBBER! I jolted upwards finding a slobbery face awaking me. My eyes were blurry so I could only see a black figure moving towards me. Instinctively, I moved away but when I did the floor felt soft and there was a tornado approaching. Then it all stopped and I was defining gravity. The site finally came into view and I was motionless in the air flying.

“Mia, are you okay?” awoken by the sounds of familiar worried voices. “ What happened? We found you on the road hike outside.” My eyeballs stretched wide awake.

“Huhhh... but there was flying and dropping and...” Auntie Yue looked at me and chuckled “Ahh silly girl, is your head okay?” I was too weak to speak, but I knew that that thing would find me again. That made me smile inside.

The Dinosaur Egg

Wellington College International Shanghai, Chen, Amanda – 13

“Auntie Meibao, if I had 10 yuan for every time you gave me noodles free of charge, I’d be drowning in money,” Li Haoran said, his voice muffled as he shovelled steaming noodles into his mouth.

The shop was small and worn, tucked between two towering apartment blocks. Auntie Meibao slapped a damp cloth over the counter and shook her head.

“Haoran, maybe if you actually paid me, I’d be the one drowning in money,” she retorted, though her smile softened the words.

Across the table, Mingxia sat quietly. Her red jacket was two sizes too big, and her cheeks were sunken. She poked her noodles with chopsticks, the steam curling around her face like a fragile veil.

“Eat, Mingxia,” Haoran said gently, his tone carrying a weight of worry he didn’t voice.

She picked up the chopsticks, her movements slow and uncertain. Auntie Meibao, watching from the counter, frowned.

“That girl...” she murmured under her breath.

Haoran finished the last of the broth, leaving the bowl spotless. He stood, stretching his broad shoulders, and thanked Meibao before taking Mingxia’s hand in his calloused one.

They stepped into the chill of the November afternoon, the wind tugging at their worn clothes.

It was hours later, in the crowded streets of the city, that Haoran saw the newspaper.

“RARE DINOSAUR EGG STOLEN – HUGE CASH REWARD OFFERED!”

The words caught his eye, and his breath hitched. The photo of the egg, a rare, fossilized relic from the ancient creatures that once roamed China, was accompanied by the promise of 300,000 yuan.

He stood frozen, the chaos of the street swirling around him. The sum wasn’t just a number. It was food. Medicine. Hope.

He ripped the paper from its stand and marched toward the edge of the city, where the streets narrowed into an old neighbourhood of leaning buildings and dusty courtyards.

“Zhangwei!”

The door creaked open, revealing his childhood friend. Zhangwei’s face was worn, his eyes sharp and calculating. He looked Haoran up and down before stepping aside to let him in.

The inside of Zhangwei’s home was cramped, dimly lit by a single bulb. His wife lingered in the corner, their young son in her arms. The boy peeked out shyly, his round face a stark contrast to his father’s gaunt one.

“What is it?” Zhangwei asked, his voice low.

Haoran slapped the newspaper onto the table. “This. We’re going to find it.”

Zhangwei’s brow furrowed as he scanned the page. “You’re serious?”

"I need the money," Haoran said simply.

Zhangwei glanced at his wife and son before looking back at Haoran. His lips pressed into a thin line. "Fine. But don't think this will be easy."

The search was gruelling. Together, they combed through Liaoning's underbelly, tracking whispers of the stolen egg. The trail led them through smoky gambling dens, abandoned warehouses, and markets where everything had a price.

At last, their efforts paid off. Beneath the flickering lights of a cold warehouse, they found it—the egg, nestled in a straw-lined crate. Its shell was smooth and speckled, ancient yet oddly alive.

But as Haoran reached for it, Zhangwei stepped in front of him.

"I can't let you take it," he said, his voice tight.

Haoran froze. "What are you talking about?"

"I need this money, Haoran. My family—"

"So does mine," Haoran interrupted, his voice a low growl.

Zhangwei's jaw clenched. "I'm sorry."

The fight erupted in a blur of fists and desperation. Zhangwei was quick, but Haoran's strength was relentless. They grappled, their friendship splintering with every strike. Finally, Haoran overpowered Zhangwei, his hands shaking as he landed the final blow.

Zhangwei crumpled to the ground, his chest still. Blood pooled on the concrete floor.

For a long moment, Haoran didn't move. His breath came in shallow gasps as he stared at the lifeless body of his oldest friend. The egg sat between them, unscathed.

By the time Haoran returned to his village, night had fallen. The wind howled through the narrow alleys, and the windows of his small home were dark.

He hurried to his neighbour's house, where he had left Mingxia. The man who answered the door avoided his gaze.

"She was crying too much," he muttered. "It's not our responsibility."

Haoran pushed past him, his heart pounding, and ran to his house.

The door creaked open, and cold silence greeted him.

Mingxia lay on her bed, her small body curled under a thin blanket. Her face was pale. He dropped the egg onto the floor with a dull thud as he stumbled toward her.

Her tiny hand was cold in his. Her chest no longer moved.

Haoran sank to his knees, his vision blurring as tears streamed down his face. The room felt impossibly small, the walls pressing in, suffocating him.

The egg sat in the corner, forgotten, its faint speckles catching the dim light.

There was no sound except for the wind outside.

The Final Sunset

Wellington College International Shanghai, Chen, Effie – 13

The sunset looked extra mesmerizing today, like how her grandmother used to describe them to her. Maybe the sunset looked extra beautiful because the world knew she was going to die. She wondered what the afterlife would be like, if she would finally be reunited with her parents. Or would it just be dark, nothing at all. Taking a deep breath, she finally met the eyes of the looming death in front of her. Inna Guiying Varya squared her shoulders and stood proudly in front of the Yangchuanosaurus, realizing that she was not afraid of her inevitable death. Slowly, so very slowly, she watched as the dinosaur reared its head back, then swung down at her.

All she could see was black.

Then, she heard a voice.

A familiar one.

Far away.

Calling her name.

“Inna.”

“Come back.”

“Come back home...”

But that small town Zabaikal’sk was not her home.

Her home was Manzhouli.

It was too late to tell the voice.

Too late.

February 17th, 1986

I’m finally visiting Manzhouli, where my mom was born! Living in Zabaikal’sk, I’ve always wanted to go to China. It was where my parents fell in love and had me. As me and my mom ride on the back of my dad’s old rusted pickup truck, with him driving, I concentrate on taking in every single small detail, every hill, every tree, every animal. I don’t mind the freezing February wind biting into my face, because why would I? I’m in China!

October 21st, 1989

It’s my eighth birthday today! And obviously I celebrated in Manzhouli. Today was the best day ever. I invited all my friends to come, and we had a picnic on the countryside. On the way back home, I stared at every twist and turn we took, just like every ride back.

June 9th, 1994

All good things eventually come to an end. That’s what my mom told me. My parents told me we weren’t allowed to go to China anymore because of some danger happening there. They said if we stay in our town, the border patrols will keep us safe. So that’s what we did.

February 15th, 1996, 5:32 am

I can't take it anymore. I'm running away. Today. To Manzhouli. I know the way better than I know the back of my hand, even after two long years. I can't believe it; I'm finally coming home.

February 15th, 1996, 4pm

I wander through the streets, hauling the heavy rucksack on my shoulder. It is getting fairly late now and by the time I find somewhere to stay, it'll be dark. If I even find somewhere to stay. Nobody wants to be caught outside at night in the winter here. Especially with whatever danger that is lurking around here, the danger that ended up with one of the villagers dead. Slowly, but steadily, I make my way across the town, searching for any apartments or motels. At seven pm, I found a shabby, but cozy inn near the half-frozen lake. Pushing open the door, I made my way towards the front desk.

"Hello, is there a room available tonight?" I speak fluent Chinese. I guess all those lessons with mom really paid off.

The old woman behind the desk looked up, a bored expression coating her face.

"Name?"

"Wang Guiying" I offer a polite smile.

"Are you by yourself?"

I offered a curt nod.

The woman sighed.

"This isn't somewhere you'd want to be during these few years, I advise you to quickly finish whatever business you are here for and go back to wherever you are from. Russia, I presume. How many nights?"

"A week"

"That'll be 105 RMB"

Luck must've been on my side for me to find a place to stay for only that cheap. I rummage through my bag and finally find the small pouch of money I took before I left. Perfect, I still have 520 RMB left after paying.

"Second floor, third door to your right", the woman says after handing me the keys.

"Thank you, have a nice day"

No response. I expected that.

After three tiresome long days of chatting up strangers, hoping to find out about the mysterious danger here, they all said two words, then ran off. *Kǒng lóng*, meaning dinosaur. What? All that work and it got me nothing. In addition to that, I'm running low on money.

October 21st, 1998

It has been two years. Two years of working odd jobs, two years of staying in that inn. I also started getting letters after the first month. Letters every two weeks. From my mom. Each said the same thing:

Inna, come back. Come back home. Please. We miss you. We're still living in Zabaikal'sk, come back at least once, to visit.

Over these past months, the old hotel manager has grown on me, though not the other way around. We've become kind of like friends. If not friends, then friendly acquaintances. Just the other day, I poured my heart out to her about my birthday coming up soon. Sooner than soon. Tomorrow. I miss my parents. The old woman merely said to just visit them. I can't just go visit them, can I? I'm still mulling over the conversation as I lie awake in bed. I want to go...It's just that I'm scared. Scared for their reaction, scared to see home again. No, not home. It hasn't been home since I first set foot in Manzhouli when I was five. I decide to sleep on it and decide what to do in the morning.

I don't know what I am doing as I sit in an old wooden carriage, currently giving directions to Zabaikal'sk, to the man at the front. This better be worth it, I think to myself, I paid a good amount of money for this ride. I hop off the carriage as we near the border, I'm on my own now. Passport in hand, I near the security booth. Strange, there's nobody there.

"Hello?" I call out.

"Anyone there?" I try again, in both Chinese and Russian.

Nothing.

I step foot inside the booth, perhaps they are in trouble. Inside, I look around for any traces of people. On one side of the room, I spot a huge panel of screens. Pretty advanced technology. I take a moment to appreciate it when I catch a remote. The screen at the very top must be a TV screen. I fumbled with the remote for a few minutes before I finally figured out how to turn it on. Looks like a news report and utterly useless. I almost turned it off before I heard what they were taking about.

Breaking News, Zabaikal'sk, a Russian town bordering China destroyed by Yangchuanosauruses, a type of dinosaur. There are no survivors.

At that moment, as if on cue, I hear a roar outside the booth. I freeze. No. It can't be. I step out of the booth. I probably shouldn't have done that.

I took in the dinosaur in front of me. It was like nothing I've ever seen before in my life. Around four meter tall, I'm guessing, and about eleven meters in length, the creature was basically a killing machine. Sharp teeth, lethal claws, long tail, this thing had it all.

My heart is beating so fast, I think I'm about to have a heart attack. I took rapid deep breaths in an attempt to calm myself. I whip my head around, looking for anything that would aid me and keep me safe.

On the horizon, I see the sunset.

So pretty. So...mesmerizing.

My last moments of peace, before,
death.

Secrets of the Past

Wellington College International Shanghai, Chen, Fika – 13

Silent tears streamed down Giselle's face, racking her body with sobs and making her vision blurred. She took a deep breath, trying to compose herself as the eulogist started the speech, going on about how much of a good palaeontologist he was, about all the achievements and projects he had carried out and acquired. She sucked in a sharp breath, feeling her heart break as she realized that he would never ever appear in her life again. Letting out an anguished cry, she started to remember how she used to run up and hug him when he came back from work, and she wondered how she would ever get on with life without his presence around her. Giselle paced the room, nibbling on her fingernails as she anxiously awaited for the reading of his will.

"And to my beloved daughter, I leave my estate in Shandong province, and 25,000 Yuan. I want you to go to the manor and find something. *In the house of memories where shadows play, Seek the floor that's loose in the light of day. Find the key to a world both old and new, Where wisdom lies with ancient knowledge.* This should help you find you what you need.

Determined to honor her father's memory and unravel the mystery he had left behind, Giselle traveled to the estate in Shandong. The property was vast, filled with ancient artifacts and relics of her father's illustrious career. The house was like a labyrinth of rooms and hallways, each one holding a piece of the past. She put her explorer's cap on as she wandered around the massive house, humming to herself quietly as she found herself in the enormous library. Giselle roamed around the bookshelves, when something glittery caught her eye. She backtracked, and found a tiny, barely-visible intricate design on a floorboard directly below the window. She pried it open carefully, and found a small, brass, ornate key hidden beneath. This must be the key to a world both old and new. It had the same intricate design printed onto the floorboard; swirling lines around what seemed to be a leaf, and it was quite heavy.

With the key in hand, Giselle explored the house further, trying to find the place where the wisdom, lies with ancient knowledge. She suddenly thought of her late father's study room. It was where he always wrote and presented case studies. She looked around the room for clues, any imperfections in the bookcases or the floorboards, eventually discovering an odd looking book that didn't seem to fit in with the other books in the shelves. She pulled it out cautiously, expecting a secret entrance to pop out or something. Giselle braced herself, but nothing happened. She rolled her eyes, as disappointment flooded her senses. She was about to put the book back and walk away, but something was calling to her. She peered into where the odd book had been, noticing a slight crack in the bookshelf. She peeled back the thin wood, revealing a small key hole camouflaged into the back of the bookshelf. Giselle dug the key out of the pocket, and inserted it into the keyhole. The key fit perfectly into the lock, and a hidden door popped open behind her, showing a dark staircase leading into the basement of the gargantuan mansion.

Inside, Giselle was met with an astonishing sight: rows and rows shelves lined with neat little jars containing perfectly preserved, pickled dinosaurs. She could hardly believe her eyes. She knew her father had always been fascinated by the prehistoric world, but she had never imagined he would make such an extraordinary discovery. Giselle carefully lifted one of the neatly labelled jars, holding it up to the light. It seemed to be filled with some kind of thick, droopy liquid. The tiny creature inside, a prehistoric lizard-like dinosaur, seemed to float in suspended animation. She marveled at the details, feeling a connection to a world millions of years old.

In the center of the room, on a large table, lay several dinosaur eggs, carefully arranged and labeled. Alongside them was an old, leather-bound book, presumably her father's diary, filled with detailed notes and reports on his

experiments with the eggs. She flipped through the pages, suspicion coursing in her veins as she realized that the pages had been ripped out. Giselle, sat down on the marble floor, took a deep breath, and started reading.

Day 1

The experiment's working! We finally figured out the formulae a few hours ago, and I can't wait to test it out. This one's different from the others, I can feel it. It's supposed to grow a dinosaur fetus in some superficial egg shells we made. We're really excited about this project because it means we get to analyze the egg the whole time.

Day 19

Progress is showing. The fetus is growing, and it looks like a pink pile of flesh molded briefly into shape. It should hatch by the end of November. We've modified the genes so it hatches as an oviraptor, the world's 3rd most rarest dinosaur. We're hoping to run some tests on it when it hatches so we can get to know more about this nearly unknown species.

The last entry of the diary looked messy, as if her father had rushed it, and it was torn into half; the bottom half missing.

Day 91

Dear Giselle, if you're reading this, I want you to know that I love you and always will. Please be careful, because at this point, you will have seen the jars and dinosaur eggs, and you'll be in grave danger. I need to tell you something. I'm actually n.....

Giselle put the diary down as she stared ahead of her in confusion. “*I'm actually what Dad?* ” The lack of information she was getting was so irritating. Giselle threw the book down onto the floor, her anger evaporating a bit, as she felt a tiny twinge of satisfaction watching the tattered book clatter to the other side of the room. The hair on the back of her neck suddenly stood up, sending shivers down Giselle's spine. She was getting an uncanny feeling that she was being watched. She turned around swiftly, surprised when she caught a glimpse of a tall shadow escaping out of the secret passageway.

“*Hey!* “

Echoes of Extinction

Wellington College International Shanghai, Chen, Liang – 13

There wasn't a single ripple in the water, sunlight streaming through the branches, creating unique patterns on the floor, and the once luscious green leaves had transformed into a tapestry of warm colours; glowing reds, golden yellows, and deep oranges. The leaves crunched underfoot as Aunt Chen strolled home from a long day from working at the noodle shop. Aunt Chen gazed at the beautiful scenery of Liaoning, and it seemed to take all of her stress away. She followed the crisp, colourful blanket of leaves down the path to her small cottage.

As she pushed open the creaky door, she heard her daughter Xiaoli Chen laughing in the backyard mixed with their dog, Bones, barking. They had named him Bones because his favourite toy was a squeaky toy bone. Aunt Chen smiled as she took a seat in the backyard and watched as Xiaoli noticed her and ran over.

"Hey mom! Welcome home!" she exclaimed. Aunt Chen chuckled and pulled her into a hug as Xiaoli threw the toy bone to the right. She replied, "It was fine, although it was a very busy day at the noodle shop."

Just as Aunt Chen finished her sentence Bones ran over and dropped his bone on the floor next to her. She bent to pick it up but noticed something strange the bone was much heavier than usual, and it was dusty, covered in dirt and definitely not made of plastic. It was almost as if it was a real bone. Xiaoli also noticed something was off and came closer for a better look. They both turned to direction Xiaoli threw the toy bone, and found it still laying on the ground, next to it bones stood in front of a hole sniffing the ground, his paw covered in dirt.

"Is this a..." Xiaoli mumbled.

"A fossil?" Aunt Chen finished quietly.

The both of them stayed frozen gaping at the strange, mysterious object in Aunt Chen's hand. Until Xiaoli finally said, "It could just be a strangely shaped rock."

"You're not wrong," Aunt Chen said tentatively. But they both saw in each other's eyes than neither of them believed that statement.

What had seemed to be a calm normal day had turned to a confusing, perplexing event.

Xiaoli reached out to take the intriguing object from her mother, but when she took it, her hand slipped causing the fossil to fall onto the tiled steps of their backyard, breaking into two pieces. Xiaoli yelped and immediately bent down to inspect the fossil, and found something even more curious. The fossil was hollow and in it contained a rolled up piece of faded parchment. She immediately picked it up and glanced at her mom in confusion. Aunt Chen was speechless and simply just shrugged her shoulders, looking dumfounded. Xiaoli could no longer contain her curiosity and began unravelling the scroll.

Suddenly, the ground began to shake and the world started spinning, colours blurred together and Xiaoli and Aunt Chen screamed in unison eyes locking together one final time before everything went black.

When Xiaoli opened her eyes she found herself laying in a forest filled with towering trees draped in vibrant vines and mosses, while the air buzzed with the sounds of chirping insects and distant calls. Filled with confusion she stood up and brushed the dust and debris off her. "Where was her house?" "Where was the little road that led to her front yard?" "Where was she?" As she looked around at the trees, she heard a faint rustling coming from behind her. She spun around eyes wide as she began to imagine what that could be. Then she heard a familiar voice call out, "Hello?"

"Mom?" Xiaoli tentatively said, inching closer to the bush and sticking her head through the leaves and vines. On the other side she found her mom, Auntie Chen, sitting on the floor looking very puzzled. Her face lit up when she saw Xiaoli's face, and asked, "Where are we?"

"I don't know, I can't seem to recall much."

"Well... Last I remember, we were...."

Suddenly she gasped as she realized. "The fossil!" she cried. As Auntie Chen processed this information, her face turned to a look of realization but then it quickly turned back to confusion, "But that still doesn't explain where we..." Her sentence was cut short by a loud thunderous roar coming from somewhere to their right. The sound echoed through the forest, reverberating off trees sending vibrations through the ground. Their eyes widened in fear as they heard the roar get louder followed by muffled footsteps of something large coming their way. "Quick! Hide!" Auntie Chen hissed as she and Xiaoli dove to the ground beneath the bushes. Xiaoli peeked through one of the cracks in between the leaves. And made a small gasp of surprise from what she saw. It was a dinosaur! Suddenly Xiaoli tripped and stumbled into the clearing where the dinosaur stood. The dinosaur's head snapped towards her. She gasped in fear and turned to run but being the clumsy person she was she tumbled to the ground. She screamed as the dinosaur advanced. The last thing she saw was the Dinosaur's mouth filled with jagged teeth and dripping with saliva. Then... nothing.

The Seventh Fossil

Wellington College International Shanghai, Chen, Ryan – 12

It was a foggy day, like always, and the relentless drone of the digging machines filled the air. In the year 2091, the world had become a graveyard of its former self, suffocated by the atmosphere and scars of climate catastrophe. Towering corporate edifices loomed over the desolate landscape, their glass facades reflecting a society obsessed with wealth and status. In this bleak reality, fossils had become the ultimate currency, and an individual's worth was measured by their "fossil count" — the amount of fossil unearthed. Reaching a fossil count of 7 would elevate one to the status of a near-trillionaire.

Chen was a dedicated paleontologist boasting a prestigious count of 6. His life revolved around the bones buried deep beneath the earth, yet as he gazed out at the city from his high-rise apartment, the desire for recognition gnawed at him. He longed for the day he would unearth that elusive last fossil—the one that would elevate him to the revered fossil count of 7.

Suddenly, a knock echoed from the door. Chen, slightly intoxicated, stumbled toward the entrance and wearily opened it. There lay an unmarked envelope, covered in leaves and dirt. As he pulled out the contents, his breath caught in his throat; it was a pair of coordinates leading to a restricted site—a long-abandoned industrial complex rumored to hold untold treasures, including the skull of a giant theropod. Flabbergasted yet determined, he snapped out of his thoughts and quickly assembled a team: his former mentor, Dr. Li, who upheld ethical standards of paleontology, and, rival archaeologist, Mei, known for her cutthroat tactics. Together, they planned to explore the site the very next day.

"Tomorrow will be the day... Tomorrow will be the day," Chen repeated to himself, anticipation coursing through his veins. The silver moon crept higher in the sky, but he still could not rest. He imagined his future glory—fame, accolades, and the validation he craved, all hinging on a forbidden excavation. As dawn broke over the mountains, they set off in their old, rusted van. Out the window, was a destroyed landscape, ravaged by pollution. As they drove past the filthy tainted remnants of rivers and the befouled hills stained with rubble and trash, Chen's gaze fell on a dead crow on a road sign, surrounded by tiny eggs. In the crow's beak lay a cracked egg, the shell scattered on its face. The sight tugged at his heart, but he quickly dismissed it and drove on. Soon, they spotted an abandoned fenced-off patch of earth nestled against the craggy mountains. Consulting the map, Chen confirmed this was their destination. As they approached the complex, the air thickened with the stench of decay, and rusted machinery jutted from the ground like skeletal remains of a forgotten era. Chen's heart raced with anticipation, but tension simmered in the air. Mei's piercing gaze lingered on him, ambition radiating from her like heat from a flame. Dr. Li's cautious demeanor served as a stark reminder of the risks they faced. "Remember, we're here to uncover history, not to destroy it," Li cautioned, his voice steady. Chen nodded, but the weight of his ambition pushed him onward, drowning out the warnings echoing in his mind. As they ventured deeper into the complex, it became evident that the government had laid traps to deter intruders. Fortunately, Mei's keen instincts enabled them to evade detection, and they pressed on. Within the crumbling walls of an abandoned structure, Chen spotted something unusual—something curved and horn-like protruding from the ground. "Here! I think I found it!" he shouted, excitement flooding his voice. As they began excavating the area around the horn, days turned into a blur of dirt and discovery. Each they unearthed felt like a step closer to glory, yet the atmosphere grew increasingly tense. Mei began to sow seeds of discord towards Li, Chen's leadership came under scrutiny, and the cracks in their unity widened.

