Emerald Rose

by KryHeart_Ardy

Summary

The Breach effected everyone differently, for Ruby it was her first real look at the life of a Huntress and the responsibilities of that title. Plagued by nightmares and the haunting images behind her eyes she seeks out solitude to fight her monsters. Ozpin comes across his student as she wields her weapon with exhaustion in every swing and he can't bare to see those silver eyes so dulled. Their encounter sparks Ozpin's need to help Ruby come to terms with the life she has chosen and who knows maybe the future won't be so bleak for either of them, or for a dusty Qrow.
Screams and explosions echo’d in Ruby Rose’s ears as she twisted and turned in her bed. Grimm swarming up into the city. Huntsmen and Huntress arrive at the entry point, too late to save everyone. She woke up with a start, seeing the ice from Weiss’s shield scattered around her, A King Taijitu, slithering forth, swatting away the civilians that didn’t flee fast enough. A shout from her sister startled her into action, grimm surrounding every team member, an Ursa towering above her jaws wide open... The crimosette woke with a start, her hands aching from the death grip she held upon her blankets.

Ruby took a deep breath, forced her hands to relax and rolled onto her back the blankets twisting tight like a snake around her. The King Taijitu flashed behind her eyes, red eyes gleaming and she kicked off the sheets as fast as she could. She could still hear the screams, she drew her legs up and curled into a ball covering her ears with her hands. It didn’t help. She needed to do something, sitting here in the dark just made it worse. Lightly she hopped out of bed, grabbed Crescent Rose and slipped silently out of her dorm room without her teammates waking.

In her pajamas Ruby crept through the school, the halls were empty and the stone cold under her bare toes. Moonlight shinned in through the windows lighting her way as she roamed. Past the courtyard, auditorium, past Port and Oobleck’s classrooms. She heard a slithering behind her and she spun around, her hand on her beloved weapon only to see an empty hall. Silver eyes wide and fearful she turned on her heel and started to run, her bare feet making a pat pat sound on the stone.

Away, away, she needed to get away! She raced down the halls leaving a trail of red rose petals and burst into Goodwitche’s training classroom. Crescent Rose was swung open as she came to a stop in the middle of the room. Her chest heaving as she tried to catch her breath, eyes darting around the doorway waiting for a Grimm to appear.

Only nothing did, no snakish King Taijitu, no Beowolf, nothing, just one empty doorway. A minute past and then two, Ruby’s breathing slowly eased and she realized how foolish she was being. Her legs gave out as Crescent Rose fell to the floor beside her with a clatter. Ruby covered her face with both hands and cried. There were no Grimm in Beacon, but as soon as her eyes closed she saw a white bone face lunging for her. She jerked her hands away from her face grabbing her scythe as she stumbled back at her feet. The silver eyed teen’s heart pounded as her gaze darted around the room.

Nothing, no Grimm, no one, but Ruby could not relax, in her mind she knew she was being paranoid but she just couldn’t calm. “I wonder if this is how Qrow feels.” She whispered to the cold empty room, when he had nightmares he either came to her or sparred alone. Though she usually put a stop to that pretty quickly. Now however she wondered if it would work, to fight against the monsters in her head. Taking a deep breath she closed her eyes and started to fight.

A pair of black dress shoes came upon a trail of red rose petals. The owner had to pause at this for at this hour no students should be out of bed, most were exhausted after the field missions or
defending Vale during the Breach. This did not seem to be the case if the littering of red petals was a good indicator. Pursing his lips he followed the trail of petals, pulling his cane from his pocket and extending it. After all he had to keep up appearances. Silently he walked through the halls the tip of his cane hovering just above the ground, till he found a pair of doors just slightly ajar. With another silent action he opened the door and peered inside.

Ozpin was not surprised to find the resident Silver Eyed Warrior sparring alone. He was surprised to see her eyes squeezed shut and tears leaking from them. Like Uncle like niece it seems, though I suppose that should not surprise me. He copper eyed man walked into the room, shutting the doors evenly behind him and walked around the perimeter watching Ruby as he went. He could see how her arms wavered, the slips of her hands, there was no doubt in his mind that she was exhausted. Crescent Rose wobbled and looked much to big for her. As he walked around to the side of the arena and picked up a blunt steel training sword. Ozpin waited for the right movement where she was mid swing, stepped up and caught the blade of Crescent Rose on the sword and cane and with a smooth fluid yank pulled the weapon from her hands and sent it skittering off the stage.

Ruby’s eyes snapped open as Crescent Rose was ripped from her hands and they widened in shock taking in who stood before her. “Pro-.” Ozpin shook his head and pressed a finger to his lips, he's not going to send me back to my dorm. She thought and rubbed her eyes, trying to clear the tears away. The red head took a couple steps back and tested the sword in her grip, it was a little bit too big for her but nothing like training with Qrow’s scythe.

As she settled with the new weapon, Ozpin rotated his cane with a little spin and settled into his fencing stance. He waited for a long moment as Ruby spun the sword once with each hand and settled into a more open stance, she reminded Ozpin of Qrow though right now though she lacked the cocky tilt of hip. Ozpin let out a long breath and jabbed out once for her head.

There was a brief metal screeching on metal as Ruby deflected the strike stumbling back a step. The platinum haired man pursed his lips and stabbed forward again. Again Ruby deflected stepping out of the way with flawed staggering foot work. This time he watched silently as Ruby looked him up and down, he could see the dark circles under her eyes and doubted this would last long.

Ruby swung in low aiming for his left side, his cane blocked it with ease and the tip slid down to the guard and with a little flick he sent it tumbling to the floor. The spar was so slow Ruby felt like he was making a fool out of her, though as he took a step back giving her space she knew he was letting her set the pace. She grabbed her sword and got ready again, taking a deep breath to center herself just like Qrow had taught her, activated her Aura and fixed her eyes on her opponent.

