



# 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 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.

# 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.

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 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, achingly *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 chittering 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 town 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 titanosaurs 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 Transformation

*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 Brachiosaurus 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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 a .....DINOSAUR 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-Xian 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 unvei**S** itse**L**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 **OuR** planet's biodiversity. **THE**se **FIND**ings not **Only** 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 **ExisT**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 Qiu’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.