The revelation arrived when they finally uncovered a breathtaking fossil—the well-preserved skull of the theropod, its glimmering like jewels under the dim light. "YES!!!" Chen cried out, jubilation surging through him.

But then Dr. Li pressed a finger to his lips. “Shhh! They might hear us!” At that moment, sound of approaching drones shattered their triumph. A bright red lights streaked across the sky. Then another. Then another, weaving the fog like predators scenting prey. Panic surged within the trio. “Run!” Dr. Li shouted, his voice drowned out by the mechanical whirring above them. In chaos, Mei seized her opportunity, darted towards the fossil with the gleam of desperation in her eyes. “Mei, don’t!” Chen yelled, but she was already bolting away, clutching the theropod skull. Fury ignited within him, and he sprinted after her, his fear eclipsed by his obsession. Chen, we need to escape!” Dr. Li urged, but Chen’s determination on reclaiming the fossil clouded his judgment. As they dashed through the ruins, the drones closed in, their red lights sweeping over the like bloodhounds on the hunt. Chen and Mei collided atop a dilapidated structure teetering on the edge of a crumbling rooftop. As the drones surrounded them, Mei pushed Chen aside, her eyes wild with. “Back off, or I’ll drop it!” she threatened, extending the theropod skull over the edge. Chen knew she was bluffing, yet the threat sent a chill down his spine, forcing him to take a step back. The drones hovered closer, their whirs growing louder. Suddenly, Mei slipped on the icy surface, and the fossil slipped from her grasp. Time seemed to freeze as Chen watched his dreams plummet into the below. In a moment of desperation, he lunged forward, attempting to save it. “Chen, no!” Dr. Li shouted, reaching out, but Chen miscalculated his leap and lost his balance, falling through the decaying floor beneath him, darkness swallowing him whole.

When he regained consciousness, pain radiated through his body, and the sounds of chaos faded into a distant murmur. He lay atop the shattered remains of the theropod skull, which was reduced to fragments. Above him, world continued its relentless pace, indifferent to his fate. “Did she—did she get away with the fossil?” Chen whispered, realization crashing over him like a cold wave. The ambition that had driven him had led to his downfall. Dr. Li knelt beside him eyes filled with regret. “You have to let it go, Chen. It isn’t worth your life.” But as Chen lay there, understood the true cost of his obsession. The fossil count, the recognition, the wealth—all fleeting. As the drones circled above, he felt his strength fading, tears welling in his eyes. In his final moments, regret and the bitter taste of karma consumed him.

He had gone too far, and now he would pay the ultimate price.

Whisk Me (And My Taxes) Away

Wellington College International Shanghai, Chen, Zhu Zhu – 12

Cold, exhausted and shaking in frustration, Layla staggered up the rotting hill of dust and debris after her coworkers, almost tripping over a fragment of bone poking out. She lets out a sigh. If only her sister hadn't signed her up for this stupid extra credit paleontological project... she should call her and demand a refund. Then, a shout interrupts her brooding. "Come on, Layla! The cafeteria is first come first serve, and I'm starving!"

#

The familiar scent of cooking instantly put Aaron's mind to rest. He stoops a bit through the hanging door, salt-and-pepper hair brushing the ceiling. His diner is quaint, but with a distinct rustic feeling from the hanging signs in Mandarin and a crackling flame burning in the hearth.

"Yo, Aaron! Two lanky teens leaned against the counter, grinning. "Casino tonight? It's a surefire win this time."

Aaron shook his head, chuckling. "Can't gamble away rent money, can I?"

And with that he donned the apron and chef's hat, easily blending into the bustling crowd.

Weaving through the sea of bodies and sizzling food, Aaron snatches two empty plates and tosses them towards the overcrowded sink. He's rewarded with an indignant "Hey!" from the cook, who bats at him softly with a frying pan before turning back with a sigh of "Stupid boys."

An afternoon of cutting, frying and washing plates later, the door gives an almighty lurch and a formidable-looking man struts in. Aaron was about to chastise him for leaving mud on the welcome mat, before his stomach sinks and he groans inwardly. John Michael, self-proclaimed "head of this industry." With a balding head, thick eyebrows and squinting eyes, John was the epitome of ugliness. But it didn't affect the fact that he held control over Aaron's property – something that he didn't let him forget.

"Mr Aaron," he hissed, emphasizing the former word, "I regret to inform you that your rent is due." A smirk played on his lips as his eyes sparkled maliciously.

Aaron strode forward confidently, a few hundred bills collected from months of endless work clutched in his hand. He stretched out his forearm to deliver the bills –he remained adamant that John Michael would always be kept at least an arm-length away– and the man in question took the pile, whistling softly.

"Woah... I mean, pitiful – How long did this take you to collect? I bet your whole worthless life isn't worth half of this." He started to count the bills, stumbling a few times and having to start again. Aaron watched, grinning confidently. His effort was finally paying off.

At long last, John looked up with a faux look of disappointment which emphasized his grotesque features. Aaron's arrogant smile was wiped of his face as he said, "This still isn't enough."

Aaron's confidence faltered.

No.

He couldn't believe it – he wouldn't believe it.

He scrambled over, stomach sinking. Desperation flooded his thoughts. Forty-six dollars. The rent was sixty. Only one option remained, illegal as it might be.

#

After an afternoon of stuffing their lipstick-smeared mouths with pasta, Layla's coworkers returned to their digging, pickaxes clanking against the ground. She trudged up the cobbled path to the laboratory.

The halls were eerily quiet, still echoing with white noise, some doors still swinging off their hinges. Heart in her throat, hands clammy with cold sweat, Layla proceeded through the empty corridors. The first thing that greeted her was the smell. It oozed through the walls, an odorous force that made Layla gag. She ventured deeper into the labyrinth of corridors her unease growing, completely oblivious of the situation that would ensue.

#

Layla was scared. She had checked all the rooms, but it seemed as if the scientists had all vanished into the sterile white lab coats. Just then, a high-pitched alarm went off, a flashing red glow projected against walls. Shadows flickered on the walls, their eeriness amplified by the tinted white lamps. Footsteps were approaching. The tension in the air was poignant as she turned a corner, almost slamming into a tall young man in a scruffily-made-up moustache and blonde wig. At first glance, he seemed to be roughly the same age as her, his "hair" knocked lopsided as he struggled to his feet. Layla rushed forward to lend a hand. "Oh, my word, are you alright? I'm sorry I wasn't watching where I was going... and that reminds me, do you know what's going on? Where is everyone? Oh yes, my name's Layla by the way." The words seemed to rush out of her. She had already spluttered out more sentences than she had done through the entire bus ride to this quaint laboratory, before realising that the man seemed to be holding something behind his back. His ears flushed red as he saw the source of her interest, and he clutched at the object with renewed vigour. "Ah, yes... about that..." He hesitated, before blurting out: "I'm Aaron."

#

Layla nodded assent, then frowned. "What's that behind your back?" "Nothing" Aaron said quickly, as he did a stupid kind of pirouette to conceal it. A loud crash sped shattered the silence. Both turned to the noise. Behind Aaron, a giant cracked egg lay on the ground, cracks spidering through its tawny shell. "What is that?" Layla whispered. Aaron snatched up the egg and ran, Layla hot on his heels.

Aaron's heart raced as he pounded through the sterile corridor, the egg stirring in his arms. The harsh light flickered, and Layla's frantic footsteps followed close behind him.

#

Someone really needed to fill Layla in on what was going on. She had been thrown into this wild goose chase, with no knowledge on what was going on besides the order that she was to aid the scientists in discovering fossils in this wreck of a place. She yearned to return to her apartment, to remain oblivious of the situation. Layla was so caught up in her thoughts that she stumbled, her breath hitching in her throat, and sprawled face-first on the tiled floor. She struggled to force herself to get back on her feet, to continue this chase to God-knows-where, but she found that

she didn't have the strength. As she against the wall, heaving in deep breaths of this foul-smelling hall, a familiar face popped up – salt-and-pepper hair glinting in the hostile light. Layla found strength in this unexpected appearance and stood up, taking in a deep breath before starting her tirade:

“You imbecile! How dare you do this to me! Do you even know who I am? My sister's car is probably worth your whole worthless life! I have half a mind to just dial nine-one-one right now, you thief. This is private property, and you are trespassing!”

Aaron sighed as she continued her rant, tuning the whole thing out after her quip about his 'worthless life.' It was the second time that he'd heard the phrase today. As he opened a mouth to provide a rebuke, or perhaps apologise for ruining her entire day, she snatched the egg from his arms. His breath hitched as her hand brushed against his sleeve, only half noticing as she peeked inside the egg and let out a gasp of excitement. Faint cooing noises were emanating from the broken shell, and Layla let out a giggle of excitement as she spun on the spot, the egg cradled in her arms, Aaron watching on with a look of bemusement. Then, a scissoring movement caught his eye as the shell started to crack, pieces falling away to reveal a distinctly bird-like thing, with scaled wings and taloned claws. None of them could believe it. Both leaned in closer to glimpse the creature, before Aaron said with glee, “Don't you see? This is a living, breathing dinosaur! It's the end of all our problems! We could get funds for it, start a centre to nurture this little fella, and money and fame will come pouring in!” At his words, Layla's heart was light with joy as she clutched the dinosaur to her chest, and Aaron's mind was a whirlpool of thoughts as the pressure of his rent was lifted from his shoulders.

A loud clattering broke their euphoria.

At first, it seemed like a stampede – then, it was no longer just one movement, but a series of them: travelling through the corridor in an unorganised line. It was a herd of baby dinosaurs; some still with their shells acting like hats, some joking around in a language that Aaron and Layla could not understand but which was still beautiful. Possibilities flooded through, ideas branching together of a future with these magnificent beasts.

#

The sun set on that fateful day, and Aaron and Layla gathered outside the facility to watch it. In their eyes, there had never been anything more beautiful, as both their lives were taking a turn for the better.

The Hidden Symphony of Time

Wellington College International Shanghai, Devis, NurIvy – 12

The air was still in the hills of Liaoning, save for the distant calls of cicadas. Mei Zhao crouched low by the dig site, brushing soil off what looked like tiny bones, her heart thrumming with excitement. At fifteen, Mei was used to being overlooked—not just by her parents, but by life itself. Living in a rural town, surrounded by her father’s endless fossil samples and her mother’s ecological reports, Mei often felt like a background character in someone else’s story. Her parents—renowned in their fields—seemed to have forgotten that she wasn’t a project to be managed, but a person with her own story waiting to unfold.

But here, at the dig site, Mei felt something stir inside her. She wasn’t just helping her father’s team; she was discovering. The excavation had unearthed a fossilized *Sinosauropteryx* nest—a rare find. The creatures were feathered, about the size of a chicken, and were known for their distinct striped tails. But what fascinated Mei more than the skeletons were the insects preserved alongside them. Some were frozen in amber, others fossilized within the rock strata—species thought to have gone extinct millions of years ago. Yet Mei’s keen eye noticed a troubling pattern: many of these “extinct” insects looked eerily similar to the ones she had seen skittering around her backyard.

That night, Mei sat by the open window in her room, sketching an ant she had collected earlier. Outside, the forest was quiet, except for the occasional rustling of branches in the wind. Mei’s hand paused mid-sketch as her gaze drifted to the jar on her desk. The ant inside moved erratically, scratching at the glass like it was trying to dig its way out. She thought back to what she’d observed earlier at the dig site. The insects they’d unearthed weren’t just ancient—there was something... alive about them, even after millions of years.

“Evolution doesn’t move backward,” her father would say. But what if these insects had never needed to evolve at all?

The next morning, the sun was already beating down on the dig site by the time Mei arrived with her parents. Tents and tables were scattered across the excavation zone, and scientists buzzed with excitement, taking measurements, jotting down notes, and photographing fossils. Her mother, Jing, stood by the workstation, examining one of the preserved beetles with a magnifying lens.

“This species hasn’t been seen for over a hundred million years,” Jing said, more to herself than to Mei. “Yet... here it is. And I swear I’ve seen the same beetles crawling near the river.”

Mei leaned over her mother’s shoulder. “Do you think they’re still alive? The same species, I mean?”

Jing gave a tight smile. “It’s not impossible. Species can go unnoticed, especially in isolated ecosystems. But it would mean... something’s been hiding right under our noses all this time.”

That thought sent a chill through Mei. She had always felt as though she was missing something—the bigger picture, some truth that lay just out of reach. The forest behind their house, usually a place of comfort, now felt like it was hiding secrets.

The unease deepened over the following days. Mei noticed strange behavior among the insects in the forest—ants clustering in dense masses along the roots of trees, beetles gathering in odd patterns, wasps moving in synchronized swarms. It was as if they were waiting for something. When Mei mentioned it to the scientists, they brushed it off as coincidence, more interested in their fossilized treasures than in modern insect behavior.

But Mei's mother grew more concerned. She spent long hours comparing the dig site fossils with the living insects she collected, her brows furrowed in thought. One night, Mei found her sitting at the kitchen table, surrounded by jars of insects and sketches.

"There's a pattern," Jing muttered, half to herself. "The insects we dug up—some of them are behaving just like the living ones. It's as if... they recognize something."

"Recognize what?" Mei asked, her heart quickening.

Jing looked up, her eyes shadowed with a mixture of fear and fascination. "Each other."

Mei felt the weight of the word sink into her chest. If these insects had survived unchanged for millions of years, then what else might have endured with them?

Days later, the tension snapped. While the team worked at the dig site, a swarm of insects rose from the forest floor like a dark, shifting cloud. They moved with terrifying coordination, stinging and biting anyone who got too close. Tents were overturned, equipment scattered, and scientists fled in panic. Mei watched in horror as ants and beetles poured out of the ground in endless waves, forcing the excavation to come to an abrupt halt.

"These aren't just insects," Jing whispered as they retreated to safety. "They're a colony. And we've disturbed them."

Back at home, Mei sat at her desk, turning the pieces over in her mind. This colony—whatever it was—had survived for millions of years, untouched by time or humanity. The fossilized *Sinosauropteryx* bones made more sense now: the dinosaurs had formed a symbiotic relationship with the insects, coexisting in ways no one had ever imagined. Perhaps the insects had even helped the dinosaurs survive longer than previously thought. But now that humans had disrupted the colony, it had turned hostile.

Mei's parents wanted to leave the area, fearing an ecological disaster. But Mei couldn't shake the feeling that this discovery mattered. It wasn't just a fossil dig anymore—it was a glimpse into a hidden ecosystem, one that had outlasted the dinosaurs and remained unseen for millennia. And it wasn't just science; it was a story waiting to be told.

The final piece of the puzzle fell into place when Mei ventured into the forest alone, determined to understand the insects' behavior. She followed the swarms to a network of underground caverns beneath the dig site. Inside, the air was thick with the hum of wings and the scuttling of legs. Mei crouched in the shadows, watching as beetles and ants moved in synchronized patterns, forming intricate structures from soil and plant matter.

The colony wasn't just reacting to the excavation—it was evolving, adapting to the threat of human interference. Mei realized with a jolt that these insects weren't mindless creatures—they were part of an ancient intelligence, a living network that communicated and adapted as one.

She had a choice: leave the colony alone and let it remain hidden, or convince the scientists to work with the local ecologists to protect it. Destroying the colony would mean losing an ancient piece of Earth's history—and possibly unleashing even greater danger.

In the end, Mei found her voice. She stood before the scientists and spoke with more conviction than she knew she had. "This isn't just a discovery. It's a warning. The past isn't something we can dig up and control. It's still here, living alongside us. If we don't learn how to coexist with it, we'll make the same mistakes the dinosaurs did."

Her parents exchanged glances, and for the first time, Mei saw something different in their eyes: recognition. They listened. And together, they worked with the local ecologists to cordon off the site and study the insects in ways that wouldn't disrupt the colony.

As summer drew to a close, Mei sat by the riverbank, watching dragonflies dance over the water. For the first time in her life, she felt like she belonged—not just to her family, but to the world around her. The colony, the fossils, the forest—they were all part of the same story. And now, Mei was too.

The swarm below would remain a mystery, hidden beneath the earth, but Mei had found her place. Not just as a scientist, but as a storyteller—someone who understood that knowledge was more than facts. It was about connection, the thread that wove people and nature together across time.

And in that quiet moment by the river, Mei knew: she would never be invisible again.

Shandong's Dinosaur

Wellington College International Shanghai, Gao, George – 11

A sheet of white blanketed the village and filled the streets of Linqu County in Shandong, the streetlights flickered and swayed. The wind and snow occupied the streets forcing people into their houses. Suddenly a small boy appeared in the corner, tears dripped down his cheeks into the white below. He was covered in layers of rags bespattered in mud and his black hair seeping out of his woolen hat was white with snow. The snow danced and attacked his flushed face. It filled his shoes and penetrated his thick coat he had only recently attained. He stumbled forward dragging his legs behind him. He felt dead as he was alive, struggling on through the vicious cold until finally, he slumped down on the doorstep of a tupi with orangish walls made of mudbrick and a straw roof. The world faded.

He slowly opened his eyes and looked around at the unfamiliar surroundings. An unfriendly odor was coming from a dimly lit oil lamp standing in the corner. Water dripped from the oak ceiling into a steel pail and ground was covered by a thin layer of rustic mire. He was lying on the wooden bed frame. He took a moment for everything to come back. Then a question came to him: was he dead? He tried to sit up and a searing pain surged from his toes to his fingertips, he opened his mouth and screamed, but no sound came out. Panicking he strained his muscles in a vain attempt to move yet his body screamed in agony.

Suddenly, the door slowly creaked open. An old man that was possibly in his fifties walked in at a leisurely pace. His clothes were ripped and ragged and his feet were encased by a thick layer of mud. He held an old wooden bowl, burnt at the bottom and containing a smidgeon of rice. The man turned to him, the tips of his mouth raised in a friendly smile.

“Oh good your awake!” the man said cheerfully in Chinese.

Glancing at the boys huge eyes and frozen face he chuckled and said “My name is Wang Yixing, what is yours boy?” as he set the wooden bowl on a stool beside him.

He opened his mouth to say “Where am I?” but no sound came out of his mouth which he noticed was unbearably numb, instead the lion in his body growled in response.

The man chuckled again “You must be hungry!”

The boy gave a tiny nod and winced, casting hungry looks at bowl of rice left of him. The old man pried open his jaws and supplied his mouth with a spoon of rice. It tasted like dirt. At least it was better than nothing. The boy chewed slowly, lost in thought, until the last bit of grub was scraped clean from the bottom of the bowl.

“I’m sorry this is all we have” said Mr. Wang apologetically, almost sadly.

Mr. Wang slowly stood up and walked to the door. Looking back for the last time he left the room.

“My name is Yuan Longxi” the boy called after him feebly.

Longxi was now 12 years old. He had lived with Mr. Wang for nearly five years now. He was a good boy, well learnt and strong. He helped Mr. Wang do his sales and did chores. He took any spare time to run to the local library. He loved books, most of all books about dinosaurs. Tyrannosaurus rex, Abelisaurus, Gargoyleosaurus, a vast number of species fascinated him. He had his freedom, and he could go anywhere he wanted all except one room

which Mr. Wang strictly forbid him to enter. He had tried the doorknob before and found it locked. That was when Mr. Wang came storming in, stony faced and dragged him off without a word.

One tempestuous night, Longxi woke up. Thunder boomed and roared outside, tendrils of light seeped through the cracks and crevices in the walls, and drops of water formed pools on the muddy ground. Longxi heaved himself up from his cold, hard bed and threw his blanket aside. He blinked his eyes a few times then licked his cracked and bleeding lips. The taste of blood permeated his senses. He flung his legs off his bed and stumbled to the kitchen. Supplying himself with a sumptuous amount of water he headed towards his room. Suddenly, something very peculiar caught his attention. The door of the room Mr. Wang strictly forbade him to enter, was ajar. Curious and scared Longxi stepped towards the door. He put one hand on the doorknob and slowly pulled it open. The room was so dark that he could perceive nothing inside. He hesitated for a moment then took a step into the darkness. Almost instantly, a blinding blue light illuminated the room. Longxi couldn't breathe. The atmosphere was changing very quickly, and his body was being flung around. The last thing he heard before he was knocked unconscious, was a roar.

Longxi, slowly opened his eyes The world rocking before him. Where was he? He looked at his surroundings. A forest, with pine trees stretching as far as eye could see. The wind mummering tales of melancholy, the pines swayed their branches slowly and wearily, the usual calm quietness was now a sad slumber. Longxi shivered, he could not be sure if it was because of the cold or of the fear. Then he realized, this was an ancient forest, the thick undergrowth of large ferns would never appear in the present era. He had time traveled. Longxi felt something warm trickling down the side of his head that distracted him from his thoughts. He lifted a trembling hand and placed it onto the liquid. When he took his hand off it was stained and soaked with blood. Longxi quickly ripped a piece of dirty cloth off the bottom of his shirt and tied it around his head covering the wound. Then he dragged himself to his feet and stumbled over to a nearby tree. It was not until he settled down when he noticed how parched he was. So, he went on searching for water.

Soon he came to the bank of a river, its waters thrashing and churning with fury. He plunged his hands in the river, ignoring how turbid the waters were, and took large gulps eager to conquer his thirst. Suddenly, a horrible and ominous roar, split through the thundering currents. Longxi slowly, turned his head around trembling. A shadow loomed over him and the odor of rotten meat was becoming unbearable. It was undoubtedly the terrible features of the Tyrannosaurus rex.

Longxi let out a terrifying scream and dashed toward the cover of the forest. The T-rex let out another earsplitting roar, and charged towards Longxi, flinging away any obstructions. Sweat cascaded down Longxi's face as the thundering footsteps behind him drew closer. Panting he collapsed against a stone. He could feel the dinosaur breathing down on him. The T-rex's huge yellow eyes glued its menacing stare on Longxi and uncovered its huge, jagged teeth with their malodorous stench. Longxi closed his eyes tightly and silently said goodbye to Mr. Wang and his friends. Tears burst though his eyelids and a wail left his mouth. It was only a matter of time before his soul left his body. Suddenly, the T-rex let out another roar. Longxi opened his eyes alarmingly to see the T-rex rammed aside and trampled on by a herd of large green dinosaurs. Shantungosauruses. His favorite dinosaurs. Longxi stood up, trembling and wide-eyed, shocked by what had just happened.

The T-rex was lying on the ground bleeding from a hideous wound on its shoulder and the Shantungosauruses were looking at Longxi in...was that worry?