Ozpin smiled slightly, barely visible and did the same, his green crackling over his skin in opposition to her red Aura. The smile widened just a millimeter more when Ruby shot forward like a bullet out of a gun, or perhaps buck shot out of a pistol would be more appropriate considering who she mimicked so very closely when fighting with a sword. The exchange was quick, furious and very sloppy on Ruby’s part, her Aura covering up her exhaustion slightly but not at all aiding in her skill. Ozpin deflected her strikes with ease, sweeping his cane in behind a knee and pulling her leg out from under her.

Ruby fell to the ground with a thump but leaped to her feet changing her grip to hold the sword with both hands and swinging clean across his body. Ozpin nimbly stepped to the side and she gave chase, their weapon’s clashing whenever Ozpin saw fit to block her rather then just stepping out of the way. She lunged forward aiming for his head, her eyes could barely track him as he took a small step to the side and hit her square in the shoulder sending her back onto the ground.
The silver eyed teen sniffled when her butt hit the ground painfully but when Ozpin offered his hand, fingers open and welcoming she couldn’t help but smile up at him. The moonlight shining in through a row of windows, reflecting upon their weapons and in their eyes. Tentatively Ruby reached up and placed her hand in his. The first thing she noticed was how warm he was, she could feel the calluses of his hand. As his grip closed around her hand she was made aware of how much bigger he was.

Ozpin pulled her to her feet with ease and let her go, then stepped away again raising his cane again. Ruby smiled a tiny smile at him and took a deep breath raising her sword up into a high guard, then shot forward enhanced by her Aura. Around and around they went, the Professor leading his student around the arena. Batting her attacks away and seldom striking out, he did occasionally just to keep her on her toes but not enough to hurt her. Ruby’s own exhaustion drained her Aura faster than anything Oz did.

The nightmares clung to her eyes, but focusing on the Headmaster kept them at bay. The silver eyed teen didn’t want to stop, she knew as soon as she did they would come back. Qrow was too far away to rescue her from memories, all she had was a kind professor who understood what she needed. The moon climbed high and higher in the sky, the room darkening. Ruby panted holding her sword in a weak grip her eyes closing for long moments before she forced them open at the sight of white skulls and red eyes. She staggered forward raising her sword only for her eyes to close again for a moment longer than she meant.

Behind her eyelids she saw a civilian, he had blue eyes, black hair and his brains splattered all over the wall from where he had hit when a Grimm flicked him away like an ant. The sword fell from her tired fingers and clattered onto the floor as Ruby fell covering her face with her hands and sobbed out. She was so tired so very tired, she couldn’t stop the tears, couldn’t get the image out of her head.

Ozpin sat down beside her, stretching his legs out reaching out he rubbed up and down her back. Poor tiny thing, fighting Grimm is one thing, failing to protect those in the way is quite another. Up and down, he rubbed hoping that would be enough to help the young woman. Ruby turned to him seeking the warmth of another human being. Ozpin froze when she crawled over snuggling into his side and grabbed his coat with both hands clenching it tight as she pressed her face to his chest and sobbed into it. His vest and shirt quickly growing wet, softly he started to stroke her back again but she only continued to cry.

Ozpin leaned back on an arm as he petted her back, he looked down at her the black and red hair was messy from her pillow and sparing. He could feel how hot she was from under his hand, considering that she was only wearing her black tank top of fuzzy pajama pants it worried him. Oz worried his lip debating what to do, “Miss Rose,” he called softly. “you need to return to your dorm and your sister.” He wondered if Yang could help her, he felt Ruby shake her head and press a cheek firming into his chest.

Ozpin sighed softly, listening to her cry removed what will he had to move her on his own. He wasn’t sure what to do but looking at her his mind cycled back to Qrow, the only other scythe wielder he knew. She was so like her uncle, “Hmm.” Oz hummed softly wondering just how alike his right hand in the world and she was. On that thought he stopped petting her and very carefully and respectfully he wrapped an arm around her in a hug. Ozpin felt her relax all at once as if a weight had been taken off her shoulders, as if the slight pressure around upper middle of her back was exactly what she needed.

Ruby breathed deeply, he smelt clean and of pine, despite the exercise. Her tears dried as her hands relaxed, his chest was firm just like Qrow’s even if he wore to many layers. The professor held
her in the same spot though, that respectful distance from her hips, his hand resting on her arm. The silver
eyed teen blinked a few times sleepily and shifted over crawling into his lap her grip on his coat relaxing as she settled. Ozpin felt her ease into him and the death grip on his coat fade, a minute later he felt her breathing even out and knew she was asleep.

Ozpin could feel her cool swiftly and pursed his lips worried again. She was going to get a cold, it was fall and already the air was cooling. Carefully he pulled his coat out from under her and let her go quickly pulling it off. As soon as his arm moved Ruby grabbed at him again this time his vest falling victim to her fierce if wearily grip. Oz wrapped his coat around her as quickly as he could and returned his arm to it’s place hugging her gently to his chest. The silver eyed teen settled again, too exhausted to keep holding his vest.

*Now what?* Ozpin wondered, had it been Qrow he would have just carried him off to his bed for him to sleep off the sorrow. He doubted he could do the same with Ruby, with a sigh he went with option two, which was take her back to Yang. Carefully he pulled her fully onto his lap and wrapped his other arm her lower back and gathered her legs up so he could hold her behind her knees. He shifted to use his other arm to brace himself then surged to his feet holding her tight to him.

Ruby didn’t even mumble as he gathered up their weapons, putting his in his pocket and carrying the collapsed Crescent Rose with the other. Ozpin looked down at her slightly amazed that she hadn’t woken from the shuffling. Her weight was nothing that said she was so small he could hold her easily with one arm. He started out the way he had came, pushing the door open with his hip and set off down the hall. While he walked Ruby nuzzled his chest, curling up more and snuggling in tight, her hands gathering up his vest again.

Ozpin quickly came upon the door to team RWBY’s dorm, not that he was rushing more concerned about keeping his tiny precious bundle happy then with speed. It took a minute and a few more knocks before he heard Weiss whine. “Yang get the door.” A minute later Yang Xiao Long opened her eyes to one of the most adorable sights she’d seen since Qrow’s last visit. With her sleep addled brain Yang couldn’t help the. “D’awww.” That slipped from her lips as she looked lovely upon her sister, wrapped up in Professor Ozpin’s coat and utterly out cold. Even in her sleep she held onto his vest and nuzzled with with a tiny purr. She looked over to Blake who as blinking sleepily over at them. “Pass me my Scroll, I’ve got to get a picture of this for Qrow.”

Blush tinted Ozpin’s cheeks, though he could think of worse people to have see this. “Really Miss Xiao Long? If you could take her please.” He tried to offer Ruby to Yang but the little red head hands tightened on her vest and Yang stepped away catching her Scroll when Blake tossed it to her. Yang turned it on and a minute later took a picture, Ozpin’s expression firmly set but not unhappy. She tossed her Scroll back at Blake and reached up put an arm around Ruby’s shoulders and another under her knees same as Ozpin. However as Oz let go and Yang pulled Ruby away the little woman’s hands tightened on Oz’s vest. She mumbled a cute but loud “No!” in her sleep and nuzzled his chest, curling up tighter.

Yang giggled, so it was one of those death hold snuggles, she only ever did those to Qrow. “You should keep her, unless you want her to rip that vest.” Yang withdrew her arms forcing Ozpin to hold Ruby again.

“I don’t follow.” Ozpin admitted, he was moderately surprised Ruby hadn’t awoken, but then this was the accumulation of days of fighting at Mount Glenn and the Breach. Not to mention sparing till she literally dropped just so she could sleep.
“She does this to Qrow when he’s been gone for a long time. My sister is a little snuggle bug and until she wakes up nothing short of a pry bar will get her to let go.” Yang reached up and petted through Ruby’s hair smoothing it down. “So you are stuck with her till she does, you should be honoured that she lumps you in with Qrow.” Yang smiled very slightly at the Xiao Long’s best kept secret.

“I can’t keep her, that would be entirely inappropriate. Why is she doing this?” Ozpin paled at the suggestion, he needed to sleep too and there was no way he could take her with him. Though he wasn’t sure how he was going to get his vest off with her holding into it so tightly.

“Ruby is a fast bonder, take Penny. They’re best friends and they’ve only talked for like ten minutes. She needed snuggles you were in range and she obviously likes you. So what Qrow does when she gets like this, is takes her to bed and sleeps it off with her.” Yang smiled a little more when her sister started to softly purr at the pets. “There is no force that can pry my sister off and I won’t let you drop her as that would be cruel. I mean look at that little face, could you wake that up?”

Ozpin couldn’t help but do as he was told and his heart turned into mushy fluffy goo. Ruby was still fast asleep, holding tight to his vest and utterly peaceful. “No.” He said only just resisting cooing at her, instead saying it with a soft sigh.

“I thought so, so go take her to wherever you sleep kick off your shoes and be prepared to be snuggled to death, or till she wakes up. If I wake up first I’ll come and get her.” Yang stretched, yawned and took Crescent Rose from Ozpin.

“There is an apartment building about thirty minutes walk from here. It has all of the staff names listened beside an intercom.” Ozpin adjusted his hold and let out a resigned sigh.

“Sounds good see you in the morning.” Yang shut the door as Ozpin stepped back and nodded a farewell.

Again he set off through the halls of Beacon, he didn’t like the idea of taking a student home but she was adorable. Then there was the matter of her connection to Qrow, that made him feel a little less guilty about this. As he understood it this was a habit of hers and considering how long it took to get her to drop, he wasn’t about to shatter that. The moon was on a decline by the time he got to his flat, pushing the key into the door and maneuvered the two of them carefully through it. He tucked his key back into his pocket and softly shut the door behind him.

The flat was completely dark but he knew his way around it like the back of his hand. He kicked his shoes off and left his keys in a dish by the door. His bedroom and bed were large but again it was too dark to see anything and he wasn’t going to disturb her but turning on a light. As quietly as he could he sat on the side of his bed and in a fluid motion, turned and laid down. He set his glasses on the bedside table, reached up and moved his pillow under his head better and let out a long sigh.

With a feather light touch he checked her over, her legs and feet were sticking out from under his coat so he tucked it tighter around her and reach over pull his blankets over them. After wrapping them tight around her legs she grumbled and he felt tears start to dampen his vest again. Thinking of nothing else he could do he rested his arms over in her a hug and felt her calm again. Ozpin looked up to the ceiling and uttered quietly. “Well, this is not how I expected this night to go.” He looked down and had to smile, she was just to cute to be cross with. “But I do not mind the company, after all we both seem to be missing someone.” Ozpin closed his eyes and swiftly fell asleep holding Ruby in his embrace, not a single nightmare bothered her for the rest of the night.
Ruby woke up slowly, her eyes sore and she was still exhausted. Her hands were tired as well, she closed her eyes again snuggled against her pillow. She dozed for several long minutes before she realized her pillow was moving. Which wasn’t that odd, Qrow made an excellent pillow, she took a deep breath and noticed a distinct lack of whisky or other alcohol scent. However the scent of pine was the same, confused she lifted her head very wearily and in a low dawn light saw silver hair instead of black.

She froze like a deer in headlights, her mind quickly remembering the sparing from the night before. Then her nightmares getting the better of her, the hug and… she blushed bright red. I can’t believe I fell asleep on my Headmaster! I must of done that death grip thing Qrow pretends to complain about, there is no way he would have brought me here otherwise. Even as she started to panic Oz’s hand started to stroke up and down her back, she looked up to him again found he was still asleep. Biting her lip she settled back down putting her head back on his clothed chest. Up and down his hand went a few more times before resting on her shoulder, clearly he was too far into sleep to keep any action up for long.