"Th-Thanks" Longxi stuttered frightfully.

One of the Shantungosaurus dipped his head and touched Longxi's sweating chin. Longxi caressed the dino's crown. The world went quiet, as dinosaur embraced man, man embraced dinosaur. Longxi couldn't believe it he had touched a dinosaur, Shandong's dinosaur.

Mr. Wang came rushing out from the forest behind Longxi hurriedly. When he saw what was happening, he smiled.

"That's Bryan the leader of their herd!" Mr. Wang said, gently placing his hand next to Longxi's.

Longxi turned around in surprise and saw Mr. Wang beaming at him.

"It's time to go" Mr. Wang took Longxi's hand and returned to the time machine.

The Secret Civilization

Wellington College International Shanghai, Gaoqiao, Lin – 12

Prologue: World War I

In midst of the hustle and bustle of Yantan Village, a mother and son fleet away from the townscape and into the obscure darkness...

"Mother, the mist approaches." the son mutters, clinging onto his mother. A block-like patch of gray mist creeps towards the pair, threatening to envelope them in ever-ending darkness.

"No need to fear, my son. It is time for them to come. We have avoided for way too long; this was destined to be our fate." his mother replies, emotionless.

"It isn't, not yet. The world will suffer without their aid. We both know that." The boy whispers, defeated. He opened his arms wide and surrenders himself to what was to come.

~~~~~

They call me Ivy. The girl of sharp-edged wits. The people of Yantan village have a tradition of symbolic names. Yantan is a place filtrated with the past. The world may have evolved into a technology-centered world, but Yantan remains constant. A shadow of the past. Isolated.

Blair was an apprentice that my master's close friend had taken on not long ago. A hard-headed girl with a unique perspective on morality. Our masters' close relationship had bonded us together, and we had since become inseparable.

Our masters were craftsmen, so our working spaces tended to be placid and undisturbed. Nonetheless, our surplus teenage energy could not go unattended. Typically, Blair would suggest something with minimal risk, such as kite flying. However, today was a special occasion. Our masters had left town, so we had the entire day to ourselves. Blair insisted on exploring the rural areas, and although I was hesitant, I agreed. The past few weeks of the apprentice trials had been a backbreaking experience for Blair, and this may be the perfect opportunity for alleviation.

We set off immediately. After reaching the rural areas, I noticed that Blair was unlike her usual self. Our conversations reached an end at an instant, and suspicion lurked beneath the apparent facade of excitement.

Blair mumbled something unintelligible, staring directly at the ground. Abruptly, she looked up and raised a finger to the gloomy distance: "Heaven, what is that!?"

I followed her gaze but failed to identify anything abnormal. "What's what?", I shrugged, bewildered by Blair's sudden intensity.

"It's calling, the mist!" Blair declared, getting more and more agitated by the second. She stood up straight, sprinted in the direction she was pointing at, then turned around, exasperated.

"Aren't you coming, scaredy-cat?", she sneered.

Appalled at her villainous attitude, I squinted in the direction she pointed at. There was, to my surprise, a thick gray mist, and it was unlike anything I had ever seen. A gargantuan, block-like formation of translucent gray mist hovered in the air, its edges indistinct and ever-shifting, as if caught between a solid and vapor state. The mist advances at a steady pace, silently absorbing everything it touches. It reflects light in bizarre ways, casting ghostly shadows that

stretch unnaturally across the ground beneath it. There is a haunting stillness about it, as if this dense fog is silently watching, waiting to strike...

Just then, a tap on the shoulder jerked me back into reality. Blair was becoming extremely impatient. Something was wrong with Blair's attitude. Although she may be stubborn at times, she would never be intentionally ill-mannered. Yet, Blair would never stand a chance against the supernatural phenomenon alone. This was for Blair, someone I treated like family. I gathered and lashed my feelings in bonds, then darted towards Blair, away from known territory.

~~~~~

"Shall we take another break?" I wheezed, panting. After running for an hour nonstop, I was slumping in exhaustion and soaked with sweat. Yet, what really stunned me was how Blair remained energetic and hadn't even broken a single drop of sweat throughout the entire run. There was no explanation to her abrupt change in personality and her unnerving endurance. Blair had always been tenacious, but this time was different—unnatural.

"Ivy, we are almost there! Can you show some perseverance after all the times I've been stopping just for you to catch your breath?" Blair snapped, annoyed. I swung around to face her. I've had enough of her attitude. I stormed past her, kicking gravel in her eyes. Then, I turned back to face her, her outraged expression catching me off guard. I regained my temper and said levelly: "I am not someone you should mess with."

However arrogant she was, Blair was right—in a sense. The mist had swallowed the landscape around us, turning the hinterlands into a distorted gray blur. The air was thick with an unusual weight, as though every breath was heavier than the last. I dragged myself forward with each step, following Blair's relentless pace as we ventured deeper into the heart of the mist.

~~~~~

But the further we went, the more I realized—this wasn't just about exploring. Something was possessing Blair, and it was dragging me along with it.

~~~~~

As I trudged through the misty air, my eyes detected something exceptionally unusual. Shapes and bodies of human-like creatures began unravelling before my eyes. I squinted, wondering if I was hallucinating out of exhaustion.

Suddenly, one of the creatures turned around to face my direction. My heart stopped as the figure emerged fully from the haze. It was a hybrid, a fusion of human and dinosaur. The body had the broad, muscular form of a man, but its head was unmistakably that of a dinosaur. A narrow reptilian skull with sharp, jagged teeth. Its eyes, cold and filled with hunger, stared straight into my eyes, sending a jolt of fear through my veins. The creature's skin was rough and leathery, and its claws flexed, digging into the ground below. I stifled a scream. I was aware of Blair standing next to me, but I no longer trusted her.

Just then, the monstrosity let out a deafening roar, a sound that vibrated through the very air. The mist around us seemed to shudder in response, as if the creature's call had awakened a mighty spirit. The other hybrids began gathering around, as if summoned by their leader. Goosebumps revealed themselves all over me as I instinctively stepped back, but Blair didn't move. She stood there, eerily still, her eyes locked onto the creature with an unnatural state of calm.

Then, this time facing directly at Blair, it opened its mouth again. From there came a deep, snaky voice that just about resembled a human's—

— “Mistress, you have come to me at long last. We have waited for this moment since the dawn of our imprisonment. WE ARE FREED!”.

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Epilogue: Year 3000

“The Dinoids were a secret human–dinosaur hybrid civilization. They were a result of a failed science experiment. The Dinoids exceeded expectations. They were invincible. The unbreakable skin and predatory skills of dinosaurs, merged with the emotional and intellectual intelligence of humans. They were perfect. Therefore, they should not exist. Such perfection would be the downfall of the human civilization, scientists observed. Thus, the Dinoids were sent to exile, forever cursed to be hidden from the human civilization. However, when humanity is in danger and in need of these unbeatable creatures, a spiritual help would be sent to those who believe. Then, these chosen ones would make it their responsibility to find the Dinoids and release them into the human civilization. If they failed to do so, however, the chosen ones would face the eternal wrath of the Dinoids.”

Blair sat by the fire, telling her children the story of the Dinoids. Since their heroic defeat of the mind–controlling AI (which at that time, the people of Yantan had no idea about), the legend of the Dinoids had spread. Her children had no idea that Blair was the chosen one who freed the Dinoids—but that truth was about to be revealed.

Her husband—their father—was the very Dinoid that Blair had first met years ago, the creature who had once been a mysterious stranger, and now stood beside her, waiting for their children to learn the truth.

## I Returned

*Wellington College International Shanghai, Huang, Xi Han Fiona – 12*

1.

Was I dead? I didn't know. But it felt like home.

2.

My grandfather died a year ago. He was an amiable old man, who used to smile and wave at me, as warm as the sun. But he died. Died on my birthday. My only light was gone, leaving me alone to confront the darkness. He abandoned me too, but I couldn't hate him. I remembered, like it just happened yesterday, my grandfather was smiling at me, just so lively and healthy. Tears were pouring down like a waterfall uncontrollably. "Twinkle, twinkle little star..." I sang to myself, just like what my grandfather did before.

This day was the day to visit my grandfather. I was there to say goodbye.

"Grandpa, I will be leaving after a few days, so I will not be able to visit you. But I promise, I will come to see you after my trip. You might be wondering where I am going to. Yes, my university gave me the opportunity to go to an archaeology site. I promise, after a couple of years, I could definitely be someone just like you."

These two promises were never granted.

The next few days, I went to school just like normal and packed my tools to prepare for the archaeology site. It had been a long time since I was so happy, showing the brightest grin on my face. Second step of becoming an archaeologist, check!

A few days later, I packed my bags and prepared. But I had a feeling. And it was not a good one. My heart was beating wildly, like a drum. The wind blew on me, cool and chilling, making my spine feel cold. And then, the lights went out. From the bottom of my heart, I felt a sense of familiarity. Was it him? It couldn't be.

I still left, gently saying goodbye, to my home and him. I still believed it was him, congratulating me. However now, I know his purpose wasn't as simple as that.

3.

"Last minute preparation! Check what you have brought! All students should listen!" A cheerful voice appeared. It was supposed to be a warning, but it felt gentle and tender. It was Mrs. Lee.

"Soon, we'll arrive at the archaeology site. It is and will be very dangerous and hazardous. This is the LAST WARNING! If one of you start moving away from the group, YOU MIGHT DIE! If fortunately, you don't, then keep it as a secret, or else you'll get expelled," Her voice was high-sounding; it was not as supportive as before. It was a serious warning, however, I wasn't really aware. There was a rescue team after all, and no one would actually risk their lives to do a random thing.

But I was wrong.

At first, I was with all the other people. But something attracted me; something made me go to another direction; something which felt important. It made me sink into my illusions; making me aimless; making me lose the direction of my companions. There were too many people in our group, so I was left neglected on my own. Alone.

4.

"I must have lost my mind! Where in the world am I?" I found myself in the mountainous areas when I finally had awakened from my craziness.

The mountain road was twisting and turning, and there were cliffs everywhere. The wind called my name, as if to count my incompetence and procrastination. How did I get here? Nobody knows. However, this was not a good thing. The mountain was deserted, and no one would hear my helpless cries and shouts. Even if I made it back alive, it would still be a disaster: I would get expelled, and my future would be ruined.

But someone came. It was Mrs. Lee.

"Thank goodness me! Xiaoran!" She called my name, "Come back with me!"

There was nothing else to care about more than my life. So, I thought about nothing else, and ran.

I ran. It was no good thing to do in a mountain.

A small rock had fallen, as if an omen had appeared. The panic deep in my heart was here again. I had a bad premonition. And that premonition was about death!

Another rock had fallen. But unlike the other, it was humongous. Humongous enough to kill a person. Mrs. Lee immediately pushed me out of the disaster, leaving herself alone to suffer what I had brought. She smiled. And she cried.

The deafening sound of the rock had ended Mrs. Lee's life.

"Tell my family...to be happy...You too, Xiaoran..." Her last words were used to soothe my feelings. Her last smile was used to soothe my feelings too. Such a waste of energy! I didn't deserve that!

The gray sky turned to be even more melancholic. She died, and everything was in disenfranchised grief for her. Thank you, Mrs. Lee.

5.

However then, I saw a glimmer. A glimmer that was different from all other light. It was a fossil. A fossil that was shaped like a Sinosauroptryx. It was a Sinosauroptryx! This was something the whole university was finding! This was something Mrs. Lee and my grandfather would be proud of!

I ran as fast as my legs could bring me, and gently went over the fossil. It was pale white and very smooth after all the centuries underground. But I felt something abnormal. It was like being petrified; I felt electricity going through my body. And suddenly, everything went black.

6.

I opened my eyes. I saw a scene of dinosaurs. The scene of dinosaurs was like a rich oil painting. In the dense forest, their sturdy bodies loom and blend in with their surroundings. And then, I heard a deafening roar. A roar of a T-rex. I was startled, confused and intimidated. Where was I? What was this place? I bent down to look at myself. A Sinosauroptryx. I was a Sinosauroptryx! And right in front of me, was a Tyrannosaurus.

I was racing with my life. I sprinted. I tried to, at least. But it was useless. It came to me and gave me a hard bite.

"Don't kill me!" I tried to beg, but the only thing I heard was my own melancholic cry.



Suddenly, another T-rex appeared. The two dinosaurs started to fight over their prey. I knew this was the moment, and ran away, watching them fight. The second one won; the first one died. This was the law of the jungle—weak die, strong live.

I understood what I needed to do, and figured out the situation I was in. Like science-fiction stories, I was back in the past. Back in the Jurassic period. And what I needed to do was to keep myself safe. I had to kill.

7.

Growling, I ran as fast as my legs could take me, my claws shimmered under the bright sunlight. I leaped and opened my mouth. One bite. Two bites. Three bites. The Spinosaurus attacked too. One bite. Two bites. Three bites. Velvet blood was streaming down onto the ground. That was my first kill. I gave the Spinosaurus an attack. I promise, it wasn't my fault, it was that Spinosaurus who tried to eat me at first. But I was not a prey to hunt. I was a carnivore.

Or was I?

I saw the streaming blood. It was like a pool of bright-red liquid; it was like a warning that was telling me to stop. I was no predator. I was a human-being, not something that slaughters!

I stopped immediately, looked at the Spinosaurus' corpse afraid. I wanted to go home. But I had no method to bring myself back.

8.

I thought. The portal that brought me here was a Sinosauropteryx. The only one in this area was me!

The one common thing between me and that fossil was that we were the same species. The difference was that I was alive, and that fossil was dead. Did I need to kill myself? No, I didn't want to obviously. However, what if that was the reason?

To live in a dinosaur society, I had to harm other creatures. That was not me. That was not Xiaoran. That was not what Mrs. Lee or what my grandfather wanted me to become. So, maybe I should die in order to return to my world. I would die anyway! What mattered?

And yes, I made a crazy decision. I committed suicide, because death wasn't scary unless you died in a completely unfamiliar world.

And yes, I went. I passed away.

And yes, I was back in my world.

And no, I was dead in reality.

I looked at the ceiling. It was the familiar mountain. It turned out that I was struck by the rock, buried underneath it with Mrs. Lee. At least, I was here, I thought thankfully.

Faintly, I saw my grandfather walking close to me, inviting me to his place...

## The Legacy of the Flying Dinosaur

Wellington College International Shanghai, Jin, Luning Alice – 12

*Chaos. Danger. Screams. We are the dark. We fear no-one. We will **rule**.*

“Stop following me!”

“I’m not!” Xiao Bao protested, stumbling over the rocky path as he tried to keep his distance from the girl ahead of him.

“Oh yes you are. And are you arguing with me?” Lihua narrowed her eyes at Xiao Bao.

Xiao Bao bit his lip and swallowed his retort. Lihua was the mayor’s daughter, not someone to trifle with. And him? Just a “poor orphan boy” like Lihua said.

Xiao Bao was tired of getting teased. The mayor had found him and his dying mom on the outskirts of town, and the villagers had decided to take pity on him, but it came with a price: being the subject of Lihua’s endless taunts.

“I’m not following you!” he snapped, throwing his arms up in frustration. “I’m just walking this way.”

Lihua smirked and said nothing.

Xiao Bao sighed quietly, his breath misting in the crisp morning air. The endless plains of Inner Mongolia stretched before them; the golden grass rustled softly as a gentle breeze picked up. He had no time for this, he was supposed to be looking for herbs for Old Zhang, the healer, who’d sent him out early today to collect a rare healing plant that only grew near the ancient temple’s ruins on the far side of the valley.

But as always, Lihua had appeared from nowhere. And now, *she* was following *him*.

“I’m not arguing with you, Lihua. I just need to—,” he muttered, but was cut off by Lihua

She folded her arms. “I’ll tell you what I’m doing here. I’m looking for something... more *interesting*.”

Xiao Bao paused, a nervous feeling crawling up his spine. “More interesting?” He sucked in a breath.

Her lips curled into a secretive smile. “A dinosaur egg.”

“Ha! A *dinosaur* egg? You mean a rock or some old thing you found that looks like an egg, right?” Xiao Bao snickered but it came out sounding hollow; he knew Lihua had a strange connection with rare creatures, and she always tested the boundaries of reality and myths.

Lihua raised an eyebrow, her eyes glinting in the sunlight. “I think you’ll be surprised.”

Before Xiao Bao could say anything else, Lihua darted ahead, her feet a blur on the grass. He rolled his eyes, but his curiosity got the better of him. He had to know what she meant.

When they finally reached the ancient temple’s ruins, she stopped abruptly. Xiao Bao stood behind her, unsure if he should say something. The rocks jutted out of the earth like the jagged teeth of some great beast, and the wind howled.

Then Lihua pointed. “There. Do you see it?”

Xiao Bao followed her gaze, and he froze. Nestled in a shallow crevice between two rocks, half-buried in dirt and dust, a giant egg, and it was unlike any egg he’d ever seen: scaly but iridescent.

“*No way...*” Xiao Bao breathed.

Lihua grinned. “Told you.”

She took the egg and wiped dirt and dust with her sleeve “It’s not just any dragon egg,” she said softly. “It’s a *linheraptor*.”

Xiao Bao’s heart stopped. “A linheraptor?”

“My family has been guarding this egg generations before I was even born, to hatch in my generation, which makes it my egg.” Lihua shrugged.

Xiao Bao was confused. He’d always thought Lihua was a spoiled, arrogant brat, but now... Now she seemed like something more—something powerful and mysterious.

Suddenly, the shell began to split into jagged lines, and *CRACKKK*.

A small bird-like creature sat in Xiao Bao’s palm, blinking its eyes innocently at Lihua and Xiao Bao.

Lihua smiled as the baby linheraptor started to stretch its tiny wings and said soothingly. “Welcome to the world, little Linh.”

Xiao Bao’s mind whirled as the dragon let out a soft, melodic cry; he had thought that dinosaurs— let alone *flying* dinosaurs were just a myth— now seeing one in front of his own eyes... it was unbelievable.

“Looks like I’ll be following you after all,” Xiao Bao said, his voice low and uncertain.

Lihua gave him a knowing smile, her eyes never leaving Linh as she nestled into her arms. “I knew you would,” she said, her voice full of promise.

Xiao Bao watched cautiously as Linh started to nibble on Lihua’s hand. Linh was no bigger than a bat housecat, but the regal way she held herself gave a sense of authority and power.

“Lihua... this...” Xiao Bao murmured. “How is this possible?”

Lihua smiled at Linh and said calmly, almost serene, as though she had expected this moment all along. “Not impossible. Just rare.”

Lihua’s eyes softened for a moment, and she stepped closer to him, the dragon cradled in her arms. “You’re more than that, Xiao Bao. You’ve always been more than that. Linh seems to *know* you.”

Xiao Bao swallowed hard, feeling a stir in his chest. He didn’t want to believe it. Lihua had always seen him as nothing but a poor orphan, a boy who’d never have the fortune or the power to stand alongside her, let alone to bond with something as an intelligent yet adorable linheraptor. But the way little Linh was looking at him—the way she tilted her head, curiously as though she recognized him...

“I can’t,” he said, taking a hesitant step back. “I’m nothing like you. I don’t know anything about——”

“You don’t have to,” Lihua interrupted “That’s why I’m here. To help you understand. To guide you.”

Before Xiao Bao could respond, Linh had hopped off Lihua’s hands, and a few steps closer to him, her claws clicking against the stone ground. Lihua watched silently; her eyes fixed on Xiao Bao. Then, to his surprise, Linh nudged his foot with her tiny snout, with playful eyes.

Xiao Bao’s breath caught. He looked from Linh’s gaze to Lihua, who gave him an encouraging nod.

“Go ahead,” she said. “Linh won’t bite.”

Tentatively, Xiao Bao knelt down, his fingers trembling as they hovered just above Linh’s back. He had never been close to anything so... wild, so untainted by the hands of humans. But Linh seemed to sense his hesitation and let out a gentle purr, almost feline, as if reassuring him. Slowly, Xiao Bao lowered his hand and stroked her colourful wings. Warmth radiated through his fingers, and an unexpected feeling of peace settled over him.

Suddenly, Linh flapped her wings again, but this time, there was more force behind it, and the ground seemed to tremble; Linh was growing, stretching out her wings in a way that filled the air with power, power that resonated deep inside oh her, like a long-forgotten memory stirring. Linh’s form started to shift, her body stretching: wings growing larger, ruffled her vivid feathers.

Lihua stood behind him, her gaze filled with something like triumph. “She’s not just any linheraptor” she said softly. “She’s the last of their kind, the one that was prophesied to return when the land needed it most. The land is in danger, Xiao Bao. The spirit has chosen us to restore balance.”

“Balance? What do you mean?”

“The world is changing,” Lihua explained. “Ancient spirits have begun to stir, and things long buried are rising to the surface. The emperor’s men have been hunting linheraptors; and without them, the world will lose its way.” Her voice grew dark. “There are forces in the world who want Linh dead. They want to control her power. But we are meant to protect her.”

Xiao Bao’s mind was spinning. His life had just shifted from a quiet existence in the village, a life full of simple tasks and quiet days, into something he couldn’t understand. The weight of what Lihua was saying felt too heavy to bear.

But before he could ask more questions, Linh stretched her full-sized wings and let out a loud, commanding roar that echoed across the valley. The ground shook beneath their feet, and Xiao Bao felt the hairs on the back of his neck stand up. There was no doubt in his mind now that Linh was no ordinary creature.

Lihua’s voice broke through his thoughts. “Come, Xiao Bao. There’s no going back now.” She placed a hand on his shoulder, guiding him towards Linh. “You can’t run from destiny. Not anymore.”

With that, she turned towards Linh, and bowed, as if acknowledging her command, Xiao Bao followed, his heart pounding in his chest. And in that moment, Xiao Bao realized that he wasn’t just a boy from the village anymore. He was part of something much larger. Something ancient. Something powerful.

And with that realization, the bond between him and Linh was sealed.

Lihua smiled as she reached for his hand, and together, the three of them stood beneath the vast sky of Inner Mongolia, ready to face *The dark*.

*The battle has begun.*

*Destruction.*

*Fear.*

*Us.*

## My Life for a Fossils

*Wellington College International Shanghai, Lee, Veronica – 12*

I had no choice. Please, just trust me—I had to do this. The wind whipped the sand up into my face, and I couldn't help but cough. My shoes felt like they were made of lead, stuffed with sand and weighing me down at every turn.

“Hurry up! We haven't got all day!” the man barked at me. I didn't even know his name; honestly, I didn't know anyone's name here. All I understood was that I was trapped under their control, with no way out.

But before I dive into that, let me take you back two days—when everything changed. My family was struggling. With my father gone, my older brother vanished, and my mother sick, it felt like the weight of the world was on my shoulders. My younger brother couldn't go to school, and I did my best to teach him what I could about literature. We were dirt poor, barely hanging on by selling second-hand goods from our home. That day was like any other until a hard knock distracted me.