From where she lay she could see the walls were done in dark auburn and he had a bookshelf of dark red filled to the brim with books. I wonder if he’ll let me look at them. She mused before pulling his coat up around her chin as sleep claim her again.

When next she woke it was because her pillow was doing a very subtle but cute squirm. Ruby stretched upon the warm body below her and it froze, then sat up and yawned, rubbing her eyes again. Ozpin had been uncomfortable with a student sleeping upon him but at that sight his brain side tracked into cute, cute, cute and he no longer had the heart to move her. The silver eyed teen looked down at him and blushed. “Uhh. Good morning?” She asked, unsure of what else to say or how to processed getting off of him.

Ozpin cleared his throat and drew the blankets off of them. “Good morning.” It seemed the thing to say, he was pretty sure it was the best thing to say. At that cue very carefully trying to touch as little of him as possible Ruby climbed off of him, his coat slipping as she did. She grabbed it pulling it tight around her, remembering she was only wearing her pajamas. The ground was cool and carpeted under her feet, she pulled the coat tighter around her as she glanced around not sure at all what to do. The copper eyed man sat up and put his glasses on, before standing and brushing down his clothes. He’d need to change but he’d do that later when she was gone, he looked down at the small women and gestured toward his door with a hand. “Your sister said she would be around in the morning to collect you.”

Ruby took the hint and started toward the open door and out into the hall. The rest of his flat was painted the same colour as his bedroom with the same dark red furniture. Only now she would see he accented the reds with emerald greens. “You talked to Yang?” She asked picking her away over to a dark red leather sofa and sitting down on the corner.

“Yes, I tried handing you to her last night but you refused to be moved.” Ozpin ran a hand through his hair trying to tidy his bed head as best as he could. His gaze roamed around his flat, from the bookshelves that covered the walls to the tv, coffee table and couch with the tiny red haired woman perched upon the edge of a seat.

Ruby blushed and shrank into his coat pulling it up sightly so it covered the bottoms of her cheeks. “I am so sorry sir.” She mumbled hiding as best she could behind the collar of the coat.

Ozpin waved a hand dismissively, in hindsight he didn’t really mind. She hadn’t been the only one to
enjoy dreamless sleep last night, he felt better then he had since Qrow’s last visit. “You were over tired in the extreme, all is forgiven.”

That did not ease Ruby’s mind, she picked up her feet and curled up into his coat. “Still it was a very immature thing for me to do and I am sorry.”

A smile pulled for a instant at the Headmaster’s lips. It had been adorable but he wasn’t about to tell her that, she was already blushing in the same colour as his walls. “Well we both know it will not happen again, don’t dwell on it Miss Rose. I am not upset, you’ve had an extremely busy and trying last few days. A lapse in decorum is by far not the worse thing you could have done.”

A knock at the door saved Ruby from answering, as Ozpin opened it Yang appeared. A smile the size of the sun upon her lips, she held up Ruby’s boots. “Excuse me sir have you seen a teeny tiny woman about five nothing, silver eyes, red hair, utterly adorable when she is over tired?”

Ozpin couldn’t help the chuckle that escaped him as he opened the door and stepped aside letting Yang in. “Well I don’t know Miss Xiao Long, but I have a young woman impersonating a tomato on my couch.”

Yang burst out laughing and walked into the room to find her poor mortified sister, blushing very very brightly. She zipped over and pulled Ruby into a bone crushing hug. “You were SOOO cute last night, going all ‘You’re home Qrow!’ on Ozpin. I got a picture!”

The copper eyed man had to bite the inside of his cheek to keep a straight face and Ruby tried to disappear into his coat. “Yang.” Ruby whined and hid her face in Yang’s hair as if it would shield her from further embarrassment.

Yang put Ruby down and gave the crimsonette her boots. “Come on I’m hungry, the sooner we get you back and dressed the sooner we can go for breakfast.” Yang set her hands on her hips smiling at her little sister.

Ruby shoved her feet into the boots without a word, Ozpin’s coat still draped around her shoulders. With proper wear on her feet she stood up and offered the coat to Ozpin, blushing and looking away from him. Oz shook his head and gestured a little ‘no’. “Keep it, you need it more then I right now and I have others.” Ozpin watched as she pulled it back on holding it together at the chest level he heard a softly muttered. “Thank you sir.”

“Come on sis, before you turn any redder.” Yang led her sister by the shoulders out of the flat and turned to Ozpin as Ruby hid behind her. “Thank you for looking after her Sir.”

Ozpin inclined his head with a slight smile. “Think nothing of it.”

That did not make Ruby feel any better but she mumbled another quiet. “Thank you.” Sticking to Yang like glue as they departed from the Professors flat.

Chapter End Notes

Hello Readers. Mwah! *blow kisses*
I bet you were expecting another chapter of this story but I’m sorry to say I have
something important I wish to discuss. It's come to my attention that a guest reviewer or possibly several is attempting to use Ardy’s name to spread toxic over these stories. Hate does not bother me (meh) Its a waste of energy in my opinion and boy must these people have time on their hands pfft. I don’t make a big deal out of things normally because well Trolls be Trolls and I have better things to do then feed them.

However,

Had it just been me I wouldn't bother but since people who like the work are being pulled in I have a duty of care to protect those people from hateful toxic comments. So first thing on the agenda and I really didn't want to have to do this. “Disable Anonymous Comments.” Now I know some of you are lovely people and your support is very much appreciated so I hope you make your own account so I can thank you properly but I will NOT have Asshole commenters hurting others people.

And to you stupid person or people, this will be the first, last and only meal you ever get. So if you want me, come and get me but you won't be hiding behind that veil of shadow anymore.