“How may I help you?” I asked, hurrying to the counter and facing a hooded man.

“Can't tell ya,” he replied, his voice mysteriously familiar. Stepping closer, he loomed over me, making him look intimidating with a cold look in his eyes. “But I can tell you this—you need money, and we can give you that.”

“What—”

“But we ain't doing nothing for no one for nothing.” He shoved a slip of paper into my hands and turned to leave. I unfolded the small strip, revealing hastily scrawled letters:

‘Today, 10 pm, ‘Dumpling Place’ hidden kitchen.’

At 9:45, I found myself stumbling towards the restaurant's basement, knowing it was a meeting place for a secret gang, I had no clue what they did, or why they wanted me.

“You're here.” It was the man from before, surrounded by others cloaked in black, all wearing matching masks that made it impossible to recognize anyone.

“Is that her? She's so skinny, ugly,” one man sneered. At that time, being a bit overweight was considered fashionable, but there I stood, too thin and lacking nutrition, and they could laugh about it.

“Name?”

“Mei.”

“Age?”

“Sixteen.” I paused, then added, “I'm only here because you said you can give me money, not to answer your questions.”

“We can give you money.” The man from the store replied. “But you have to do what we say.” I snorted, trying to mask my fear with make-shift bravado and sarcasm.

“*Wonderful*. Then tell me what you want me to do.”

“We want to steal *The Dinosaur Fossil*.”

“Okay, that's—” My heart raced, and I looked up, eyes wide. “Wait! That's illegal! It's cursed! Are you—”

“Do you want the money or not?” I froze, words escaping me, making me feel uncomfortably hollow. *The Dinosaur Fossil*—the one buried deep in the deserts, the only fossil illegal to dig up. But for the money... I had no choice.

At the break of dawn, I left a note for my mother that read: “Gone out, back soon.” With a heavy sigh, I made my way toward the waiting gang, knowing my promise to my father lay shattered. My thoughts drifted until a booming voice snapped me back to reality.

“You’re here. Wrap it up!” The man, clearly the leader, commanded as the others hurried to gather their bags and equipment.

“We’re leaving now?” I stammered, panic rising in my chest. “I’m not ready! I didn’t bring anything! What—”

“You won’t need anything. We leave—now.”

I squeezed into the back of a delivery van with about ten others, the cramped space quickly becoming uncomfortable. The ride felt endless, bouncing over potholes until fatigue finally swept me away into sleep.

“We’re here!” The leader barked, that same intense energy in his voice.

As we slipped out of the van and stepped onto the coarse sand, a sense of disappointment washed over me—there was no turning back.

Time blurred as we trudged across the desert, each step dragging with uncertainty. I tried to drown out my fear with a lullaby my mother used to sing whenever I cried as a child. I missed her and my younger brother, Hong, now more than ever.

“We’ve arrived!” one of the gang shouted.

“Arms at the ready!” another echoed.

“I don’t have a weapon! Am I going to die?” I panicked, my voice rising.

“Keep your voice down, you don’t need one—just keep up,” the leader shot back.

“By the way, you asked for my name. What’s yours?” I pressed, narrowing my eyes at him.

“Can’t tell ya—just call me Boss.”

“Boss. Right,” I muttered. My older brother also made me call him boss before he disappeared.

We approached a towering building encased in high gates. The gang immediately fell into a defensive formation, but no one emerged from within.

“The guards must be on a break.”, trying to sound casual.

“You shouldn’t be worried about them. It’s the birds you have to look out for.”

Just as he spoke, a dark cloud erupted from the tower’s peak. Panic surged through my veins as the gang unleashed a flurry of arrows into the sky, some birds tumbled to the ground, but many continued to rush toward us. These guys seemed experienced; they must have done this before. Without warning, we dashed toward the building, adrenaline drowning out every ounce of my fear.

I found out that the building was an abandoned dig site, but a guarded one. After going through series of security like spears and crumbling pillars, we reached the heart of the building. That was where the fossil, in all its glory, lay. The

creature's talons were at least half a meter, it's spine crooked, but intimidating and . Then there were the wings, I never believed it until I saw for myself. The wings were opened like in flight, making the creature seem majestic. It had no eyes, but it seemed to be looking, for us.

"Come here," said the man, "I have something to tell you."

I walked over and he pointed to the fossil, "Now, my men stationed in their places, you now need to unlock the fossil."

"Unlock the fossil?"

"Correct," he rubbed his hand together and whistled, one of his gang men rushed over and gave him a knife. The handle was leather, and the blade was gleaming under the only ray of sunlight coming from a crack in the walls.

"This is what you're using, good luck," he had a sad tint in his eyes, but he kept a firm smirk on his face. "Well go on! Get closer to it!"

I walked over to it, having no idea what I had to do whatsoever, I looked back only to see everyone still staring at my every move. I gulped, breathing shallower. When I got to the fossil, I tried to grip the knife tight, but my hand disobeyed. I didn't know what to do! What was this about? Maybe it was the aura of the fossil, I was becoming more scared by the second.

"A vulnerable one. This one is perfect," said a voice, coming from the heart of the fossil.

Suddenly, all the men around me kneeled, each saying the same thing.

*"Congratulations Master. You are soon to be free."*

The man said something else, "Master, I have found her. Let me do it. I'll know how."

"Very well Ming, don't fail me this time," said the dark voice.

*Ming?* The man took off his mask, revealing a dark scar that ran across cheek. I gasped, I know that scar! My brother got one when he fell- It's him! But he kept coming closer. I tensed, sensing something was wrong.

"What are you doing? Get away from me!", I said, raising the blade, but he knocked it out of my hand easily. He pointed it at me, I backed off and fell, *hard*.

"How could you? Do you know when you ran away how devastated mother was? You were the only person who could earn money for the family! I hate you!"

"Enough! I *don't* regret my decision. The power of the fossil...it's glorious. I need that, and I won't be needing you."

He quickly ran a line across his palm and let his blood drip onto the fossil behind me. No doubt he'll do the same to me. Still on the floor, I shrunk back as he made huge, deep slit across my right palm and let the blood run onto the fossil. I screamed.

So much blood...so much pain... My body was as cold as ice, frozen from horror and helplessness. I felt the world start to lose pigment; a painful headache attacked me. I knew was going to die, soon.

"Ming," my voice, rasped and weak, a thin ray of light escaped from the fossil, "I missed you..."

That's when I blacked out.

## The Legend of the Crystalsaurus Wish

Wellington College International Shanghai, Liong Kee, Elaine – 11

My eyes gleamed with excitement as I saw the bus coming towards me. It felt like a dream come true. I've been waiting my entire life to get into the Young Fossil Company (YFC), and now I'm finally here. I looked at my bestie with a smile. A man with blonde hair, blue eyes with glasses, wearing a white T-shirt and brown shorts, came down the bus and shouted, "Hello fellow students! Welcome to Beijing! My name is Peter Ling, but just call me Pete. I'm one of your council's in YFC. You're all chosen as a member of YFC, but before you can officially become one, you will need to pass the next round. We'll talk about all that later, anyways, congratulations! Now follow me, and I will take you to the campsite where we'll start having some fossil fun!" Everyone cheered and started hopping on the bus for our journey ahead.

After two hours on the bus, we finally got off, Pete grabbed everyone's attention and registered for our camp cabins.

Finally, Pete called out the two besties' names.

"Aisha Li. Ella Shan. Helen Lan. Jane Wang. You're all in Crystalsaurus cabin."

I was super excited, but confused when they said crystalsaurus, *Is there such thing as a Crystalsaurus?* I turned to Aisha and told her what I thought. "*Maybe it's just a dinosaur that we never heard of.*" Aisha answered. But I know all the dinosaurs that were ever found, how can I not know what dinosaur that is? A gentle tap on my shoulder stopped my mind from wondering, Aisha was pulling me over to where our cabin was. Everyone here is all talented in fossils like me.

Everyone walked to the main campfire for dinner, I was starving. Finally, food came. While we ate, I wonder what I should write about first in the letter I will send to my adopted parents. I never saw my actual parents; I wish I could. We then headed back to our cabins, and dozed off to dreamland.

The first day of being a YFC—in training seemed fun, Aisha and I went to get our schedules for the day from the councils. After eating breakfast, we started our first activity, "Learning about different dinosaur's habitats". To be honest, that session was boring. I nearly slept during the lesson, dreaming about what the crystalsaurus looks like. *Oh, I should ask about the crystalsaurus!* After, I asked my teacher, Ms. Yue, about what a crystalsaurus was. She stood up excitedly, and grabbed an old book, in what seemed to be from a long time ago. The book's cover has the title: ***The legend of wishes***. Below it, it wrote: The crystalsaurus *written by Matthew Shan*. I couldn't believe it; *did it say "Shan"*? Ella then asked, "Who wrote this book?", Ms. Yue then answered, "Matthew Shan wrote it, he was one of our greatest members in the company, but he suddenly disappeared with his wife on finding the crystalsaurus. People tried searching for them but never found a clue. They had a beautiful daughter called Ella; I feel very sorry for her."

"I'm the Ella Shan!" I said, shocked and confused.

We had a quiet moment for a while. I've always thought they died in a car crash, that's what my adopted parents said. Then Ms. Yue broke the silence, "I would be happy to help you figure out what a crystalsaurus was, since you're the daughter of this author, I would like to give this book to you, this book was his diary as well, so you can find out all his adventures with your mother."

"I would love to keep this book, thank you!"



I was so surprised how she just changed the topic like that, but what matters now is that I got something that I can discover on.

As I got to bed, I told Aisha everything, and her mouth dropped. I and Aisha went to read through the book secretly, while everyone was asleep. There was this one page that caught my eye. A page filled with my dad's handwriting and the other page with a map with torn borders:

*I finally found where the crystalsaurus lies! Their footsteps are shiny, not like others. They only live among crystals of their kind, if I am right, it seems like we need to go through a portal. I think the portal could be somewhere on the map.*

The map showed the whole Great Wall of China. Looking at the map, it says that the portal would be somewhere to the eastern side of the Great Wall, covered with the maze of green trees. On the next page it said:

*A crystalsaurus is a magical, legendary creature that grants wishes. Whoever finds a crystalsaurus may be granted the wish they always ever wanted. But some say that the wishes they grant might not always be good; some say that people disappeared from their wishes.*

Wait... Maybe my parents disappeared like what it said in the description!

Below the definition lies a picture of a predicted crystalsaurus. It's got shining, gradient colored, scaled dragon skin, with huge bat-like wings and a pointy long tail. It's got crystal horns like a deer and has eyes as bright as the stars.

I must find them. I can't believe that they could be still alive. If I can convince the department to get a field trip to the Great Wall, then I'll be able to find the portal. I whispered to Aisha, "Aisha! I need to find my parents! We just need to try convincing the department to let us have a trip to the Great Wall!"

"I'm with you, but how are we going to make this plan work?"

"We just tell them that in our activities, we discovered that the Great Wall had many fossils related history to learn. Then while others tour around, we secretly slid away and find the portal."

"Okay, we'll ask the start of tomorrow."

After planning, we went to bed before anyone noticed. I couldn't sleep at all; my parents could be alive! Finally, I started closing my eyes dreaming about tomorrow.

The next day, we went to the lobby. I quickly dragged Aisha to Pete with the register clip board. I then asked Peter with a soft voice, "Excuse me, Peter,"

"Yes,"

"Well, I with Aisha thought, since we learnt that the Great Wall of China had many historical facts about dinosaur fossils, maybe we can have a small visit there with the camp?"

"What a great idea you two have, I'll go tell the councils right away! Thank you, girls! We'll go at around 9:00am, okay?"

"Okay, thank you Pete!"

"You're welcome!"

*Oh my gosh, I can't believe it!* I thought surprisingly, I did not expect that to work out that well! So, on we head off to our activities, today we have 'fossil finding & fossil polishing' session. This session seems to be fun, and it's outdoors! Aisha dragged me to the class, as I looked at the schedule.

Everyone sat on the ground, as our teacher, Mr. Albert, settled everything we needed for the lesson. Mr. Albert taught us the right ways to find a fossil, knowing your rock type like limestone, sandstone, shale, or looking for the signs of a fossil's presence and other facts. After that, we went to find hidden fossils that were buried in the ground before the class started. When we found the fossils, we started polishing them with the nice professional tools. Mr. Albert was very impressed with the class.

The next morning, I and Aisha got ready to head off the Great Wall. Aisha handed me my dad's book, and I stuffed it in my bag. Let's go find that crystalsaurus.

As we got off the bus, we all went to Pete, and he called out who's in what group and what time we meet on the bus; 3:30pm. When everyone was in their groups, we started walking in front of the gate where people bought tickets. We went hiking all the way up. Few minutes later, we had a water break and that is when Aisha and I started to slide away. Because of the various people here, we easily slid away and started our new route. I took out the book and navigated carefully with Aisha. We arrived at a greenish looking maze just like on the map.

Luckily, we got passed the maze and found our destination. But where was the portal? I then noticed some footprints on the ground with shinny crystals, which were pointing to a dark forest pathway... I and Aisha slowly walked towards it, squeezing each other's sweaty hands hardly. Suddenly, a huge blue and green portal appeared right in front of us! *Yes, we found it!* Suddenly, there was a shake underground! We then got sucked into the portal!

"AAAAHHHHHHH!!!!!!!!!"

***TO BE CONTINUED..... PART 2!***

## The Fossil Heist

*Wellington College International Shanghai, Lo, Gareth – 13*

Sand and dust wafted through the air on the fossil site. The land appeared desolate, but James knew the site was just a shadow of what could be underneath it. Son of an immigrant mother and an American father, James grew up as a mix of both cultures. His parents often struggled to pay the bills and often dreamt of a better life, a life where they didn't have to catapult out of bed every day at the break of dawn to go bust their backs for 12 hours. A life where they worked stable jobs not having to struggle to make ends meet. And though they didn't succeed, their son sure did. James J. Hammet was a world-renowned palaeontologist, travelling the world studying and looking for fossils. James stood, pensive in thought, thinking about how his life now was like night and day compared to his harsh childhood. Although things were better now, James also could not help but think about how life didn't quite meet his requirements. He felt as though he wanted more. Needed more.

As he sat there muzzily daydreaming, he felt a hard pat on his back. "Ouch!" yelled James, seemingly surprised. "The team have just dug up a fossil, we need your help" his boss muttered sternly. His boss, Ricky. Had always treated James like an outlier, despite all the grit and grind James put into his job, his needs were never tended too. The only times he would hear from his boss was when he needed James's help. James reluctantly rushed over to the fossil site and peered over the crowd, Hong Kong wasn't home to many fossils. So, anything, bird, fish or plant fossil from the dinosaur era was considered breakthrough, however this time things were different. Usually, the team was calm and collected, efficiently extracting whatever was to be found. Although today there were at least fifty people frantically running around, he really wondered what all the fuss was about, especially with the journalist around with all their camera gear. He rushed up, trying to understand the intensity written on everyone's face, but then he saw it.

The fossil lay there like a needle in a haystack, James couldn't believe his eyes. This was history, and he was a part of it. The dinosaur species was yet to be confirmed, but James knew that it could fetch a tad bit of cash on the black market. People might wonder why James felt like this, and trust me, he pondered about it quite a bit as well. But the truth was, James was never brought up well. His family was always known as the immigrants that didn't hold up well. And for good reason, his parents struggled to provide James with basic necessities and were barely home, even when he wasn't old enough to fend for himself. But even when they were home, James was treated like nothing. Some nights there wasn't even enough food on the table. His parents were borderline alcoholics and often berated him. Since he was young, every night he would say to himself "One day. I'll earn some cash, enough for the rest of my life and move away somewhere. If I worked hard enough, I'm sure I could." But to his despondency, nothing happened. Sure, he was living the dreams of many other people, but he wished, especially that day. That he could let go of everything and run free.

That night, he listened to the owls hoot, thinking of everything that could go wrong. After all, if he failed. Everything would be gone, his job, his life, his everything. He would spend his life rotting in jail like a soulless body. But hadn't he spent his entire life like that? He concluded that there was nothing to lose. After all, his everything in hindsight, was nothing. He grew up in an abusive household, worked for an exploitive boss. Soon, exhausted from his own thoughts, he slumped into bed.

Suddenly, he seemingly woke up in a vault. The fossil lay in front of him. Sweat rained down his forehead and though he might have felt calm and collected earlier, he knew his future stood in front of him. He leaned forward, cautiously reaching for the fossil, his future. The fossil felt, weird. Almost a bit like his bedroom wall. Then he heard

a thud, the next moment. He was sitting on his bed, a puddle of sweat around him. His head hurt after the hit; it really did. The next few months he continued to have these dreams, every time he thought of the heist, he told himself that he would do it soon. But inside he knew that all his life, all he heard was “soon”, “later and “next time” and that it was getting to him. One day, he couldn’t take it anymore, he really couldn’t.

As he crept into the vault, he was petrified. He was afraid of being caught, but based on his dreams, the only thing between him and that fossil was the passcode. His colleague told him the passcode so he could check on the fossil occasionally, so he knew that even if he was caught, he could play it off. But that was a worry for another day, as he carefully input the passcode, his temperature skyrocketed. He felt as if, he had unlocked his true self. He stepped in the vault, carefully observing his surroundings. Just as he did in his dreams, he leaned forward reaching for the fossil. Soon the fossil was carefully extracted from its holding case. James vigilantly crept out, as he left the vault. He dashed for his life, for his everything. Taking the fossil with him. He drove to who knows where. But what we knew now was that the future held many things for James.

# Dino Hunter

Wellington College International Shanghai, Petersson, Mia – 11

## Chapter 1 – Meet the Heroes

Thud. Thud. His heart was racing. Thud. Thud. The controller was smeared with oil. Thud. Held by the hands of Li Jan.

Li Jan is an eighteen-year-old, spoiled, home-schooled teenager whose father was a bodyguard that worked for Houston Whitney. Li spends half of his time playing dinosaur video games and half of his other time reading about nature, camping, and dinosaurs. He is a skinny teen with silver strands in his messy black hair; we could tell from the slightest glance at his puffy eyes that he has experienced a sleepless night. Li is not tall for his age, and thanks to his time spent reading, he is pretty smart. His father is half Canadian and half Guizhou, and his mom was an orphan abandoned at the Guizhou Xiuwen People's Hospital. Li's grandfather was a successful dino palaeontologist who grew incredibly wealthy after discovering a *Sycptosaurus* fossil in the high mountains after an unexpected landslide.

Li's mother's name was Patty; it relates to her face reminding everyone of a raw beef steak. Patty is a plump woman who was about five and a half feet tall. She had long, thick black hair that ran all the way to her hip. Li's father is a slim, tall man about eight foot five. He always wears a fashionable wig on his bald head.

Li has always taken an interest in dinosaurs. His favourite so far is the T-Rex; he usually changes his favourite every week. Every day he plays this video game called *DINO HUNTER 3D* and has posters of the main hunter named Collin Keeper and his trusty sidekick Sean Ludwick by his side. He wishes to be a dino hunter one day.

"Great job, Dr. CK, you've made it to level 3! Remember to always follow your heart! Believe! You'll do great!" said The Main Guide in *DINO HUNTER 3D*.

That night Li had the craziest dream yet... Dr. Li and his assistant Sean Ludwick were running from a pack of Velociraptors. His boots sunk into the mud, mosquitoes clinging onto his skin, and hanging vines whipped onto his face like a bat hitting a birthday piñata. Sean had managed to hand over a sniper rifle to Dr. Li as he tried to untangle his boots from tendrils. Dr. Li closed his eyes and shot. The vibration of when he pulled the trigger ran through his blood. Finally, the hideous creatures ran away.

Li sat up from his bed, eyes wide open. Five seconds later he was packing canned food, clothes, a world map, grabbing the poster of Dr. CK, and climbing out of the window. Once Li had gotten on his motorbike, ready to pounce, he remembered that he needed a sidekick.

The family phone rang in the house of the Chens. "Hello?" a teenager responded.

"Hi Thomas, I was hoping you'd answer," said Li.

"Li? Do you know what time it is? It's the middle of the night!" said Thomas.

"You want to know what I think? I think that it's time we started our own dino-hunting team – me the team leader, and you my trustworthy sidekick. I'm going to make a run for it today! It's finally time to take my life seriously!" said Li.

"You'd better be serious about this," said Thomas as he hung up the phone and went to prepare.

## Chapter 2 – Sean Ludwick

Thomas is a skinny, average twenty-four-year-old looking old man with silky brown hair. The Chens are not rich, but they had enough money to make a living. Thomas is half Austrian and half Guizhou. His parents own the

supermarket down the street where they sell the best mangos.

Li and Thomas decided to meet at the Shilongpo historical landmark.

“Where are we going to go?” asked Thomas.

“Let’s find a place to camp first,” said Li.

Li and his sidekick Thomas settled in a cave near the riverbed of West–South of Guizhou and reread Li’s camping book about how to start a campfire. Soon they gathered twigs from the nearby trees and started to rub them together.

“This isn’t working,” said Thomas. “Let’s go back and get a lighter.”

“No, we can’t! Remember we are dino hunters now. We can’t return home or give up – we already made it this far!” replied Li. “But on second thought, it would be nice to grab a few things.”

Thomas’s face brightened. “Ok, I’ll go to my house, get the lighter, and come back,” he said.

It was morning. They decided to leave the camp at noon and go off to another city.

“Are you sure you have everything?” asked Li.

“For the third time, yes, I have everything,” replied Thomas.

Thomas climbed aboard Li’s motorbike, and they headed off to the countryside near the border of Chongqing.

“Are you ready?” asked Li.

“Yes, of course I’m ready,” snapped Thomas. Li and Thomas were both really nervous as they crossed the white painted line.

### **Chapter 3 – Dinosaur Hunt**

Li and Thomas went house–hunting downtown a neighbouring city called Guiyang and managed to find a suitable small, cheap flat to stay in for now.

Li and Thomas went into the house and looked around. A box sized room around the size of a jail–cell containing a fridge, a microwave, two wall–mounted bunks, a toilet, and a sink.

“So, what do you want for dinner?” said Li, looking at all their canned food options in his bag as they settled themselves on their beds.

“You know what? I think I want to try the chicken curry today,” replied Thomas.

“Chicken curry it is!” said Li walking to the microwave.

“Li, did you ever think that dinosaurs are extinct?” said Thomas. “Cause maybe we cannot find what we came here for.”

“I just want to believe,” Li said, fighting to hold back the tears coming out of his eyes.

“Hey, hey, hey, don’t worry. If we can’t find any dinosaurs, then we will look for dinosaur bones, eh?” Thomas said while handing Li some toilet paper.

“Ok,” said Li while wiping away his tears.

“Good. We’ll start the hunt tomorrow,” said Thomas.

Li and Thomas packed all the equipment they needed for the trip and climbed onto Li’s motorbike. They travelled around Chongqing looking for a place to start their search and stopped when they came to the mountains. Li wanted to start the search where Chongqing’s last landslide was. Li has, and always will, look up to his grandfather. They prepared the materials needed and started to dig.