And to all those wonderful people out there who enjoy the story and are waiting to see more. For now stay awesome and If you see these comments or if someone is using a name that looks like a poor imitation of ours Kry or Ardy or any of our other co-writers please alert the me. They are not us, the account name for Ardy is retired and she’s not using it anymore and we've merged instead. If a comment does not come through KryHeart_Ardy account it is not either of us.

Be happy, grow and spread that positivity and Ardy has asked me to leave you now with this lovely song.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jclPWidTfak
Chapter Notes

A note from Ardianna

"So as this is getting a rewrite I've decided to age Ruby just a small bit so as the story stands at the beginning she is 16. Also I love literature and the Beowulf is a real book that my teachers would read to the class so I hope you enjoy it. Thanks for all the support as we are really happy with how this is starting to turn out. Many changes are being made but now it feels much more balanced."

Ruby hugged herself walking silently behind Yang, she still held Ozpin’s coat tight around her. Thankfully it was early enough that the halls were still largely empty. Yang glanced over at her sister, the younger girl had flipped up the collar to hide better. “You okay Ruby?” The blonde slowed a step and put her arm around her sister. It wasn’t like Ruby to be this quiet, or hiding this much, or going out alone after dark. Well any number of things about Ruby in the last twenty fours weren’t quite right.

The smaller girl looked away from her sister, she had slept soundly last night. Maybe it was just missing Qrow, maybe she had just been really tired and Ozpin had been in the right place and right time. Ruby bit her lip she still felt guilty for falling asleep on him, but sparing with him had been…

“Ruby?” Yang asked again surprised by her sisters silence. The lilac eyed woman stopped and pulled Ruby to one as well, placing her hands on her shoulders. “Are you okay?”

Ruby looked up at her for a moment, “I.” she looked down again. “I’m just tired. I needed to get out last night and Ozpin found me training. He didn’t even say anything, he just disarmed me and gave me a sword and then we spared. It was… nice I guess. Almost relaxing, I just couldn’t sleep and we spared till I was too tired to keep going.”

“How can sparing be nice?” Yang asked as she rubbed her sisters shoulders. “Why didn’t you wake me up?”

Ruby pulled away and hunched up into the coat. “He was… nice, I don’t know. We didn’t talk, we just trained and it was nice.” She let Yang pull her into a hug, she tucked her face into her sisters hair. “I had a nightmare and he made it go away, if only for a little while. I didn’t want to bother you, you were sleeping.”

“How can sparing be nice?” Yang asked as she rubbed her sisters shoulders. “Why didn’t you wake me up?”

Ruby pulled away and hunched up into the coat. “He was… nice, I don’t know. We didn’t talk, we just trained and it was nice.” She let Yang pull her into a hug, she tucked her face into her sisters hair. “I had a nightmare and he made it go away, if only for a little while. I didn’t want to bother you, you were sleeping.”

“Ruby you know you can come to me anytime, what was the nightmare about?” Yang hugged her sister tighter, even Yang had some unpleasant memories from yesterday but she had been too tired to dream. “I saw a man, who was in the wrong place at the wrong time and…” Ruby pulled away tears pricking at her eyes and she pulled Ozpin’s coat around her. “His head was smashed in, with this brains all over a.” She covered her mouth as the tears started to flow.

“Oh sis.” Yang pulled her back into her embrace, and rubbed up and down her back. “I’m sorry you saw that, I get it now, I wouldn’t be able to sleep either.” Ruby shrank in on herself, and mumbled into Yang’s neck. “What if I’m not cut out for this Yang? Being a Huntress, I never thought about what happens when we fail.”
Yang was completely out of her depth so she just held Ruby tighter. “Come on, let’s get you ready for the day. We have it off remember? The Headmaster gave everyone the day off to come to terms with the fight yesterday.” She pulled Ruby off down the hall, they came back to their dorm.

Ruby pulled away from Yang at set about getting dressed, Weiss and Blake looked to Yang who just shook her head. After grabbing her clothes Ruby silently walked into the bathroom to change finally pausing to look at what she had held onto like a lifeline.

Ozpin’s coat was heavy on her, a thick dense weave that when she tested it, it resisted her pull. I bet it doesn’t tear easily. Her lips quirked up at that, so Ozpin did wear armour he just wasn’t obvious about it. She brought it up to her nose and inhaled deeply, pine filled her nose and Qrow instantly came to mind. Why would Ozpin smell like Qrow? Or is it the other way around? The sixteen year old sat down on the edge of the bathtub and rubbed her thumbs against the coarse fabric. She was well aware a person’s scent changed depending where they came from. Qrow said she always had a almost spicy smell when she had been at home for a long period of time. While he always reminded her of pine, rain and alcohol at least at first. She supposed when she thought about it, the pine was always under the rain with Qrow. Always smelling strongest when he had just come home.

Ruby furrowed her brow, that was kinda weird, she brought the coat to her nose again. She closed her eyes and breathed deeply, yes pine was most definitely Ozpin’s signature scent. So why was it so regularly all over Qrow? She wrapped the coat around her shoulders again, put her arms through the sleeves and hugged herself, squeezing her eyes shut and pretending it was a coat of Qrows.

It worked for about a minute, but then the cold crept through her pajama bottoms and she leaned over and started to cry again. The memories pushed forward and she shook her head, lifting her hands covered by the much too long sleeves and covered her face with the coarse fabric. She forced her eyes open and cleaned her eyes with the sleeves, she couldn’t do this now Yang was waiting for her.

She pulled off Ozpin’s coat and set about changing of the day, leggings thicker for the cold weather a long smooth heavy black skirt pleated and going down almost to her knees to block the wind. A thick grey shirt with a had a little button at her throat, with sleeves that went down to her wrists. She put her corset on overtop and slowly laced it up, the pull of the string through holes. It was such a familiar action, lace pull fold lace pull , she sniffed as the repetition slowly helped focus her and clear her mind.

Now dressed she turned to the sink to wash her face, she didn’t want Yang to see she had been crying again. Then she picked up Ozpin’s coat and folded it over her arm, when she left the bathroom everyone else was already ready to go. Mutely she walked over to her bed and put Ozpin’s coat on her bed, she’d seek him out to give it back later. After Ruby pulled on her cloak team RWBY headed out for breakfast.

The cafeteria was the most quiet Ruby had ever seen it, students ate in an almost somber and calm silence. It appeared that everyone was dealing with their experience with the breach differently and as team RWBY settled down on one of the benches with their breakfast their team leader wanted nothing more then to leave. Crescent Rose was once again strapped to her back and she wanted to train some more, perhaps if she were stronger the things that had happened . . . The people they couldn’t save . . . Thoughts jumbled around her head each more sad and hopeless then the last.
Ruby idly picked at her food, resting her head on her propped up hand, the omelet quickly becoming a mess of mashed egg and gooey cheese. She reached over for the ketchup drowning her breakfast in the tomatoey sauce. Picking at her food again she lifted a forkful of egg to her mouth and a drop of tomato sauce dribbled onto her hand. Looking down it reminded her of blood, blood. . . the omelette resembled a bloody mess and she was immediately shuddered her body chilling rapidly. When she shut her eyes all she saw was blood, the bodies, that poor man’s brains splattered against the wall. The crimson eyes of the a Grimm as it opened turned to her, jaws open. It drooled, the gleaming white fangs reaching for her-

“And then! He slip-” Yang had been trying to coach her team into laughing by telling her usual jokes when the sound of cutlery clattered. Looking over she noticed her sister, eyes wide open and her hand slammed over her mouth. “Ruby?”

The young leader felt the burning of tears building up and stood from the bench, running with her Semblance over to the bathrooms leaving a mess of petals in her haste.

Ruby could only be thankful when she rushed into the bathroom to find it empty. She went straight for a stall and locked the door behind her before sticking her head down to a toilet and emptying what little her stomach had in it. Once it started she couldn’t seem to stop, the sound was loud in the bathroom, coupled with her silent screams and crying. The images of blood and brain splatter played behind her eyelids. Her hands shook as she held onto the top of the toilet leaning her head down, using her arms to avoid getting vomit in her hair. Even when her stomach rebelled, empty as it was she dry heaved, her knees caving so she sat on the floor waiting for it to pass.

Ruby stared at the floor and started tracing the pattern of squares with her mind and counted each tile out loud. When she was done with the floor she lifted a hand to flush the toilet. The smell was making her queasy again and started tracing the patterns of the ceiling instead while she listened to the water swirl next to her. Only when the room was quiet again did she lean her head against the stall wall before standing again. At the sink she took several minutes to wash the taste of sick from her mouth, using the cold water to splash on her face and cool her clammy skin.

When she lifted her head again she took in her appearance in the wide bathroom mirror. Her silver eyes stared back at her but now they were shaded with dark bags and a little bloodshot from exhaustion and tears. Her lips, usually a sweet pink were quivering and blanched, she bit her lower lip. Even her pale complexion was sickly, she looked pasty and ill with not a trace of color. Ruby splashed her face again, rubbing her eyes with wet knuckles. She glanced at the door, couldn’t hide away in here forever and if she didn’t come out soon she knew Yang would break down whatever door she was hiding behind to check up on her.

Cracking the door open a bit she could see her team still sat where she had left them, only now Team JNPR had joined them. Yang kept glancing towards the bathroom door and Blake and Weiss took turns addressing the blonde, probably trying to convince her not to come storming in here. Ruby was debating making for the main door when her eyes met Yangs lilac ones, her sister started waving her arm and Ruby had lost the chance to run off. Huffing a large sigh she walked back over, greeting their friends.

Blake who had been reading her book looked up from the page. “You okay?”

“I’m fine, just tired.” Ruby peered down and sighed again, the messy omelet was thankfully gone and the minute she sat down Weiss placed a plate of toast and a tall glass of water in front of her, “Eat that.”

“Awwww Weiss, I didn’t know you liked to nurse people.” Yang smirked at the heiress, though she was sincerely thankful their platinum haired teammate was observant and cared enough about her
baby sister.

There was a quiet huff, “Don’t be silly Yang, Ruby won’t be productive if she faints. I am simply seeing the wellbeing of our team.” Weiss crossed her arms and went back to the conversation she had been having with Pyrrha.

A stack of pancakes was slowly being demolished by the ever loud Nora but she said while her stuffed cheeked face around the fluffy goodness. “What’s the matter with Ruby? Are you not feeling well! Do you need to see the nurse!?”

Nora’s loud and erratic questioning was met with the calm voice of her partner Ren. “Nora, don’t speak with your mouth full.” He leaned over and wiped a few crumbs from his friends cheek.

“I’m fine Nora, see.” Taking a tiny nibble on the toast seemed to be enough for her friends to return to their conversation, though she did notice Yang and Weiss often peeking over to make sure she ate. The group remained quiet, their conversations muted as Ruby took tiny bites of her toast. Thankfully it seemed to stay settled in her stomach and she sipped the cold water.

It was all too calm for Nora’s taste who had finished the stack of pancakes and was now bored out her mind! The red head dropped her head onto the table thinking, they all needed a distraction, something to bring back her favorite smiles. A stray bean caught her attention and Nora grinned, flicking it towards Yang.

Feeling something land on her cheek Yang wiped the bean off and took stock of the mischievous grin an idea forming in her mind. The brawler stood from the table and slammed both hands down. “Okay! Let’s get out of here!” Quickly she grabbed Ruby and Blakes hands dragging them up with her. Nora did the same but to Ren and Weiss. Having little choice Pyrrha followed behind them with Jaune outside and into the sunny afternoon.