“Hey, Li!” Thomas shouted. “Look what I found!”

Li walked up, stood next to Thomas, and noticed a black hole where they couldn’t see the end.

“Did you dig this just to trick me?” asked Li.

“No, I just dug, and then this popped up. Why would I want to trick you?” said Thomas.

“Huh, that’s weird,” said Li while looking at the hole. “Let’s go and explore!”

Thomas dug more on the side as the hole got wider and wider.

#### **Chapter 4 – Into the Abyss**

“Oh—my—lord,” said Thomas. “Ok, you hold the rope as I climb down.”

“Hey Thomas?” said Li. “Do you think that there are dinosaurs in there?”

“What? No! Dinosaurs are extinct!”

“Ok, I am going down.” Thomas slid down the rope and landed. Splash.

“EWWW,” shouted Thomas while landing in what appeared to be water.

“What?” asked Li.

“I landed in some gluey, slimy stuff. But otherwise, you should come down and check this. I think we could get some samples of this,” said Thomas. Li carefully tied a tight knot on the spike as he slowly lowered himself down.

Splash.

“EWWW,” said Li while handing Thomas the samples bag.

“What do you think this is?” asked Thomas.

“I honestly don’t\_”

“AAARRRGHH,” screamed Thomas.

“What?”

“Shush! Not so loud!” shushed Thomas as he turned his head to the left. Slowly, Li followed his eyes to where Thomas was looking and spotted two large round eyes staring at them in the dark. Slowly, it opened its mouth, showing off its sharp, vicious teeth.

“AARRGGHH,” shouted both Li and Thomas as they ran for the rope. The dinosaur’s eyes had gotten larger, as had the heavy thumping noise of its feet. Li and Thomas pushed each other, clinging to the rope for dear life. Li, who was in front of Thomas, noticed that the hole they had dug was slowly closing by itself. Moments later, Thomas saw it too.

“COME ON, LI!” screamed Thomas as the dinosaur neared. “CLIMB FASTER!”

“I’M TRYING,” Li shouted back, his hands blistered and burning. The dinosaur reached the bottom of the rope and leapt, its jaws clamping onto Thomas’s foot just as Li reached the top.

#### **Chapter 5 – CLIMB!**

Just when Li reached the top, he held the hole open with one foot and a hand. With the other, he reached for Thomas.

“HERE! TAKE MY HAND!” Li shouted.

Thomas hesitated.

“COME ON! TAKE MY HAND!” shouted Li.

Thomas figured out that if he took Li’s hand, he would drag him down. It all happened so quickly that Li barely saw it.

Thomas took the camera off his head, took pictures of the dinosaur, then threw the camera to the ground above. He looked at Li one last time and let go.

Li was shocked, so shocked that he let the hole close as he heard the dinosaur devour its meal.



# The Time Machine

*Wellington College International Shanghai, Shen, Liz – 11*

A woman's head dropped to the floor with astonished expressions as the man threw the dagger away, he held the rock in his hands and spoke the spell devoutly. His body appeared in a large machinery, he pressed the only button inside, the one which said go.

## One month ago, in Yunnan province

"We need volunteers to test if the time machine is working," said an old man, he is the director of a time machine experiment, "the people who go are going to get extra points for the exam. Everyone who wants to go, please sign up here, put your names on this piece of paper. There is a maximum of 8 people. Even though you might die in it, but if you bring back the fossil, then there will be rewards more than you could expect"

The only people who signed up were Tao Xiao and Li Qingchuan. Others were afraid of death. The lesson ended, and the old man flashed an expression of dissatisfaction and muttered under his breath: "It's a shame that only two people dared to join. But at least one of those two ought to die. Zhong Ren, my best student, is still trapped, and he'll never come back! My lord must be proud of me!"

The day finally came after one month, and the two people were ready to travel to their destination, the Shang dynasty, to get fossils and artifacts. They are going to be there for one month, until the machine has enough battery for the trip. They held the rock together and spoke a spell to activate it. They flashed inside a large machinery with everything prepared. They pressed the button in the middle and sat in two seats.

## The emperor's study room

"Lord, there are two people from 2000 years later that just arrived. Do I leave them to what they're doing, or do I order the assassins to kill them before they could cause any harm?"

"Leave them for now. I would like to see what they are planning to do. But if they show any interest in that fossil, take them to me, for they will do harm to us otherwise. Now go!"

As the general left, the emperor looked at the samples taken of the mysterious object seen in the morning and started to mutter: "Did they, even Dr. Zhao, forget me? I am already left here because of the stupid mistakes they made, and they still dare to use the same prototype?! How idiotic. But at least they sent 2 people, if one of them finds the true meaning of the spell and does it accordingly, then that person could go back to the present. But I was the only one on that trip of my time! So even if I knew it, the meaning, I would still need to stay here for the rest of my life, how is this fair to me! The professors in our school always translates unknown messages, so how are they ignoring the fact that people would die in this!"

## Shang dynasty, under the reign of Zhong Ren

"We're finally here, after all of that trembling of the machine. I checked and we have everything needed for survival."

"We'd put this rock and scroll in our house, but we don't want it stolen by some random bandit since it is shiny and looks valuable, and we can't go back without this."

"However, it's way too big for us to carry around every day. Don't forget, our main mission is to get that fossil from the pit before it gets taken by the emperor. If we leave the stone in our bags, there would be no space for the fossil"

"But we're only in two plebeian bodies, how can we get in the fossil pit without any background?"

"Don't tell anyone; the emperor Zhong Ren is said to have been from our school 2 years before us. But in one summer holiday, he suddenly disappeared from school. He might also be in this time machine project."

“Just try to do something big that could alert the emperor. And it has to seem modern, so that we could catch his attention.”

“Let's just get the fossil now, I remember from our textbook that he would excavate it one month later but already started planning around one week ago.”

No one noticed, but a leaf was flashing red lights in the corner of a window; teleporting an audio of what they said to another leaf with a signal receptor.

### **Fossil bone bed**

A few days later. Tao set foot on the dry, yellow ground beneath her. She scanned around and quickly saw her target: the largest fossil in this bone bed, the Lufengosaurus, the fossil they were aiming for; more correctly, the body of the crystal. She carefully used a brush to clear the dust above the skeleton and the original size was revealed. Its length was around seven meters, and its height was around three meters. The skull was revealed, and inside of it was a shining crystal. She caught a slight change of noise in the background so told Li to stop making noises, nobody replied. She noticed a scene of mockery in the ambience, so turned to see. What was waiting for her was Li's body fainting on the floor and a team of warriors wearing the army's bronze armory standing dragging his body. She was then held like a prisoner and was yanked all the way to the emperor.

“Just think these people are free labor for the emperor. They helped him find that crystal he was talking about, and we'll all get paid for taking them.” said one of the soldiers as they left the bone bed.

### **The emperor's study room**

Li and Yao opened their eyes due to a splash of water. The emperor was sitting in front of them. They learnt this dynasty's etiquette so quickly bowed accordingly. All the other people left.

“I thought that you heard rumors about me being from the present. That is true.” Zhong said, walking around the room. “I am Mr. Zhao's past student. The one who disappeared in the summer holidays.”

Not regarding their astonished expressions, he continued: “I am left here because of the mistakes made by my mentors and that I was the only one on that trip. Only one of you can return, try to translate the scroll into English, and remember to follow what it says.”

Zhong left them speechless and knelt on the floor, not willing to stand up. He did what he had been doing before, as if they weren't there. A scroll was thrown onto the ground in front of them, revealing the words inscribed on it.

“It is the exact same copy of what we have!”

“Exactly what I thought. I thought that they would be smarter than this. I have already stayed here because of that, for now I cannot leave this time anymore. If you don't leave in two days, then you will stay here, for all your life. Leave now, otherwise...”

### **Li and Tao's house in the Shang dynasty**

Li thought about Zhong's advice about translating the scroll into English. He translated it, but his face turned pale. If the scroll is correct, then it means that for someone to return, all other people must die. He does not want to, but he must kill Tao to get back. He may be desperate, but he is still sane in the last parts of his consciousness. But then, the thoughts of the whole trip in the Shang dynasty came to him, the appalling sanitation, disgusting food and worst of all, the stinging clothing with fleas on. The petrifying memories crushed the last parts of his sanity. Controlled by his subconsciousness, he picked up the dagger from the bag, packed to help them survive other people, and walked to Tao's room being completely stoic. Ignoring her horrified and astonished expressions, he drew a perfect line with the dagger. Tao's head dropped.

Almost without hesitation, Li picked up the stone and spoke the spell. He appeared in the time machine, pressed the “go” button and fainted in his seat. He only realized what he did when he woke in the hospital.

**Zhong's study room**

In his room, Zhong finally heard that the Li left to leave them with peace and Yao died. Without any doubt, he knew that it was Li who killed her. "I knew that nobody would resist the temptation of going back to the present. At least one of them went back this time." His face turned into the face of another person, the face of the director of the experiment, Mr. Zhao.

## The Survivors

*Wellington College International Shanghai, Tan, Jessie – 12*

I took off my hoverboard and stepped onto the platform the floating platform that connects with the teleporter. I entered the code and the entrance to the teleporter opened. Then, I thrusts my bags into a luggage teleporters before climbing into the main tunnel. Immediately, the entrance behind me closed and I was teleported to my home. To my surprise, someone was waiting for me at home.

“AHHH!” I screamed, terrified, just as my bags came shooting out of the luggage teleporters and landing on Caleb Wu’s face.

“Do you have a knack of hitting your brother’s face?”

“No need to shout!”

“I came here to tell you guys that we all got chosen for the annual Family Fossil Hunt! You can’t go because the age limit is above 15.”

“That’s so typical of you. Of course you would do that,” I stated coldly. Unable to withstand disappointment, I stomped to my room and burst into tears.

“Hey, don’t be mad! I’ll send you videos every day, okay?” my brother called from outside the door. “See you at dinner!”

“Every time, empty promises!” I muttered and opened my secret laptop. Inside, was files and files of every dinosaur species in the world. I ignored that and I opened a file named Caleb. Inside though was everything about him. Sure, I hacked all his devices, but he’s my brother so it wouldn’t matter right?

I didn’t notice time passed until my room alert system sounded and I quickly put away the laptop and opened my tablet.

“Don’t be sulky, time to eat dinner! When the rest of us goes to Liaoning, you’ll get this home all to yourself,” she remarked, cheering me up.

That night, I heard a crash downstairs and grabbed my dagger beneath my pillow. It was intricately designed with patterns beautifully carved on the metal. Slowly, I opened the door and found the lights were off and a man was standing in the living room. Just as I drew my dagger to attack, he turned around and it was Caleb.

“When did you have a dagger?” he asked casually.

“Where’s mom and dad?” I replied, ignoring his question.

“Probably still sleeping like logs.”

“I’ll check their bedroom. Can you check mom and dad’s lab?”

“Sure.”

I ran to my parent’s room. The door was locked. Mad with worry, I smashed the door open with a chair. Their beds were empty, but the window was wide open, and the cold wind blew at the curtains wildly. Yet the blankets are a mess and suddenly, the seemingly cozy room started to feel sinister. I screamed for Caleb, and he came running in.

“What—What happened here?” he asked, stuttering.

I noticed a note on the floor, and I grabbed it and read slowly, “*Today on this moonlit night. Your parents gone from your sight. If you ever want to see them again. Do not call the policemen.*”

My hands shook as reality hit me and unable to hold anything the letter dropped to the floor. Tears flowed silently down my cheeks as I fell on my knees collapsing under the pressure. Caleb snatched the letter, and everything grew silent. My cat bot, Luna, hopped in and assessed the situation.

“The kidnapper left no thumb prints,” Luna said.

“Give it the letter for it to assess, Caleb,” I whispered, voice hoarse.

“N-No, it’s the only thing we have,” Caleb stuttered

“Master Wu, I’ll be careful.”

“Yeah, Caleb.”

“I’m not taking chances.”

“Be reasonable.”

“No and that’s final. Caitlyn you’ll go up to your room and lock your door, windows.”

He trudged back into my parent’s lab and locked the doors. I looked at his back while he left, and I felt something was off. I looked around the room, everything was a mess, and he went straight into the lab without helping to clean up. It was almost as if he doesn’t care! So, I asked Luna to do some analysis...

When Caleb came out, and I slipped through the door and tiptoed into the lab. With my flashlight I found some documents piled on the table, and it all added up. Caleb’s weird personality, his strange actions and his suspicious language. He betrayed mother and father... I heard a click behind me and saw Caleb, holding a gun to my head.

“It was you all along,” I interjected softly yet menacingly.

“Yes, spare me your furious screaming,” he smiled wickedly.

“Why?”

“Why? If you truly know me, you will know why.”

“But—”

“Don’t ‘but’ me! Nobody understands me!”

“You’re unbelievable! I’m leaving!”

“Oh no, you aren’t! I want you to see what I’m going to do with our parents’ invention.”

He locked the doors with a snap of his fingers. I watched in horror as he set the location of the time portal at Lonely Hill and turned on the time machine my parents created. With a beep, the process began, and a horrific scene unfolded before my eyes. A dinosaur head of an Alectrosaurus poked through the portal. I stared in terror, as the portal gurgled and clamped shut when the last of the Alectrosauruses materialized.

“What’s your plan?” I shouted.

“All I want is to be the hero of the day!” he replied carelessly.

“You mean the villain of the day.”

“Same thing, from different perspectives.”

I was fuming as he unlocked the lab door, and strolled out, leaving me inside the lab. Without hesitation, I gathered all my contacts for a phone call on the lab tablet.

“What’s wrong?” voices asked in unison.

“Dinosaurs are coming to town and I’m not kidding,” I shouted. “Gather as many humans as you can and go into hiding.”

With that, I ended the call. The devices in the lab showed the locations of the dinosaurs as the alerts rang. Using my precious time, I hacked into the security and accessed all the security cameras in the city. Just before I start working, I asked one of my genius friends to create a government broadcast to warn people of dinosaurs. With strings of hair hanging down my face, I started working and hoped that my efforts didn’t go to waste. I placed different portals at the places where dinosaurs were, hoping that no one will go inside the portals. Beads of sweat poured down my forehead and my fingers typed so fast that they were blurred. However, the loading seemed to be against humanity.

My frustration was getting worse and worse. While waiting, I sent the recorded conversations I saved in my recorder online. Everything seemed to be hopeless now, nearly no one’s on the streets anymore, either eaten or gone into hiding. There was blood everywhere and the streets were lined with broken parts of buildings. The

Alectrosauruses were stomping up and down the streets, destroying everything in its path. Tears rolled down my cheeks as I thought of humanity pathetic, defeated, hopeless.

A blindly flash of light shone from the screens, and I fell, unconscious. When I opened my eyes again, I found the lab door open with Luna looking down at me.

“Mistress Wu, you’re awake!” Luna said robotically yet heartwarming.

“I want to check the traitor’s room,” I replied indifferently. His door was locked up to prevent anyone in looking in them and I allowed Luna to do the trick. Outside, it was dull. Inside, it was a different story. There were high-tech computers, screens, tablets everywhere and most of them were on a plan called “Operation Glory” which was the plan Caleb where summoned the Alectrosauruses. I saw many files that were about different operations that I dare not to open. Then, I saw Caleb’s diary. Inside, many parts shocked me like “Alexander isn’t my best friend anymore. People always laughed at me and kept on praising Alexander. That’s when I started my first plan: Operation Revenge.” I never thought my ultra-smart brother was insecure and lonely. As I turned around, I saw a dart board covered with darts, as I plucked off each dart, I saw a boy’s face covered with holes. He must be Alexander and there’s nothing I could do about it.

“Let’s go check outside,” I declared expressionlessly, despite Luna’s protests.

The Alectrosauruses were gone and so were most of the citizens. The remaining ones was the ones that took heed to my warning. I gazed at the disastrous surroundings around me, filled with the past hours of terror and death. The morning sun smiled down at the rest of the citizens as if nothing ever happened here. We were the only ones that were left. The Survivors.

“Well, what will it feel like to rebuild a city?” I murmured.

“That wouldn’t be necessary. You’ve passed the Purification stage. Now it’s time for the Experimental stage,” announced a dark voice and I turned around to see Caleb and a bunch of suited guys. “After all, welcome to the real world. We are going to another planet.”

## The Girl who Befriended a Dinosaur

Wellington College International Shanghai, Tan, Kayla – 12

Have you ever seen a criminal running from the divine, hiding for 5 centuries? Surprisingly, a girl called Xing-Yi exactly fits the description.

Xing-Yi was walking through the Yunnan grassland, finding food after she arrived in earth from her never-ending escape. Though the walk may have sounded calming, this was stressful for her, as no food was to be seen! She had gotten so hungry that she considered biting off her arm, but luckily before she tried self-cannibalism, she spotted a tall, green animal ahead.

'Finally, some food!' she rejoiced. Like a secret agent, she quickly crawled next to the animal while holding a sharp stick. She was ready to start her ambush, and was already thinking about how to eat it— when only after closely looking at the 'animal', she realised it was not just any creature... it was a—  
'A dinosaur?!

She was too stunned to speak. She dropped her stick, and simply fell on the ground, shaking her head in denial. *What mess did I get myself into?!* She thought.

Her anxiety levels rose, and her heart was beating faster than ever. She was getting dizzy, and all scenarios were forming in her head. She didn't know where this dinosaur came from, but she read about them in books— and she was terrified. She was so scared, that by the time she came back to reality she saw the dinosaur right in front of her. 'AAAAHHHHH!!!!'

Luckily, the dinosaur had no intention of eating her. Even better: it was a herbivore. The dinosaur sat next to her, and started chewing on leaves while Xing-Yi was sweating. *What is this dinosaur doing?!* She thought. This weird interaction already made her lose her appetite, so her only goal was to leave.

After finding an excuse to leave, she immediately ran. But while running away, she felt some guilt; is this how I treat animals? Could I have been any nicer to this dinosaur? And the questions kept coming. Amid her thoughts, she heard heavy footsteps behind her. Looking behind, she saw the dinosaur following her!

'Sorry, can you leave— '

She paused. *I can't keep treating it like this, Xing-Yi thought.* If she was the dinosaur, who had nowhere to go, how would they feel if they kept getting pushed away like this?

After making her decision, she looked up at the dinosaur; then she turned around, starting to walk.

'Let's go, Clover.'

6 months later...

It had become spring, and other than the flowers blooming, Xing-Yi and Clover's relationship miraculously bloomed into a thriving friendship! Additionally, it was also someone's birthday...

'Luckily the weather's good today, Clover. Or else my birthday would be even more miserable!' Said Xing-Yi.

'Who's birthday?'

Xing-Yi uncontrollably flinched.

'Why so afraid dear... it's only me, the forest fairy!' The fairy introduced.

Xing-Yi sat up and looked directly at the fairy, observing all her features. She had long, shiny black hair, a fair complexion like a porcelain doll, and the most special: her eyes were as shiny as marbles, which reflected the clear sky. *Were all fairies this beautiful?* Xing-Yi thought.

'Anyway, Is it your birthday then?' Asked the fairy.

'...Yes, but I don't really celebrate it — '

'Don't be silly birthday girl! So, how old are you?' interrupted the fairy.

'...518?'

The fairy gasped.

'Woah grandma... your older than me!' The fairy exclaimed.

'Yea...'

'Still... Happy birthday! As my gift, I shall grant you with... 3 wishes!'

'...really?'

'Yes! Say it now!'

In doubt, Xing-Yi began wishing. After all, what's the worst that could happen?

'My first wish, is to stay happy and healthy.'

The fairy nodded in approval.

'Secondly... I wish my companion, Clover, can understand and speak the same language as... me... if possible, of course!' Xing-Yi said hesitantly. She felt dumb for asking that.

'No, no, I could definitely do that. Go on!'

There was an awkward pause for awhile. *Is there not anything else I could wish for?* Xing-Yi thought.

'I—'

'Don't worry! If you can't think of one now, just call me whenever you think of it, okay?' Said the fairy.

Xing-Yi nodded.

'Oh, look at the time! I gotta go... Bye birthday girl! Oh, also happy birthday!!!' Shouted the fairy as she wandered off into the forest depths.

'That lady is quite strange,' said clover.

'Yea...' replied Xing-Yi, still staring into the forest depths.

Suddenly, she realised who she was talking to.

'CLOVER? YOU CAN TALK?!

Since that day, life had just been getting better! The cherry blossoms in spring had turned into Autumn gingko trees, and it was a beautiful autumn evening while Clover and Xing-Yi went for a stroll. Their bond was now inseparable, and there was no way they would be separated.

Right?

'The evening today is splendid!' Remarked Xing-Yi.

'I thought so too.' Replied Clover. The two looked out onto the horizon, and saw the sky filled with hues of red, yellow, and purple.

You know, I think I've been having so much fun, I've begun to forget something important.'

'Really?'

'Yea, well... I don't think it's THAT important.'

Suddenly the sky blew a tremendously strong gust of wind upon the two. The sky shined a blinding light, while someone walked down invisible steps from a portal.

A terribly similar sense of fear came upon Xing-Yi. Now she remembered it. How could she be so stupid! The reason she came to earth, the thing she was forgetting—

'We meet again, sinner.'

That's what she was forgetting! Yes, her escape...! How could she forget?!

The air felt tense, and Xing-Yi tried her best to stay calm.

'Did you enjoy your hide-and-seek game?' Asked the entity as they slowly walked to her.

'How did you find me...?' She muttered. Her anxiety quickly spiked up.

'Do you think I'm blind? You are running from the gods, Cecelia.'

'Cecelia? W—who is Cecelia?!'

'You don't remember the curse? **You shall live till you can't even remember your name!**'

The horrifying memory ran through her head.

'Does that ring a bell?'

'I was young... I—I didn't know the consequences of stealing the divine potion!' She defended.

**'SILENCE!'** The entity bellowed. They pulled out a long, sharp dagger. 'You shall now serve your punishment and be a sacrifice to repay for your sins!'

'WAIT! Don't kill her... kill me instead.' Interrupted Clover.

By hearing those words, it felt like a sharp thorn stabbed Xing-Yi.

'Clover! What are you doing?!' She screamed.

'I want to save you, Xing-Yi.'

'No...! You can't leave me! What... what will I do without you?!'

'Xing-Yi, I'm just a dinosaur. Just... move on.'

The words Clover said pierced through Xing-Yi even harder. How would she live without her only companion?

'Clover... Please!' She helplessly pleaded.

'Goodbye, Xing-Yi.' Bid Clover.



...

'I guess I could take them instead... Well then, farewell Cecelia. I hope you enjoyed playing this long game of ours.'

Said the entity. With Xing-Yi watching in defeat, the god stabbed Clover, then leaving through the portal. After the portal closed, all that was left was Xing-Yi, who was left crying mindlessly on the grass.

She had lost everything. Again.

A month later...

Like Xing-Yi's condition now, the weather had turned gloomier and darker. The mentally scarred girl rotted in her bed, still denying the fact that any of that ever happened. During her depressing thoughts, she heard someone approach her from behind.

'Hey birthday girl, have you thought of your third wish yet?' Asked the fairy,

'I... I don't know.' Muttered Xing-Yi. She turned around to the fairy, revealing her current condition: horrible.

'What the—What happened to you! You look so different to how I saw you 7 months ago! You used to be so happy... pretty...'

Thinking about how happy she used to be— with Clover— she then burst into tears.

'... Oh my! Dear there's no need to cry! Why so sad?'

'They killed Clover... and— and they took them away!' Xing-Yi cried.

*Them?* The fairy thought.

'I want Clover back! I don't know what to do! \*sniff\*.' She admitted.

After realising what to do, the fairy smiled. She then closed her eyes, and after 5 seconds or so a luminous light shined through the whole room.

Wiping her tears, Xing-Yi stared at the light, curious but also hopeful. *Please, something good happen...* Xing-Yi thought. *Please!*

Suddenly, something floated down gently and rested next to Xing-Yi. Soon, she realised the thing wasn't just anything... it was... it was—

'CLOVER!'

The two shared a long, emotional hug, and Xing-Yi was crying even harder— tears of joy. While they reunited, not wanting to interrupt their moment, the fairy quietly stood up, and happily wandered off to her next errand, disappearing into the depths of the forest.

Looking into the fairy's direction, Xing-Yi felt nothing but gratitude to the fairy.

'I guess the fairy isn't that strange after all!' Clover remarked.

'Yea.' Replied Xing-Yi as she stared into the sky, wondering where her life will take her next— now hopeful for the future.

## The Echoes of the Unforgotten

*Wellington College International Shanghai, Teng, Mia – 12*

Hannah knelt on the cold, stone ground, her knees burning as the icy surface bit into her skin. The night air wrapped around her like a suffocating shroud, the wind howling through the gaps in the stone castle as if mourning her fate. She stared up at her father, her chest heaving with ragged breaths, her eyes brimming with anger, betrayal, and a desperation that threatened to consume her. How could he—her father, her protector, her life, become this monstrous figure towering over her?

Professor Lin's warning echoed through her mind, sharp and haunting:

Some choices cannot be undone.

And now, as her father raised the bronze dagger high above his head, the sharp edge gleaming like a scythe in the moonlight, she finally understood the weight of those words. His face, once a map of warmth and love, was now unrecognizable—a battlefield of furrowed brows and twisted rage, his darkened eyes were empty of the humanity she had once known. He wasn't her father anymore. He was Phantom's puppet.

"Please, Father, don't," Hannah whispered, her voice trembling, her plea a fragile thread against the storm of his anger. "This isn't you."

Her words pierced the night but not his heart. They fell like pebbles into an abyss, swallowed by the void Phantom had carved within him. Instead of softening, her plea seemed to fuel his anger. With a guttural cry, he swung the dagger in a savage arc, the blade slicing through the air with deadly intent. Hannah threw herself sideways, the blade narrowly missing her and striking the stone with a deafening clang that reverberated through the castle walls.

Her knees scraped against the ground as she scrambled to her feet, the pain sharp but insignificant compared to the fear gripping her chest. She ran—fled through the twisting stone corridors of the castle she once called home, her father's furious shouts chasing her like ghosts. The path ahead led to the wild forest beyond, a labyrinth of colossal trees and lurking silhouettes where the creatures of ancient China roamed.

As her feet pounded against the earth, a memory surged forth, unbidden and vivid, a fragment of her past that stopped her in her tracks. It was the night everything changed.

It had been a Wednesday. Storm clouds churned like restless beasts, rain battering the windows of Hannah's small room. She sat by the window, her forehead pressed to the cold glass, staring into the swirling chaos outside.

She was eleven then, a child dreaming of escape. Escape from her dull life. Escape from people who didn't understand her—who teased her for believing in the impossible. How bitterly ironic it was, then, that the impossible knocked on her door that very night.

Three soft knocks.

Hannah froze, her stomach twisting. This was wrong. Terribly wrong. The knock came again, more insistent. Against every instinct screaming at her to stay put, Hannah rose and heaved the door open. A cloaked figure stood before her, rain dripping from their hood, their presence otherworldly.

"Hello, Hannah Agatha Ling," the figure rasped, their voice like the creak of ancient wood. "You've been chosen."

She flinched at her full name, barely anyone called her that. Before she could speak, they thrust a small, smooth egg into her hands, its warmth startling against her cold skin.

"Take this," they commanded, their tone urgent. "Time is short. Hatch it before midnight. The Academy awaits."

The figure disappeared into the storm, leaving Hannah with the egg and a hastily scrawled letter. Her hands trembled as she unfolded it:

“Dear Hannah,

I await you at The Chinese. The egg must hatch. Good luck.”

The grammar was atrocious, but before she could laugh or cry, the egg in her hands began to tremble. Hairline cracks spread across its surface, and then, with a soft *pop*...it split open. A tiny, green dinosaur emerged, its scales shimmering like emeralds, its bright eyes locking onto hers with an intelligence that stole her breath.

“Cheng,” she whispered, the name spilling from her lips like a prayer.

In that moment, a bond forged between them—something ancient and unbreakable.

The journey to Hatchlings Academy was surreal, like stepping into a dream. The academy, nestled in the mist-shrouded mountains, loomed like a fortress of secrets. Lanterns cast a golden glow on the cobblestone paths, and the air buzzed with an energy that made Hannah’s skin tingle. She clutched Cheng tightly, the little dinosaur nuzzling against her chest as if to reassure her. Professor Lin, the academy’s enigmatic leader, greeted her with a knowing smile. “Welcome, Hannah. I see you’ve already formed a bond with your Ling long. That is no small feat.”

At Hatchlings Academy, life was a whirlwind of wonder, students trained with dinosaurs of every size and species. Cheng, though small, was quick as lightning and fiercely loyal. Together, they learned to communicate without words, their bond growing stronger with each passing day. But even amidst the beauty and camaraderie, a threat brewed. Whispers of Phantom spread through the academy like wildfire—a dark force bent on controlling the world’s dinosaurs.

“The Ghost Rider,” Conor said one night around the campfire, his voice low and fearful. “He’s Phantom’s servant. He steals dinosaurs for his master’s army.”

Hannah shivered. “What does he want with them?”

“To conquer the world,” Conor replied, his eyes dark. “And if he gets Cheng...”

The nightmare began one crisp morning. Hannah arrived at Cheng’s stable to find it empty. The sight of the open gate sent her heart plummeting into her stomach.

“Cheng!” she screamed, her voice breaking.

Every corner of the academy grounds was scoured, but Cheng was nowhere to be found. Desperation clawed at Hannah as she burst into Professor Lin’s office, tears streaming down her face.

“He’s gone,” she choked out. “Phantom took him.”

Professor Lin’s face darkened. “Then we must act quickly. Phantom’s darkness is like a poison—it will consume Cheng if we don’t intervene.”

Hannah clenched her fists, her jaw set with determination. “I’ll get him back. I swear.”

The journey to Phantom’s lair was harrowing, a test of courage and resilience. Hannah and her friends—Conor, Abby, and Lily all faced countless perils. They battled Dilong, serpent-like creatures with razor-sharp fangs, their victories hard-won and costly. By the time they reached the entrance to Phantom’s cave, their bodies bore the lacerations of their struggle, but their spirits remained unbroken. Inside, the air was thick with malice, the shadows alive with a sinister presence. Phantom’s voice echoed through the cavern, chilling and cruel.

“You think you can defeat me?” he sneered, the evilness of his power oozing from every word. “You are children. You are nothing.”

Hannah stepped forward, her heart hammering but her voice steady. “I don’t need to defeat you. But my beloved one needs to be saved.”

In the centre of the lair, Cheng stood motionless, his eyes empty, his spirit trapped by Phantom's dark magic. The sight shattered Hannah's heart.

"Cheng," she whispered, almost choking.

The bond between them was her lifeline, and she clung to it with everything she had. She reached out, her hands trembling. "Cheng, it's me. Remember the time we won first prize in the Dinolymics?"

For a moment, nothing happened. And then, a flicker of recognition sparked in his eyes.

"No!" Phantom roared, his power lashing out like a storm. "You cannot take him from me!"

But Hannah didn't falter. "You're not his," she said, her voice rising with unshakable conviction. "You're mine. And I will fight for you."

Cheng let out a deafening roar, the sound shaking the cavern. The magic binding him shattered, its fragments dissolving into the air along with Phantom's form, flickering and weak as ever.

The flashback ended, and Hannah found herself once more on the stone ground, surrounded by her father's army. At their centre stood her father, his eyes still clouded by Phantom's spell. But Hannah saw the man beneath the darkness—the man who had once cradled her in his arms and promised to protect her.

"Dad," she said, her voice trembling but resolute. "I know you're still in there."

He raised his dagger, his hand shaking.

Hannah stepped forward, tears streaming down her face. "Please, come back to me. I need you. Mum wouldn't want this. Remember who you are."

For a moment, the world held its breath. Then, like sunlight breaking through a storm, her father's expression softened.

"Hannah?" he whispered; his voice raw with guilt. The dagger slipped from his grasp, clattering to the ground.

Hannah ran to him, throwing her arms around his neck. "We're together now," she said, her voice thick with emotion. "We'll make it through this."

With Phantom defeated, they returned to Hatchlings Academy, hailed as heroes. But as the night crept forward, something stirred. A shadow moved in the distance, and a cold breath grazed Hannah's neck. The darkness had not been fully vanquished.

Danger was still lurking, and this was far from over.

## Jennifer's Adventure

*Wellington College International Shanghai, Wang, Ariana – 12*

“Mom, when are we going to arrive at China?” asked Jennifer her voice brimming with excitement.  
“Only two more hours. Stop asking me, you’ve already asked me almost twenty times. Can’t you stay quiet like your sister, Jaden?” replied Mom with a tired voice.

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When they finally arrived, they weren’t at a museum but at the sprawling mansion of their family friends, the Li family. “Welcome!” Mr. Li greeted them. “We can’t wait to show you, our collection!” Jennifer’s eyes widened as they stepped inside. The grand hall was filled with incredible dinosaur fossils displayed in elegant glass cases.

“Wow! This is incredible!” she gasped.

“Look at that T. rex skull!” Jaden exclaimed, snapping photos.

Mr. Li explained the stories behind each fossil, from the giant sauropods to delicate dinosaur eggs. Jennifer listened intently, imagining the dinosaurs roaming the Earth millions of years ago.

“Can we touch this one?” Jennifer and Jaden asked, pointing to a smaller fossil.

“Of course!” Mr. Li smiled, encouraging her curiosity. “Just be gentle.”

However, all of a sudden, they were outside, and they can’t see any buildings or humans, then they heard powerful roar it was a Alectrosaurus. “It was just like what I read in the book!” said Jennifer with a surprised face.

“Where are we?” shouted Jaden. “I want mom! I want to go!”

“We are in the dinosaur world isn’t it so cool,” said Jennifer with a happiness smile.

“NO! it is so dangerous here any creatures might kill us I don’t want to die I don’t want you to die I need to find a way that can bring us home now as fast as I can!” replied Jaden. She looked pale like she was dead. Her voice worried and definitely not relaxed.

As the Alectrosaurus let out a deep roar again, Jennifer and Jaden froze. The massive creature, with its sharp claws and piercing eyes, stood before them, both frightening and fascinating. Jaden, anxious, scanned their surroundings. “We need to find shelter,” she thought, and they dashed toward a cluster of lush ferns, hiding behind the thick foliage. The ground shook with each step of the dinosaur, but eventually, the sound faded away.

“We need to figure out how we got here,” Jennifer said, her mind racing. If they could retrace their steps, maybe they could find a way back home. Just then, a shimmering object caught her eye. Jennifer approached cautiously. It was a small, glowing stone nestled among the ferns. The warmth radiating from it filled her with a sense of wonder. She picked it up, and suddenly, the ground trembled again. A Alectrosaurus appeared, its head looks like it had a very strong jaw and its tail looked long and powerful but had small babylike little arms and claws that looked a little bit strange on its strong looking body.

The creature lowered its head, curious about the glowing stone. In that moment, Jennifer felt a connection to the dinosaur, as if it understood them. The Alectrosaurus nudged the stone, and a swirl of light enveloped them. They felt a strange sensation, as if being lifted from the ground. When the light faded, they found themselves back in the grand hall of the Li mansion, surrounded by the familiar dinosaur fossils. Jennifer looked at the glowing stone, heart racing with excitement. They had truly visited the dinosaur world.

As they shared their incredible experience with Mr. Li, he didn’t say anything, but a smile was all across the face.

Jennifer knew they would remember this story forever, and perhaps one day return for another journey into the past.

## The Beast is Real

*Wellington College International Shanghai, Wang, Haoyu Harry – 12*

It was dusk when they arrived at the Sichuan Basin.

'Land of Heaven's Abundance', it was called by the local people; as the Basin's soils were rich with fossil beds and known for the discoveries of several dinosaur species. Archaeologists and fossil diggers were attracted here like metals to a magnet, most here betting on chance with a hope of discovery.

Carrying their large, stuffed bags of equipment on their shoulders, the three men marched slowly towards the populated and lively village beside the Basin with sweat crawling and dripping down their backs. Behind them, the sun dipped below the horizon, dusk unfurled its velvet cloak across the sky, painting the world in soft shades of purple and gold.

"We're almost there, gents. Just one more route and we'll be at the village," the most muscular of the men, who wore a light red cap, explained heartily. "Can't wait for the moment we set down into the Basin, hit the jackpot and find a dino bone for ourselves. I mean, this place is crowded with fossils!"

"Ugh, could you please stop yammering on about 'hitting the jackpot' and all that, Xu? I'm tired of you repeating this all along the journey. Anyways, we've got more to worry about. What 'bout the hotel fees? I'd bet none of us have enough money to pay!" the man who walked at the back complained, lighting a cigarette.

"Why do you have to be so negative all the time, Liu? Let him dream away. He's still young," the shortest of the three remarked, placing his hand on Liu's back.

"Don't touch me, Chen!" Liu spat, shuffling away uncomfortably. "Wait? What's this?"

He had stumbled upon what reassembled a huge hole in the ground. It wasn't that deep, more like a footprint, with three prints sticking out of a hole in the middle.

"Come on and hurry up, Liu! What are you doing, stopping randomly all the time?" Xu called.

"Coming," Liu said.

As the men entered the village, they were immediately greeted by the friendly villagers, having their bags removed and placed at the local station and treated kindly. They were much more caring and generous than Liu had expected, giving the fellow travellers free rent for a few days. After all, the villages around the Basin were always crowded with people.

But just as the trio was about to enter their lodgings, another cluster of archaeologists and fossil diggers arrived.

They were behaving, somewhat peculiarly.

There was silence for a while, as most of the crowd was huddled together, staring at the ground.

Then one stumbled forward, eyes wide open, and screeched: "THE BEAST IS REAL!"

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The room was lit with a few lamps, warm but exposed to the howling wind outside. The men sat together chatting while they ate a few rations provided.

"What beast? I don't believe in this embarrassing gossip. Who came up with this beast myth anyways? Maybe they saw a tiger in the woods? Or perhaps one of the fossils of the dinosaurs? If so, we definitely should go and take a look!" Xu exclaimed.

“There are no tigers in China, stupid! But this beast though... the way they acted... we should still be cautious out there in the Basin.” Liu warned, occasionally shuddering.

“Pffft! Don’t be a coward!” Chen laughed. Suddenly, through the window came a monstrous croak, ringing into Chen’s ears.

“AAAAH!” he yelled, leaping away from the window. “WHO’S THERE?”

He wheeled towards the flower pot and the table and threw it towards the window. It shattered on impact as Chen gasped at what he had done.

“What the hell was that for?” Liu shouted.

In from the window, came again the same croak. Chen looked towards the sound with his eyes widened. It was a frog. He relaxed, his face now red.

“Sorry... I couldn’t control myself. I, uh, was terribly nervous... I thought it was something else.”

“The beast, right?” Liu laughed. “Now who’s the coward?”

Then there came a knocking on the door. It was the chief of the village, an old man with a snow white goatee which dropped down his chin.

“Ah, my visitors. I’m here to discuss the... thing outside.”

“You mean the beast?” Xu demanded, curious. “Because these two are literally killing each other because they’re afraid of that so-called... beast.”

“Er, yes. I’m just here to warn you to not go to the bamboo wood right at the edge of the Basin, behind the village.”

“Why?” Liu questioned.

“Let’s just say I told the same thing to your fellow visitors outside.”

“What, those insane men outside? You also believe in this beast?”

“No, no no! I beg your pardon, but this has been happening for the past four years now, ever since we recovered that... skull. And then we saw all the footprints around.”

“Footprints...” Liu muttered.

“What skull? Take me to it,” Xu interrupted, suddenly fascinated by the idea.

“Come with me.” The village chief said quietly.

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It was in the middle of the village hall, hanging on a wall, a strange but magnificent thing, a tiny skull reassembling a head with a remarkably long, skeletal neck stretching out from behind.

“Oh! I know this creature! It’s the skull of a Mamenchisaurus, a dinosaur species found a while ago, right here at the Sichuan Basin.” Xu exclaimed, surprised. “What is this supposed to do with... the beast?”

“After we retrieved this from the bamboo forest, we began seeing all those footsteps,” the village chief sighed. “Then everyone went mad.”

“Footprints...” Liu muttered again.

“I... I don’t understand. None of this makes sense. But if you’re so intent on your little ‘story’ being true, then fine. We’ll go. Let’s check if there’s actually a monster in this ‘mystical’ bamboo forest. Come on, Liu, Chen. Let’s get away from this madman.” Xu stormed off.

“That’s what they said…” the village chief murmured.

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Xu stepped through the dense grass and dirt of the bamboo forest, pushing through the many layers of bamboo slowly with his knife in hand. Chen and Liu followed silently behind, pale-faced and cautious in their actions, like frightened prey attempting to hide from the invisible predator.

“There’s no monster here! I told you! It was all lies, made-up stories to scare us away! Perhaps they’re hiding some sort of treasure here! Then we’ve definitely hit the jackpot!” Xu laughed jeeringly.

“I can’t be so sure about that,” Chen said. “What’s that?”

On the ground in front of them, the three men could see a track of footprints, footprints of something large.

Liu had seen them somewhere before, on the way to the Basin. “Xu! Isn’t this what the village chief said? Footprints of the beast!”

“Pfft! Come to your senses, Liu! There’s no such thing as a—”

That was when they saw it.

In the road before them, stuck in the middle of the dirt, half sticking out and half submerged in the ground, was a skull. In particular, a skull of a Mamenchisaurus.

“AAAAH!” Liu yelled, covering his face and jerking backwards in fear. “THE BEAST!” he cried as he readied his shovel, preparing to smash the skull into pieces.

“WAIT! What do you think you’re doing?” Xu exclaimed, leaping in between Liu and the skull, his arms outstretched as he defended the fossil.

Then, slowly and carefully, Xu began digging up the skull with his shovel, swinging it against the dirt gently time after time.

But Liu froze. In his eyes, the skull was shifting, changing, morphing into something else. It had sprung back to life, now again animated with monstrous movements as it laughed mockingly at him. To Liu’s tired imagination, skin and flesh began to return to the skull, and out from its head sprang two vulture eyes, both bloodshot red and staring right into his.

In his mind, the beast was skeletal, horrific and gruesome, towering over the slender and tall bamboo of the forest, rising over him as it let out a ghastly roar into the night sky. And Xu was freeing the monster from its grave, unleashing death to them all.

“DEATH IS WHAT’S COMING FOR US! THE BEAST IS REAL!” he cried, screeching and bleating like a frightened goat, his hands clenched on his head as he jerked his hairs up with a sense of insanity. Then he launched towards Xu, bashing his shovel against his head.

Xu fell to the floor, unconscious.

In fear, Chen stared at Liu, horrified by his actions. Liu was now also shifting into something different, something more savage and barbaric.

“WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!” Chen pointed frantically towards Liu. “You… YOU ARE THE BEAST!”

Then the men struggled, skirmished and fought, kicking and punching one another; once friends, now fighting for survival, overwhelmed by fear.

The last that was heard of them, coming out of the bamboo forest, was hysterical cries of: “THE BEAST IS REAL!”



## The Lost World

*Wellington College International Shanghai, Xia, Marcus – 11*

“What was that?” Mr. Li shouted as the leaves rustled in the bushes around them. “Something we don’t understand.” Mr. Wong said calmly. Mr. Li shouted before something jumped out of the shadows at them.

2 days before...

“Oh, don’t be so serious, it’s just a trip to Hunan for fossils,” Mr. Li said, though both knew it was more than that. Archaeologists had found a new dinosaur species and called Mr. Wong for help. He never traveled without his assistant, Mr. Li. Soon, they were bumping along a rough road in a taxi.

As the taxi screeched to a halt, the hum of chatter, carts, and the roar of planes flooded their ears. “Nice day for a discovery, don’t you think?” shouted Mr. Li over the sounds of planes and people. “There’s no time to chat,” murmured Mr. Wong. “We have work to do.” They rushed toward the downward slope that led to the plane, and the captain ushered them inside. Minutes later, the captain’s voice came over the radio, announcing that they would be taking off in one minute. Voices faded as the plane rolled onto the runway; the ground blurred as the plane sped up, and seconds later, the air screamed like the wind in a storm.

Shortly after takeoff, Mr. Wong noticed a strange cloud of tiny birds flying east. He initially thought they were migrating but dismissed the idea since it was July. As the plane landed and screeched to a halt, he checked his watch: 9:30 AM, right on time. “Come on, Li, we need to go,” he muttered.

They called a taxi at the airport and loaded their suitcases in the trunk. After an hour on bumpy roads, they reached the site where archeologists had set up tents among giant trees. Some were brushing dust off pearly white bones in the dirt. “We’re almost done excavating, so you’ll soon get a good look at them,” a man said excitedly to Mr. Wong.

“How soon can we see it?” Mr. Wong inquired.

“In about 36 to 48 hours,” came the reply.

“We can wait. Where will we be staying?”

“In the professor’s quarters.”

“Lead the way.”

The archeologist showed them to their quarters, and after dropping off their suitcases, they went outside to watch the progress. Mr. Wong noticed birds flying east and, upon checking his compass, was surprised when they disappeared. A man then announced it was time to relax for lunch. They enjoyed their lunch of beef, sausages, and broccoli, finishing at 12:00 AM. After lunch, Mr. Wong eagerly examined some dinosaur fossils, noting that it was a species he had never seen before, even with all his years of experience. That night, a storm kept everyone indoors.

The next day, they discovered the rain had washed away dirt from the fossils. Suddenly, their compasses began spinning, all pointing east. Mr. Wong, recalling the birds, insisted only his assistant, Mr. Li, accompany him to investigate. He solemnly explained the situation to Li, and they followed the birds to a hidden cave covered in vines. “Let’s go,” Mr. Wong said as they entered the tunnel.