They came out to a empty courtyard, many of the students had gone down to Vale. Whether to help repair damage that hadn’t been fixed by Goodwitch or to just be anywhere but here was unclear. The courtyard connected to a small forest and hills of freshly cut grass, trees that were normally so green and lush had started to tint with the reds and orange of Autumn.

Once they were far enough away from the school, just reaching the tip of the forest Nora spun around and linked arms with Yang. “Okay children, now it’s time to play, Hide!” “And Seek!”

“You two could be a comedy duo.” Weiss said, brushing her hair back with a hand.

“Oh come on Snow Flake, what better way to burn off that breakfast then a game of agility!” Yang posed, her fists together everyone knew playing this game with Yang turned more into tag.

“And stealth!” The hammer wielder joined in, with a fist pump while thinking even Huntsmen and Huntress needed to know how to hide at times. Given what happened it seemed a good a time as any to brush up those hiding skills.

Not one to be shown up the heiress huffed. “Very well, how do you want to play teams?”

“I’ll seek first, I’m not so good at hiding. Oh but no Aura and no Semblance.” Nora stated. “Though don’t go easy on me.”

Ruby unclipped her weapon and lay it on the ground besides her. “I’ll just watch if you don’t mind, maybe have a nap.”

“You sure Rubes?” Yang asked her sister. Already Blake and Ren were making for the treeline as
Nora placed her hands over her eyes and began counting to a hundred.

Smiling the young woman lay back. “Yup, I'll be fine Yang go. Or your be the first one caught.”

“Ok then.” The brawler said before racing for the forest, she could hear Nora’s erratic counting and had little time to hide.

“Ninety-eight, ninety-nine, ONE HUNDRED!” Grinning Nora bolted, hammer raised after her friends.

Ruby waited until the ginger haired girl had left before sitting up. In the distance she could hear shrieks of laughter and giggles, it lightened her heart a little to hear them. Ruby stood and reclipped her scythe, Yang would probably be pissed at her but right now she wanted to be somewhere else. As she retreated back into the school she wondered briefly if the library was open today.

Ruby shivered and hugged herself, arms wrapped tightly around her waist as she slipped like a wraith between the shelves of books. It seemed many students were taking advantage of the break in classes as the library was unusually silent for the time of day. Not for the first time since entering the expansive library Ruby wondered why she had not joined her friends in their game, instead seeking out the written word. In some part of her mind she hoped to familiarising herself more with the creatures of Grimm but that was just a lie. She just couldn’t get the images of the Breach out of her mind and they burned behind her eyes. Her hand shook as she reached up and pulled another book from the shelf, flipping it open she shivered again. She wasn’t afraid of Grimm but you could only see things many times your size trying to eat you so many times before it rubbed off.

She rubbed tears from her eyes with the back of her hand and blinked trying to clear her sight. People had died because they had taken too long to figure out Torchwick’s plan. She was so focused on the page she’d stuck to that the young Huntress in training failed to notice a familiar presence come up behind her.

“Are you alright Miss Rose?” Ozpin stepped into the row and softly approached, complete with a mug of hot chocolate and his signature cane. It was a redundant question, he could see that she was not, the grey of her sweater making her look even pastier than usual. Not that he noticed aside from bringing her into his school a year early and the forming of the teams training mission he hadn’t been paying her to much mind. He was more curious as to when her power would manifest or if it would manifest, he hoped so. The loss of her mother, well it still smarted at times, Silver Eyed Warriors were few and very far between and his magic was something very different altogether.

Ruby jerked slightly and sniffed, closing the book with a startled snap. “Professor Ozpin! Sorry I didn’t hear anyone come in.” She rubbed her eyes again, already she was so tired and her eyes felt dry. The young woman looked up at him and noticed he had a new coat, this one with just a hint of green to it rather than pure black.

“It is quite alright Miss Rose, I was just coming for a book myself.” He collapsed his cane, put it into his pocket and reached up to a shelf well out of Ruby’s reached and pulled a thick black volume down. It had a very heavy leather blinding with a white Grimm skull painted onto the cover.

“What’s that?” Ruby asked, the title of the book was in a dull brown and very hard to read on the black binding. The book was almost the same width as her hand and she could see that it’s pages
were old and yellowed.

“An early study of Grimm, from back when we had to use our eyes to learn with rather than science. As much as I admire Atlas and the technology they brought to the world, I still believe that some of the old ways are more productive. This was written by a Huntsmen who had a Semblance that allowed him to mask his emotions and was a chameleon faunus. Naturally this allowed him to study the Grimm in relative safety.” Ozpin finished his hot chocolate and set the mug on the shelf, the book seemed much smaller in his hands Ruby noticed. She cocked her head slightly as he opened the book with practiced ease thumbed a page to turn it easily. Upon closer inspection she noticed that the imprint left by his thumb was already on all the pages. As if he had read the book so many times that the pages as deformed to match his thumb.

“Why don’t we read it in class?” Ruby asked as Ozpin flipped a few pages in and turned it so she could read the first few sentences. Blush rapidly dusted her cheeks and she hauled her eyes away from the page. “The man was rather rude, not exactly what I would want my students reading in class as informative as it is. I have assisted Professor Port and Oobleck in working what they can into their lesson plans.”

“I see,” Ruby rubbed her eyes and yawned again, at least the very colourful words about the stubborn obstence of Grimm had forced her memories of Grimm away. Even if they weren’t a whole lot better, she never thought a book would teach her new curse words. “Sorry.” She covered her mouth as she yawned. “It’s just been a stressful lately.”

Ozpin closed the book and ran his hands over the cover, feeling the dips and rises of the leather. “I take it you are having difficulties this morning?” He hadn’t been looking for her so he really had no idea if a good night’s rest had helped her set the memories aside. He pitched the bridge of his nose, argh he need to stop thinking of her like Qrow. Helping Qrow cope quickly had taken years to accomplish, one night would not help her.