“Could you turn on your flashlight? It’s too dark to see anything.” called out Mr. Li.

“I don’t have mine on me,” replied Mr. Wong. “Wait, I think I see light.”

“But how? Were underground!”

“Let’s find out.”

They scrambled through a narrow, damp tunnel, hearts racing with excitement and trepidation. After what felt like an eternity, they emerged into a cave filled with a vibrant ecosystem. Lush, emerald forests and sparkling rivers created a stunning landscape under an otherworldly light. Towering trees swayed gracefully, their leaves whispering to the refreshing breeze. Exotic flowers added bursts of color to the scenery, and the air was rich with the sweet scent of damp earth and blooming flora, making it feel like a hidden paradise underneath our feet.

Mr. Li’s eyes widened in astonishment as he took in the breathtaking scene. “But how is there light?!” he exclaimed, his voice echoing in the cavernous space.

Mr. Wong gestured toward the shimmering crystals embedded in the rocky walls. “It’s bacteria growing on the crystals that radiate light,” he explained. Just then, something rustled among the dense canopy, sparking their curiosity and drawing their gaze toward the mysterious shadow flitting between the trees. “What is that? It has a long neck!”

“It looks like a...”

“Dinosaur!” Mr. Li trembled, “But how on earth did it survive?”

Mr. Wong explained that the cave was coated in a strange, unknown metal that seemed to have compressed and absorbed the heat and shock of the meteorite impact.

As they drew closer, the massive 10-meter-tall creature suddenly crumpled to the ground with a thunderous crash, sending a tremor through the earth. Dust and debris swirled around its colossal form. From the shadow cast by the fallen giant, a dark, menacing figure emerged, crouching next to the majestic creature and staring at it with predatory intent. Mr. Li’s heart raced, and his voice trembled with fear as he shouted, “What in the world was that?!” His eyes widened, trying to comprehend the scene with terror.

“An undiscovered species; it’s killing the dinosaurs!” exclaimed Mr. Wong. They decided to use the strange metal to capture the creature. They walked around collecting the silvery strips of metal from the ground. Using their archeological tools, they made dents in each strip and fit them together. After hours of hard work, they built a cage and set it up in an area with many dinosaurs. Mr. Wong observed the creature’s size and weight and figured it couldn’t escape inside the cage. They waited for the creature to return, and soon, it approached a dinosaur. Mr. Wong jumped out, slammed the cage over the creature, and closed the cage door firmly.

Mr. Wong leaped out secured the cage, and the creature struggled but eventually quieted. “What do we do now?” Mr. Li asked.

“We should bring it back to the surface for examination,” replied Mr. Wong. They transported the creature through the cave and drove back to their base, greeted by a man who exclaimed, “Where were you two? We were so worried!”

“We were checking out some suspicious tracks and found this creature hiding in a bush, we have never seen something quite like it,” Mr. Wong told them. “ah, Li, would you mind taking it out?”

Mr. Li took the cage out of the car and allowed the spectators to observe it. It had gray skin, gleaming white teeth, blood-red eyes, and long, sharp claws made of an unusual material. “You’ve discovered a new species! This is incredible!” they exclaimed.

3 days later...

"We have confirmed your extraordinary discovery of a new species; you will be credited for this remarkable find," declared the government official, a hint of authority in his voice. "Is there anything else you wish to add?"

"Oh yes, we—" Mr. Li began, his excitement evident as he leaned forward. However, he quickly fell silent as he caught the stern, warning gaze of Mr. Wong.

"My friend here was going to say that we have nothing further to discuss and that we wish you a good day," Mr. Wong interjected with a polite smile.

They both watched as the official turned away, sliding into his vehicle and driving off into the distance. As the car engine faded, Mr. Li leaned closer, his voice dropping to a whisper, "Why did you stop me from mentioning the dinosaurs?"

"Believe me, those creatures are better left undisturbed," Mr. Wong replied, the weight of his words hanging in the air.

"Why not? They're incredible!" Mr. Li exclaimed, his eyes alight with curiosity.

"Well, we certainly don't want to spark another mass extinction, do we?" Mr. Wong stated matter-of-factly.

"No, of course not," Mr. Li nodded, his enthusiasm dimming slightly as he absorbed the implication.

"So, there you have it: if no one knows about the dinosaurs, then there's no risk of a mass extinction," Mr. Wong concluded, his tone leaving no room for argument.

With that, they continued their journey, walking side by side as the sun dipped lower on the horizon, casting warm hues of orange and purple across the sky. Ahead lay the promise of new adventures in a wondrous world filled with mystery and beauty, the shadows of hidden truths trailing silently behind them.

## Cancerous Dinosaurs

*Wellington College International Shanghai, Xiao, Ya Dai Charlotte – 12*

1

I touched my bald scalp as I stared into the darkness. With the light of the city, my dream of becoming an archeologist was slowly being diminished as well. Time was passing like sand falling, and yet, I was still alive. My body was sucked of energy, as the risk of my disease increased. I was far away from a light named hope. Far, far away. I was fatigued; it starved me. I was malnourished, a gaunt shadow on a thin wooden bed dreaming, for something better, saving me from the pain. Death.

When I was little, I used to dream of flying, high in the sky like a pterodactyl. Or driving deep into the water like the mosasaurs. But now, I dream about dying, ending the pain, enclosing into the darkness. Big changes have been made. My heart has been withering. My desires have been fading into the darkness.

What could I do?

I don't know.

I checked the clock; I wanted to close it. The ticking irritated me. 00:01. It showed. I had stayed awake for 2 hours. I slept at eleven. I turned around. The blankets enveloped me like a cocoon, the heat made me suffocate. The smell of perspiration blocked my nostrils, and I took a tissue to wipe it. I tossed again. 00:02, the clock showed, (to my annoyance) and I closed my eyes. I tried to deflect my focus to something else, but this was heavy.

Heavier than I imagined...

I sighed. My breath was muffled, and my throat tingled. I coughed out a spurt of blood, and it crackled like firewood. I was too tired to grab a wipe, so I closed my eyes and forced myself to sleep. And the warmth of the blood led me to sleep into a dreamless night.

2

I woke up being entangled in the cold. The blood I had coughed up the night before was brown, fading into my blankets. The waking city was obscured with a thin layer of mist. The sky was grey, like ashes. The clock was still ticking. 05:00 it showed. I groaned, as I attempted to wrap myself into oblivion and darkness once again. I failed. So, I decided to get up. A warm pool of blood rested on my bedsheets. It was brownish red, with some patches dry and some still liquified. External bleeding. Typical.

I left it there.

Then I dressed.

I made my own breakfast.

A sunny side up egg, toast, oatmeal, and orange juice. After fiddling with my plastic spork (I refused to use the metal cutlery after poking myself using a metal fork on the head once), I finally stabbed my egg and unwillingly stuffed it into my mouth. I could do with some suffering anyway; I thought to myself. Then, I chewed, spit and drank for a few minutes, before finally giving up.

"Egg on my shirt," I groaned as I brushed it off. Then I rushed to the bathroom, washed my hands several times until it was bruised and finally rushed out to slip on the bathroom mat.

"Ughh, ow." I moaned, as I swore under my breath. I held the thin door railing to support my weight as I slowly got up. My lungs started to contract, and mucus blocked my weak trachea. That is what the doctor had said. Then a flood of red metallic blood poured out. It stained the mosaic floor. And with the pain I fell to the floor again, this time, my knees edging on the marble.

"Owww... sheesh!"

I groaned, slowly got up and looked down on the floor before proceeding. When I finally passed the slippery slope of the floor, I had to get ready for school. I ate my meds, changed into school clothes (the most comfortable ones, plus I had lost my fashion sense), and lastly meditated. My therapist recommended this treatment, though it was personally self-harm and boredom. Then after passing all of these processes, I went to the bus stop.

As usual, I was early. The sun was tenderly poking out of the red horizon, with the spring wind blowing onto my pale cheeks. I sat down on the hard rock tarmac and sighed. I glanced around to divert my attention, and it finally rested on this bluejay. It had sapphire blue wings, with a ring of pearl. The light shining from an angle made it luminescent to a degree which gave it an ethereal radiance. As its wings gracefully flapped, a soft breeze whispered through the air, causing the leaves to rustle and dance around its elegant presence. But then, I snapped out of this trance.

3

The metal box gleamed under the sunlight, its surface reflecting like a mirror. A panel adorned its side, catching the eye with its intricate design. Ten enormous buttons illuminated the box, their soft glow casting a mesmerizing light. As I approached, I noticed the buttons had Arial font text labels, each one a portal to another world. Some labels read "Time travel" and "Duplicator," their words echoing in my mind. Yet, there were others, mysterious and unintelligible, resembling ancient hieroglyphics, their shapes and lines seemingly etched into the very fabric of the box. A towering antenna rose from the top of the metal machine, dominating the environment, and I could feel it, a tangible energy that sent shivers down my spine. The air around it seemed to vibrate, creating an eerie sensation that both fascinated and unnerved me. But my curiosity, at last, got the best out of me. I walked forward, slowly and steadily, and pressed the "Time travel" button. To the Mesozoic era. And I felt this sensation. I was pulled in, like gravity ruled different. My body was experiencing a new type of heat like being baked in a tesla-sized microwave. The smell of plastic permeated the air, and perspiration coated my bruised back. Once again, discomfort surrounded me, and I could not let go. I twitched and kicked my weak limbs, fighting hopelessly. I was a fish trapped in a net. A strong metallic net, with a harpoon sticking through my bare chest. A whirlwind of colors blinded me, and the colors made me dizzy. My head was rumbling, and it was giving me an agonizing migraine. The whirling motion came to a halt suddenly.

4

I cautiously emerged from the time machine, my heart pounding with anticipation. And there, right before my eyes, stood the embodiment of my past lifelong dream – dinosaurs. My breath caught in my throat. And in front of me, I saw tall thick palm trees, larger than I had ever imagined, stretched high into the sky. The air was dense and humid, filled with the cries of creatures I had only read imagined or read in the books. There, not far away, was a herd of dinosaurs. Their scales glimmered under the sunlight as they moved gracefully together.

One of them approached—a massive, but surprisingly gentle-looking dinosaur with deep green eyes. It seemed to study me curiously. My heart pounded with fear and awe. I stepped closer, and it lowered its head, almost as if it understood my pain. In that moment, I felt like I belonged.

As days passed, I lived among the dinosaurs. They were not the mindless beasts I thought they'd be. They had their own ways of communicating, of caring for one another. They taught me to find food, to build shelter, and to listen to the world around me. For the first time in a long time, I felt alive. They accepted me even though I was weak, even though I was dying. I stopped coughing blood as much. I smiled more.

But there was trouble. A huge predator was threatening the peaceful dinosaur village. The others were afraid. They whispered to me in low, mournful sounds. They knew I was sick, that my time was short. I realized what I had to do. I would fight to protect them, to give them a chance to escape.

With trembling hands, I picked up a sharp rock. I knew it wouldn't do much against the mighty beast. But I had to try. As the ground shook and the monstrous predator drew near, I ran forward, a thin shadow of courage and desperation. My heart thundered, my breath came in painful gasps, and my body burned.

I slashed at the predator, distracting it. I roared as loudly as I could, calling it away from the others. My dinosaur friends used the chance to flee. The beast struck me with a force that felt like mountains collapsing. Pain exploded everywhere. I collapsed, the world fading.

But as darkness claimed me, I saw the dinosaurs escaping. I had given them life. My final breath came with peace. I had found my purpose—my sacrifice meant something.

## Truth Behind the Science Lab

*Wellington College International Shanghai, Yang, Madelaine – 12*

It was a cool Autumn morning in Shanghai, in the year 2356. Zhao xin and her family were listening to the news on their robot.

“237 people died near a mysterious science lab. This is the fifth time this has happened this year. Scientists found that they were killed by dinosaurs. It is suspected that it was another accident.”

“It’s impossible that it’s still a coincidence after 5 times.” commented Zhao xin, frowning her eyebrows.

Frustrated, she stormed back to her bedroom. She decided that she needed help from her brother.

“Hey Zhao yi, I need your help.”

“What is it?” he asked, curious.

“It’s about the news; I feel like there is someone behind all the killing.”

“It does seem dodgy.”

“I’m gonna investigate, but I need a dinosaur expert to help.”

Zhao yi chuckled, “You and your hallucinations again.”

“It’s for uncle,” Zhao xin’s voice quivered.

Zhao yi wiped off the smile on his face, “Fine then.”

Together, they set off on an adventure to find the truth of the science lab. They worked 24 hours, searching the web for any clue. However, they got no results. Eventually, exhaustion dawned on them.

“I think we should look for the science lab,” Zhao yi suggested.

“Let’s go before more people die.”

They travelled the whole of Shanghai, from one street to another. The cool breeze blew past their faces as they were running. Suddenly, Zhao xin heard a noise.

Creak.

She stopped. Silence. She walked another step.

Creak.

The noise was coming from the object below her. Carefully, she picked away the leaves. There it was. It was a hidden door in the ground.

“Brother, look!”

Zhao yi immediately sprinted towards her, gasping at the secret she had just found.

“This is amazing!” Zhao yi exclaimed. “Let’s go in.”

“But this is dangerous.”

“Don’t be a coward.”

Zhao yi dragged her sister into the trap door. They found themselves in a bright hallway, illuminated by the lights on the ceiling.

“Whaaaaaaaaat?” His voice echoed throughout the entire hallway.

“Shut up!” Zhao xin whispered. “Is this the science lab?”

“I think so,” he whispered back.

They scanned their surroundings. Zhao xin gaped. In front of them, was an uncountable number of narrow hallways. Thoughts were swimming in her head. She resisted the urge to run back home. No, she thought to herself. After calming down, they tried to explore the peculiar place, straining their ears to hear any sound. But the white walls just seemed to never end, leading them to nowhere. It was like a maze. Fatigue was draining all their energy.

“Let’s rest here,” Zhao yi suggested.

Unexpectedly, someone yelled, “Intruders!”

Zhao xin almost jumped up and hit her head on the ceiling. With no time to react, they dashed down multiple corridors. Zhao yi looked around as they ran. This particular corridor had doors with numbers on them. Behind them, the people were approaching very fast. What have they gotten themselves into?

A hand grabbed them by the shoulder. They struggled, but the grip was too tight. They were pulled into a room.

“I’m not supposed to help you guys,” the person told them.

The lady, who had silky black hair tied up in a ponytail, wore a lab coat and gloves.

“Who are you?” Zhao yi asked.

"I'm the scientist's assistant, Li ping. Why are you here?"

"We saw that many people died here, including our uncle," explained Zhao xin. "I found it suspicious, so I came to investigate. I'm Zhao xin and this is my brother Zhao yi."

Li ping stayed silent for a moment, looking as if she was in deep thought.

After a while, she finally replied, "As long as you guys keep this a secret, I can tell you everything."

"Fine."

"Professor Ming invented the cloning machine and collects samples of dinosaur fossils. He experiments on people to see how powerful each species is. His goal: to destroy humanity. I despise him. I'm forced to work for him," Li ping sighed.

As she was talking about Professor Ming, she grimaced and glowered. They could feel the pure hatred she had for him.

"Can you guys help me stop him? I can't do it myself."

"Yes," Zhao yi agreed without hesitation.

"Really? I am so grateful!"

"We need a map to navigate through this lab efficiently," Zhao yi pointed out.

"Oh! I have one in the drawer."

She fetched out a map. It looked extremely complicated, with hallways and rooms everywhere.

They used the map to walk through the narrow corridors, occasionally stopping to rest.

Boom.

The loud noise violently shook the ground and threw them off balance.

"What was that?"

"Dinosaur footsteps. Probably around 20 metres away," Zhao yi explained.

As soon as they turned the corner, they saw it.

It was a massive dinosaur.

Immediately, they crouched down and stayed silent. All of a sudden, they heard screaming and crying noises.

"Don't look," Li ping warned them. "It's not pleasant."

After a while, the noises had stopped.

"Thirty kills in two minutes, not bad," an uncanny voice remarked.

Professor Ming, who was watching the slaughter, laughed maniacally.

Zhao xin's eyes widened. The place they were watching the dinosaur before had already turned into a bloody scene with flesh everywhere. She wanted to vomit.

"Filthy intruders, I know you're here. Come out or I'll do it the hard way....."

Zhao xin stepped into his sight and the others followed.

"Oh, you've finally showed yourself. You like being a traitor, Li ping?"

"You've murdered innocent people and my dad. I've had enough, you monster!" Li ping shouted angrily.

"Monster? This is all to restore our Earth's beauty! It was once full of nature, then humans trampled all over it!"

Professor Ming looked beyond angry. He was fuming.

While they were arguing, Zhao xin and Zhao yi grabbed the closest weapon and began to sprint towards the cloning machine, which was at the end of the long corridor.

Professor Ming watched them as if they were putting on a show. Hidden compartments were revealed at the side of the walls. Ten guards stepped outside, blocking their path.

Three guards immediately jumped onto them, almost scarring Zhao xin's shoulder.

Li ping pulled out a remote control from an invisible pocket and pressed the button in the centre. All their weapons evaporated into thin air. They easily knocked them all unconscious and got through.

"I forgot that you had that Li ping," Professor Ming snorted.

There was nothing blocking their path now. It was only a few meters away from them. This reminded Zhao yi of a video game; a boss would spawn just before the end of the level. He felt that something was off.

"Guys, don't go!" He shouted as he dragged both of them backwards.

Just like he hypothesized, a dinosaur spawned right in front of the cloning machine.

"That's a *Dinocephalosaurus*, an aquatic dinosaur. Wait..... That's weird; it's walking on land!" Zhao yi exclaimed.

"Impressive, isn't it?" Professor Ming grinned.

"Hit its eyes. Distract it while I get my weapon," Li ping ordered.



When Li ping went to help them, they were already injured in several places. All three of them jumped onto it at the same time and managed to give the dinosaur some nasty gashes. It wasn't enough. The Dinocephalosaurus came to Zhao xin's direction. She clenched her weapon tightly. The creature moved surprisingly fast and hit her weapon onto the floor. Sweat dripped down her face. It was creeping up on her and she can't defend herself. Was this the end? Helplessly staring at the creature's jaws, she accepted her fate. In a smooth movement, Li ping jumped in front of her and took the hit. Blood streamed down her torso, and it didn't stop.

"Li ping!" Zhao xin cried as she ran towards her.

Zhao yi took the chance and leaped up behind the creature and finished the final hit.

"Why?"

"It was necessary. You are much more important than me."

"No!" Zhao xin cried.

She smiled as she closed her eyes. They never opened again.

Zhao xin, her breath quickening, sprinted to the cloning machine and pressed the button with all her strength. She could see the veins in her hands. In a blink of an eye, the cloning machine exploded and was engulfed in flames. Everything was over.

"My plan!" Professor Ming yelled as he collapsed onto his knees. "I was doing it for the greater good!"

"That doesn't justify what you did," Zhao yi stated.

After a while, the police arrived and arrested Professor Ming.

"Uncle, I've finally avenged you," Zhao xin thought as she smiled.

Zhao xin and Zhao yi slept soundly that night. She still thought about Li ping at times, thinking about how she sacrificed herself to save her. They were now famous and were known as the 'Saviors of the Human Race'.

As Professor Ming was being led to his cell, he smirked.

"Not bad, kids. You've beat me..... for now."

## The Time—traveling Camera

*Wellington College International Shanghai, Yu, Ruoxi Lucy – 12*

“Mum, you know, I was just walking home on the outskirts of the Gobi Desert, when something sharp dug into my shoe. I looked down and took my shoe out of the gritty sand. I used my hands to brush aside some of the sand that had gotten into my shoe, then leaned over the hole to see what had been so sharp.” explained Xiao Ming as he munched on his spring rolls.

“Oh, ok. Did you know that it was a dinosaur tooth as soon as you took it out of the hole?” asked Chen Ayi.

“No, but I took it to a local museum, and they identified it as a Euhelopus tooth.”

Chen Ayi stood up and cleaned the dinner table. She turned to the kitchen sink and started scrubbing the plates.

“I’m so amazed that you found a dinosaur tooth though.”

“Yes, but it’s just that I—”

“Gosh! Look at the time! You should probably go to sleep now, or you won’t be able to wake up in time tomorrow to welcome our visitor Mr. Cai in.”

Xiao Ming obediently went upstairs and as he slumped onto his bamboo bed, breathed in the fresh scent, and muttered to himself: “I just wish I hadn’t found the dinosaur tooth so I wouldn’t be so famous in Inner Mongolia right now. I just want to live a normal life with nature.”

He fell asleep.

The next morning, he woke up with a jerk, and rushed downstairs to help prepare the house for Mr. Cai to come. Xiao Ming was just about to sit on the sofa and relax when the doorbell rang. He got up and walked to the door. He unlocked the door and welcomed Mr. Cai in.

“Hello, Mr. Cai! Please sit down.”

“Oh, no need to be so formal! Anyone for a cup of coffee?”

Later that day, after Mr. Cai had left, Xiao Ming was about to sit down on the sofa when a glint of silver caught his eye. He stood up and went over to it. It looked like a camera. He hadn’t seen it the day before. He assumed that his mother had bought it to make the house look good for the visit of Mr. Cai, so he took the camera and thought, “I would like to have some photos of my dinosaur tooth, in case a museum wants to see pictures of it.” and he went and took multiple photos of his dinosaur tooth and left it on his table before going to sleep.

When he next opened his eyes, he went to his table to put the dinosaur tooth away. But to his surprise, it wasn’t there. His table was bare. He rushed downstairs to his mother and told her of the terrible thing. “What did you do with it last night?”

“Oh, I just took some photos of it with the camera you bought, nothing stupid.”

“But I’m pretty sure I didn’t buy any cameras recently.”

As soon as she had spoken, Xiao Ming clapped a hand to his mouth and blurted out, “Then Mr. Cai must have left it here yesterday!”

And with that, they rushed to his house with the camera.

At the place that the front door was supposed to be, there was a wall with red bricks. Xiao Ming frowned. "How do we knock? And where is the door?" As soon as he spoke, the bricks at the bottom of the wall vanished into the house. Within minutes, the disappearing space formed the shape of a door, and Mr. Cai appeared in it.

"Welcome!" He said. "This is my humble abode." He led them in, and asked: "Why have you come today? Don't tell me that you knew it was my cousin's birthday today! Ha ha!"

"Well, no, I'm afraid I didn't know that it was your cousin's birthday today. But what I do know is that you left your camera in our house yesterday." explained Chen Ayi, seeming a little embarrassed.

"Oh really! Did you take any photos with it? Because you know it may—"

"Yes! I did! Um, what does it do?" blurted out Xiao Ming. He wasn't used to blurting things out so suddenly as he was always being top of the class at school and listening in class, so he was even surprised at himself.

"Oh! Um, is everything all right? Mr. Cai, you look as if you've just accidentally made someone go to live with dinosaurs!"

"Well, the thing is, I have! Basically, any object or person that has their photo taken with that camera will be time-travelled to the time of the dinosaurs, when the Euhelopus' were still alive."

A look of concern appeared on Chen Ayi's face, "What do we do? That means that our dinosaur tooth is in the time of the dinosaurs!" she exclaimed.

"Well, if you really want your dinosaur tooth back that much, then I will have to take a photo of you to send you to the time of the dinosaurs. I will also have to give you a string to put around your neck. It has a button attached to it. When you are ready to come back, you just press the button. Also, adults will forget about what happened but I'm not sure about children."

With that, Chen Ayi and Xiao Ming hung the string around their necks and got ready to go. Mr. Cai took the camera and 'Snap!'

A whirlwind of dust swirled around them and then they found themselves standing behind a tree on the edge of a forest. Suddenly, Xiao Ming and Chen Ayi heard a low rumbling sound.

"Quick! Hide behind this bush." whispered Chen Ayi to Xiao Ming. The rumbling sound grew louder, and in the distance, a large shadow appeared. It seemed to be running away from something. Within seconds, a tyrannosaurus rex appeared into their sight, and it was chasing what looked like a Euhelopus!

"Wow! Look at that! That's so cool, mum!" Xiao Ming whispered loudly. Xiao Ming looked back to check if his mother was still there, she was. When he looked back at the dinosaurs, the T-rex was gone and the Euhelopus was limping back to its nest. And, in the nest, there seemed to be a dinosaur tooth, and Xiao Ming was quite sure it was a Euhelopus tooth, his Euhelopus tooth. Not long after that, Xiao Ming and Chen Ayi noticed that there were baby dinosaurs in the nest, and they seemed very hungry. As if the larger Euhelopus could hear their thoughts, he limped away into a thicket and started feeding on some of the plants. He soon beckoned his children over.

Xiao Ming grabbed the chance to get his dinosaur tooth back. He darted out, snatched the tooth and dashed back into the trees. The flash of movement must have caught the Euhelopus' eye because it turned its head towards their direction and started making its way towards them.

“Quick!” whispered Xiao Ming, “Press the button!” Chen Ayi did as he said and pressed the button on her string. She vanished. Xiao Ming was about to press his own button when his hand slipped, and the string fell off his neck. He grappled about on the ground for it when a loud roar filled the air.

He stumbled backwards and landed in a bush. He looked up and saw a huge face staring at him. He made to run, but there came another loud roar that shook the dust off the ground. Xiao Ming scabbled backwards and grabbed his string from under a leaf, and with his Euhelopus tooth clenched in his other hand, pressed the button just as the Euhelopus’ mouth opened wide to swallow him whole.

He appeared in Mr. Cai’s house a moment later, covered in dust and very tired. He said, “Wow! That was so cool!”

“What was so cool?” wondered Chen Ayi.

Xiao Ming thought to himself: Oh, I forgot that adults forget what happened. But I will never forget. Perhaps being famous isn’t too bad after all.

## The Fossil Adventure

*Wellington College International Shanghai, Zhong, Ianna – 12*

As the sun set a boy and girl walked out from the airport of Yunnan “Let’s get back on time to eat dinner! You don’t want to miss it do you John?” “Of course I would not Sarah, I will get there before you!” yelled John. “Hey!” yelled Sarah after him as she ran to catch up to him.

A mountain full of traditional houses came into view as Sarah and John jogged uphill “Look how much it has changed. I can’t believe that only 3 years have passed.” Sarah and John were born in China but they have lived in America since young age even though they don’t stay in Yunnan for a long time they still think of it their home. A house bigger than the rest was in the middle Sarah and John walked towards it as they saw their grandfather Peter, Peter was an old man, but he could walk and jump totally fine. They rushed over and gave him big hug “Look at you now a few years ago you were only at my chest, now you are taller than me.” commented Peter.

When Sarah and John ate finish their dumplings, they told Peter that they wanted to climb to the top of the hill and look what has changed in the 3 years. Peter responded with a yes but with a lot of words about their safety he kept on telling them about how to be safe until he closed his eyes and fell asleep. Sarah and John ran out to adventure as they saw lots of kinds of animals, after running for half an hour John and Sarah started slowing down into a walk. They were halfway through the hill when John decided they should sit down and rest, Sarah thought it was a good idea and they sat down on a broken tree. “I think the forest has changed so much. Look at the time we should get back by 9 o’clock. Right John?” asked Sarah as she sat down “Yeah, we should go soon. Ahhhhhhh!” “John where are you where did you go!” shouted Sarah as she used her phone to look at the spot John was sitting a second ago. She looked down and there was a hole she looked around desperately until she saw a vine “I guess I have no other choice,” she thought as she gripped onto the vine and slid down.

After a few minutes there was a loud sound. Sarah rubbed her butt as she stood up it was pitch black, so she took out her flashlight. She felt a sudden wind on top of her head. Sarah flashed her flashlight at it a pair of eyes stared at her. It was a bat. She started running. Sarah never knew she could run this fast in her life, she always got last in PE lessons yet now she was running faster then ever. After awaking that bat, she woke up all of them and they chased her she noticed they were following her light, so she turned it off the bats flew away. She slowly walked catching her breath until she tripped over something. “Ouch!” yelled the thing Sarah tripped over, Sarah thought she heard of this voice before and she asked, “John is that you?” “Of course, it’s me can you help me get up I think I have broken my leg from the fall.” responded John as he groaned in pain. “I also think I have discovered some kind of white rock or something it is right next to me.” Sarah used her flashlight and looked at it closely. It looked very familiar...

She started shaking with joy and excitement. She shrieked “John I think we might have discovered a fossil!” John jumped up into the air not caring about his leg as he shouted, “Oh yeah now that you say that it really does looks like a dinosaur fossil. “Wait what kind of dinosaur is it?” After racking her brain for a few minutes, she gave up and took a few photos to keep and looked at the time. It was 3 o’clock in the morning and a day has already passed, they have stayed in this cave for the night. They also didn’t have water and food supply. They decided it’s time to find a way out of this cave.

Slowly, looking for a light source they wandered around the cave for some time. Soon they followed the sunlight to the hole they dropped in from “Well now we are here but we don’t have any rope or something to get up there.” voiced John as he sat down no hope in his voice. “John if I remembered correctly, we were playing with fireworks with grandfather. Do you still have some?” stated Sarah as she racked her brain for ways to get out. “I should have some left wait. Let me check.” mumbled John. After a few minutes John took out three fireworks “I only have three

left.” whispered John as he looked up. “But it’s better than nothing. Let’s shoot them up one by one,” decided Sarah “Out of the three I think the people should be able to hear or see one.”

The first one went up it was red but there was no sound, but they did not give up hope. The next one went up it was white and had a large sound, Sarah got a little bit worried but continued. The last one went up. It was the largest and the most colourful one, after it was out of sight John sighed “If they did not hear or see that I think there is a chance we will be stuck in here forever.” “Don’t give up hope John.” she muttered “Don’t give up.” Sarah kept on repeating in her mind.

A shadow showed up Sarah looked up in hope to see her grandfather “Grandfather, me and John fell in here and are stuck can you help us get out?” “I may not be strong enough I will call some people to help wait. I will be soon back.” stated Peter as he wobbled away. Soon he came back with a long piece of rope “Hold onto this rope when you are ready tell us and we will pull you and John up.” Yelled Peter as he held on to the rope. Slowly they got pulled up after they got up Sarah immediately told her grandfather that she wanted to go to the dinosaur museum. Peter told her to rest for a while then they can go over.

After resting they ran to the museum and asked the professors what fossil was in the picture. They looked at the photo for days until they determined that the fossil is a species of dinosaur that they haven’t found before. They asked Sarah and John where they took this photo and told the team to immediately go there to dig out the fossil.

When they dugged it out and named the species but in the name Sarah’s name and John’s name were concluded. The news about a new kind of dinosaur species fossils in China made a lot of tourism.

17 years later a boy and a girl wearing lab coats stepped down from the plane “Are you ready to look for some more dinosaur fossils?” asked the girl “Of course I do after finding that fossil 17 years ago we did not find any new ones did we.” answered the boy. “Let’s go!” he shouted as he ran towards the sunset.

## Bones In My Yard

*Wycombe Abbey Nanjing, Chen, Adele – 14*

When my brother was digging a hole for a new tree in the backyard, he saw a bone leaking out of the dirt. He called me out and we dug slowly with a shovel until we found a big bucket of bones. I saw that these bones did not look like normal animals, so I took them back to my room and began to observe, I read various books, and finally, I spent two months to piece together a dinosaur skull! According to my observations, this skull belongs to a Tyrannosaurus rex. As I was about to take a closer look at the skull of a Tyrannosaurus Rex, the skull started talking. It said that it was buried into the ground by a team of top scientists and transported it to my time, because in the distant future, human science and technology have been highly developed, but also due to excessive resource development and environmental destruction, resulting in the destruction of the earth's ecology. In search of a way to save the planet, scientists are going to ask the man who dug up the skull to help them. This crystal ball can keep you safe, and you can also contact future scientists through this crystal ball, and they will tell you what you should do. After saying that, he spit out a crystal ball from his mouth, and I was immediately confused after listening to what he said, I have never encountered such a strange thing. I made up my mind and decided to do what it said. I first prepared some food and water, and I also prepared a lot of first aid supplies. I also brought flashlights, batteries, tents, blankets and so on. After cleaning up, I began to try to contact the future scientists with a crystal ball. I patted the crystal ball, and the crystal ball immediately appeared as the scientists. I started talking to scientists, and they said that if I succeeded, they would give me a lot of money. I started talking to scientists, and they said that if I succeeded, they would give me a lot of money. We had a quick chat about what I should do and how I should do it, and they said that all I had to do was take some dinosaur blood, and dinosaur blood could help nature regenerate in the future. The scientists sent me some things that I could use, lots of anesthetics, tranquilizers, a big, sharp needle, and a smart watch that would help me identify the weaknesses of those dinosaurs and the types of dinosaurs. The next day, there was a huge spaceship in my backyard, and I knew it was prepared for me by scientists, so I immediately sat in it, and after I went in, the spaceship flew up by itself, and in a blink of an eye, I was in the age of dinosaurs, I walked out of the spaceship, surrounded by dense plants, huge trees to cover the sun, the air is hot and humid. Before I could recover myself, the ground began to shake violently. I looked in horror and saw a group of Triceratops galloping forward, their huge bodies moving like hills, and the ground under their feet being stepped out of deep pits. I ducked behind a sturdy tree, my heart pounding. After the Triceratops, I discreetly poke my head out and decide to find a safe place first. I make some simple weapons and tools from branches and rattan and found a hidden cave for temporary shelter. I heard a strange noise while I was sleeping. I looked for the source of the sound, I saw an injured baby dinosaur, its leg was cut by a branch, blood flowing, I quickly took out a small glass tube from the backpack, the blood it is flowing to collect into the bottle, so that the bottle is full, I treated the wound, and the baby dinosaur ran away, in the next few days I collected 10 different dinosaur blood, the watch came to a sound, I raised my arm to look, I finally completed the task, I jumped up with joy, the scientists are also very happy to celebrate for me. But then, the sky suddenly became very dark, a huge meteorite dragging a long tail across the sky. I knew that this would be a disaster enough to destroy the world, I quickly hid in a cave, but finally did not escape this devastating disaster, I thought I would die here, but when I opened my eyes, I appeared in my home! I looked at the clock on the wall, and it had only been five minutes since I had traveled to the age of the dinosaurs! I checked my bag to make sure the blood was still in it, and I quickly used the crystal ball to contact the scientists, and they said just bury the blood and the dinosaur skull and the crystal ball where I had dug up the dinosaur skull, and they would receive it. I buried it after I heard it. Five minutes later, my bank card received a transfer, and I knew that the scientists had received my stuff. I was tired after such an exciting adventure and just wanted to have a good sleep. I lay down in bed and fell asleep. When I woke up again, my body was drenched in cold sweat. After a while, when my mind cleared, I realized that what I was

experiencing was a dream. After I lost my mind for a while, I heard a scream in the backyard, and my brother yelled that there was a skull leaking out of the dirt! I know, the adventure begins again...



## Reborn Dinosaur

*Wycombe Abbey Nanjing, Jiang, Vivi – 13*

I never believed such a something strange could happen to me before.

I walked in the forest of Triassic, as I looked around, there were giant footprints were embedded in the mud. Gently caress the layers of vines, they are huge and strong, like the green python, entwined together.

As I walked deeper into the lush jungle, a breathing sound suddenly appeared. "Help!" Something was crying! "Help me! I had been buried under ground so many years ago. You built houses and planted trees on top of me." Who is talking? I do not think I had made friend with a Triassic creature!

Just as I walked across some low bush. A huge body appeared in the dark green of jungle. That body moved closer and closer to me. "I slept under your backyard millions of years ago. Help me! Dig me out!" "Wait, who are you?" I shouted back. But the voice seems didn't want to answer my question. "Dig me out and get my body back together. Let me see your world." The voice grown farther and further.

I opened my eyes. "What a strange dream!" I sat up on my bed and throw the bedclothes back. The sky was still dark blue, some stars were twinkling. Thinking about that dream, an idea grown into my head.

I ran down the stairs and carefully opened the door of my backyard. The night of this town was quiet as usual, darkness covered the houses. Blue and purple shadows swallowed the trees and grass in my yard, trying to hide a secret.

I found a shovel and a brush in the tool house, using them might make my work easier. The rain this morning made the mud softer to dig in. As I am digging deeper in the mud and sand, the shovel hit something long but hard. I gently brush the mud of it, it shows a milky white color. It was a bone! Along with the surprise, I found more bones around this bone.

The sun started rising, I took the bones inside my house. It was hard to build back the bones at beginning, but as I spent a lot of time with more and more research, the bones were finally fixed together, a whole dinosaur stood in front of me.

I used springs and gears to connect the joint to make it move. And used rubber skin to cover the skeleton, make it look more like it's alive, the sin was colored by brown and green paints.

It's already! Just waiting for a special night. I control "reborn dinosaurs" walking down the street.

It looked like it had come back to life and was curious about everything around it, enjoying the wind hundreds of millions of years later.

This long night is all the time for its short return to life.

## A True Friend

*Wycombe Abbey Nanjing, Newson, Mary-Rose – 13*

As my friends waved goodbye I wondered when we would see each other again. Slowly, I turned around and started walking back to my house. My steps were heavy and tears threatened to fall. Shaking my head, I walked back to my room and started packing my bags.

Just a few months ago, I was a normal student with a normal life. I didn't have many friends but that didn't bother me. everything was going on as usual until she came. The most perfect and goodlooking student I have ever seen. Little did I know she was soon going to be my best friend who I cherished so much.

When Abby first arrived, everyone wanted to be her friend. To be honest, I did to but was too shy to ask. Instead, I walked away to my own disappointment. But Abby had followed me and asked me to help her with homework. After that, we spent more and more time together and even started having sleepovers. People started thinking she was weird for hanging out with someone like me, but Abby didn't care. She continued playing with me and that was the first time I ever felt so happy in my life. She stood up for me, went shopping with me, and even made presents for me. pretty soon, people started bullying me but Abby always was there for me. she was like an angel and I didn't know what I would do without her.

But a few days ago, she came to tell me the news. She was moving again because of her fathers job. I got extremely upset but I knew I couldn't change anything, so I came up with a plan. I asked Abby all about where she was going and even found out where her new school would be. Then I called my parents and they helped me find an apartment near it. I didn't tell Abby anything so that it would be a surprise. "Wait for me Abby" I said as I locked the doors to my old home.

## Dinosaur Bones in My Yard

*Wycombe Abbey Nanjing, Wang, Cherry – 13*

When my brother was digging a hole for a new tree in the backyard, he saw a bone leaking out of the dirt. He called me out and we dug slowly with a shovel until we found a big bucket of bones. I saw that these bones did not look like normal animals, so I took them back to my room and began to observe, I read various books, and finally, I spent two months to piece together a dinosaur skull! According to my observations, this skull belongs to a Tyrannosaurus rex. As I was about to take a closer look at the skull of a Tyrannosaurus Rex, the skull started talking. It said that it was buried into the ground by a team of top scientists and transported it to my time, because in the distant future, human science and technology have been highly developed, but also due to excessive resource development and environmental destruction, resulting in the destruction of the earth's ecology. In search of a way to save the planet, scientists are going to ask the man who dug up the skull to help them. This crystal ball can keep you safe, and you can also contact future scientists through this crystal ball, and they will tell you what you should do. After saying that, he spit out a crystal ball from his mouth, and I was immediately confused after listening to what he said, I have never encountered such a strange thing. I made up my mind and decided to do what it said. I first prepared some food and water, and I also prepared a lot of first aid supplies. I also brought flashlights, batteries, tents, blankets and so on. After cleaning up, I began to try to contact the future scientists with a crystal ball. I patted the crystal ball, and the crystal ball immediately appeared as the scientists. I started talking to scientists, and they said that if I succeeded, they would give me a lot of money. I started talking to scientists, and they said that if I succeeded, they would give me a lot of money. We had a quick chat about what I should do and how I should do it, and they said that all I had to do was take some dinosaur blood, and dinosaur blood could help nature regenerate in the future. The scientists sent me some things that I could use, lots of anesthetics, tranquilizers, a big, sharp needle, and a smart watch that would help me identify the weaknesses of those dinosaurs and the types of dinosaurs. The next day, there was a huge spaceship in my backyard, and I knew it was prepared for me by scientists, so I immediately sat in it, and after I went in, the spaceship flew up by itself, and in a blink of an eye, I was in the age of dinosaurs, I walked out of the spaceship, surrounded by dense plants, huge trees to cover the sun, the air is hot and humid. Before I could recover myself, the ground began to shake violently. I looked in horror and saw a group of Triceratops galloping forward, their huge bodies moving like hills, and the ground under their feet being stepped out of deep pits. I ducked behind a sturdy tree, my heart pounding. After the Triceratops, I discreetly poke my head out and decide to find a safe place first. I make some simple weapons and tools from branches and rattan and found a hidden cave for temporary shelter. I heard a strange noise while I was sleeping. I looked for the source of the sound, I saw an injured baby dinosaur, its leg was cut by a branch, blood flowing, I quickly took out a small glass tube from the backpack, the blood it is flowing to collect into the bottle, so that the bottle is full, I treated the wound, and the baby dinosaur ran away, in the next few days I collected 10 different dinosaur blood, the watch came to a sound, I raised my arm to look, I finally completed the task, I jumped up with joy, the scientists are also very happy to celebrate for me. But then, the sky suddenly became very dark, a huge meteorite dragging a long tail across the sky. I knew that this would be a disaster enough to destroy the world, I quickly hid in a cave, but finally did not escape this devastating disaster, I thought I would die here, but when I opened my eyes, I appeared in my home! I looked at the clock on the wall, and it had only been five minutes since I had traveled to the age of the dinosaurs! I checked my bag to make sure the blood was still in it, and I quickly used the crystal ball to contact the scientists, and they said just bury the blood and the dinosaur skull and the crystal ball where I had dug up the dinosaur skull, and they would receive it. I buried it after I heard it. Five minutes later, my bank card received a transfer, and I knew that the scientists had received my stuff. I was tired after such an exciting adventure and just wanted to have a good sleep. I lay down in bed and fell asleep. When I woke up again, my body was drenched in cold sweat. After a while, when my mind cleared, I realized that what I was

experiencing was a dream. After I lost my mind for a while, I heard a scream in the backyard, and my brother yelled that there was a skull leaking out of the dirt! I know, the adventure begins again...

## The Story About a Bone

*Wycombe Abbey Nanjing, Zhang, Michelle – 13*

It was an ordinary Sunday. The sun was pouring down on the patio loungers, and the breeze was full of fragrance. I have just come back from the flower market to buy some seeds. It is rare for a lazy person like me to try to plant a flower carefully. I picked up my cell phone and called Rossum, who lives across the street (she's my best friend) and asked her to join me for a chat and plant flowers. As we talked, we picked up the shovel, found a satisfactory piece of soil, and dug according to the instructions. As we dug, something felt wrong, and suddenly, my shovel hit a hard bulge. I looked down and saw a strangely shaped bone half buried in the earth. At first, I thought it was just an ordinary animal bone. But as I crouched down to take a closer look, I couldn't help but gasp and feel a strong sense of shock and surprise. The shape and texture of this bone was unlike any I had ever seen before, it was huge and heavy, with strange bumps and ridges on its surface, as if it told a story of the past. The thought flashed through my mind: Could this be a dinosaur bone? The thought made my heartbeat faster and my hand trembled slightly. I quickly brushed the dirt off the bones with my hand to get a better look, filled with awe and curiosity at this amazing discovery. With such a precious thing, how could I sit idly by? My friends and I put the bone on a transparent cabinet and searched the Internet for some information to make sure it would not be damaged. So, I would look at it every day. Until the day comes. I was stunned. The dinosaur bone was gone. The blood drained from his face and turned white. It's like a thunderbolt, buzzing in my ear. As I stood there, staring straight ahead, my mind kept picturing the image of my beloved bone. My hand trembled slightly, and my heart was filled with fear and panic, afraid of being discovered, afraid of losing the bone, and even more afraid of being punished for it. I wanted to find a place to hide the artefacts more quietly, but I was afraid that doing so would arouse more suspicion, and for a moment I flitted about the room like a headless chicken, completely at a loss. I was stunned. Who leaked the news? After a month of this incident, I thought that nothing would happen, but suddenly my doorbell rang, and I opened the door without thinking much. "Here is my ID," he showed the professional badge in his hand, which was originally from the museum. "Do you remember the dinosaur fossil? After our identification, he is from the Cretaceous period, is an ankylosaurus fossil, very rare, we want to recover him, would like to ask how much you are willing to pay?" I thought about it, and said, "I will email this tomorrow, but you said, I can leave you an email and then tell you that I need to think about it." He smiled, "OK, waiting for your news, goodbye, happy life!" When I decided to sell this valuable item, caution took over my heart. I know that once the pricing is wrong, I may bring great losses to myself. So, I did a lot of preparatory work before pricing, looking up various materials and consulting a lot of people in the industry, but the more information I got, the more hesitant I became. After discussion with our friends, we decided to sell it for 80 million. Because we found it together with our friends, we decided to take 40 million each. This money is enough for me to live a luxurious life. With the release of the message, my friends and I received 40 million yuan directly on the bank card account, which is fast. But the retribution also came faster, because we secretly traded dinosaur fossils, we were soon arrested by the police, at the police station, we accepted the police interrogation. The police asked us serious questions about the origin of the dinosaur fossils, the details of the transaction and the people involved. The museum staff that day was also at the scene, and we explained in detail that my friend and I were sentenced to less than five years in prison or criminal detention and fined. The man, who claimed to be a museum staff member, was sentenced to not less than five years but not more than 10 years in prison and fined. It didn't end well for either of us. Readers, if one day you also found ancient relics, please hand them over to the local authority at the first time, do not hide secrets or trade.