Ruby hugged herself and hunched over holding her stomach sudden even her toast made her stomach turn as the image of her eggs turned into brains in her mind. Ozpin saw her cheeks further pale, on reflex he reached out to her and asked. “What’s the multiplication of twelve by twelve?”

The silver eyed woman had to pause and think as her brain reset going into math mode. The queasiness in her stomach shoved aside as she thought about it for a second before the answer leapt out of her mouth. “One hundred and forty four.” Ozpin quickly followed it with another question, “Thirty six by fourteen?” he squeezed her arm slightly giving an exterior sensation to go with the math that he was using. “Five hundred and four.” Ruby said instantly, perking up and look up at him. “Twenty four multiplied by nine divided by eleven?” Ozpin as started to get curious just to how fast she could up up with answers, she hadn’t struggled in the classes as far as he knew but he hadn’t see what she could do himself.

Ruby frowned and paused for a grand total of three seconds. “Nineteen point six three six.” She all but reported with a nod of her head sure she was right, Oz quickly followed with another question before she could think of anything else. “Thirty six multiplied by six divided by seven multiplied by the answer and give me the square root.” Ozpin watched her freeze for a several long seconds her eyes flicking about as if she was looking at a page. Then she chirped. “Three point zero four!”

“Give me a few more decimal places.” Ozpin said a slight smile playing over his lips, she hadn’t gotten one wrong yet. As she perked up she became quite cute again, her hands tucked behind her back as she rocked on her feet. “Five nine zero… one.”

“Well done Miss Rose.” Ozpin picked up his mug again, hook the empty thing with his pinky. He saw Ruby’s face fall and restrained a sigh. “You’re going now aren’t you?” She asked mutley her
rocking stopped and she grabbed her arm with the other it resting over her chest.

Ozpin tapped a finger on his book and did sigh, he had planned on returning to his flat for more hot chocolate and to curl up on his couch. Instead he looked at the shelf again and scanning the titles, he plucked a thin volume from the shelf and asked. “How is you’re old english?”

“Okay.” Ruby said with a shrug then looked to the volume when he offered it to her. “I’m not that good, Qrow usually reads anything I find with old english to me.” She took the book and read the cover, “Beowulf” the silver eyed warrior opened the battered book carefully it’s pages yellowed and made a face at the first few lines. Ozpin couldn’t help but chuckle, he was pretty sure most people made a similar face when first looking at the poem. “Come there are couches on the second floor, I am free today and I have no objections to reading here. You can ask me when you have questions.” He picked up his mug again and watched her.

“Cool!” Ruby’s face lit up again and they headed off out of the alley. “With just looking at the first four lines of this I am sure I shall have LOTS of questions. What exactly is it about? I couldn’t really tell.” That made Ozpin smile again as they walked up the stairs to the second floor of the library, it just as empty as the ground floor. “It’s a fantasy epic about a hero who became a king through great feats in battle and protecting his people. Interesting english aside I think you will like it.”

“Neat!” Ruby bounced over to a brown leather couch and pounced onto it. She pulled her boots off and curled up into the corner and carefully opened the book again. Ozpin found her enthusiasm endearing and walked to the other side of the three cushion couch and set his mug down on the side table before sitting himself and stretching his legs out. He had about three minutes of silence before Ruby asked. “What does whale-path mean?”

“Sea or ocean.” Ozpin supplied without looking up from his book, the problem with this book was it was very personal. There were whole pages full of poems that the author had composed in his travels. Needless to say Ozpin enjoyed them, it tended to happen when one spent a lot of time on the road and alone. Composing songs was something one could do on the move. James, Qrow and himself had all gotten rather good at it in the past, needless to say some very dirty limericks had been created. A few more minutes passed and the little woman spoke up again. “And ring-dight vessel?”

“A ship for a king, that passage basically says that Scyld died in the prime of his life and wished to be buried at sea. His men put their king in his ship and filled it with treasures, they set a gold banner flying from the mast of the ship and it flapped in the breeze that carried him away. He and the treasure sailed into the unknown and his people mourned deeply at his passing.” Ozpin turned a page in his book, the yellowing page crinkled and he loved the smell of pages.

“Wow that’s all that passage says? It’s really long and,” Ruby stuck her tongue out at the page. “Long winded.”

Ozpin closed his book and set it in his lap, looking over to her. “It’s a poem, it’s a tale to be told orally around a campfire. When you have naught but your voice to ensnare you audience the detail is required. If you find it long winded you are clearly not reading it right.”

Ruby shivered though not at all cold, he had turned his words around slowly and played with the words he chose. She shifted over to sit in the middle couch. “So show me, how I am supposed to be reading it?”

Ozpin let out a huff and took the book from her with and hand, looking down to the page. “Alright.” He thumbed the page and began, letting the words rumbled up from his chest and resonating in the air.
Now Beowulf bode in the burg of the Scyldings, leader beloved, and long he ruled in fame with all folk, since his father had gone away from the world, till awoke an heir, haughty Healfdene, who held through life, sage and sturdy, the Scyldings glad. Then, one after one, there woke to him, to the chieftain of clansmen, children four: Heorogar, then Hrothgar, then Halga brave; and I heard that—was—’s queen, the Heathoscylfing’s helpmate dear. To Hrothgar was given such glory of war, such honor of combat, that all his kin obeyed him gladly till great grew his band of youthful comrades. It came in his mind to bid his henchmen a hall uprear, ia master mead-house, mightier far than ever was seen by the sons of earth, and within it, then, to old and young he would all allot that the Lord had sent him, save only the land and the lives of his men. Wide, I heard, was the work commanded, for many a tribe this mid-earth round, to fashion the folkstead. It fell, as he ordered, in rapid achievement that ready it stood there, of halls the noblest: Heorot he named it whose message had might in many a land.:

“So he built a house?” Ruby asked, one could tell a great deal from the next but she had decided she
liked listening to Ozpin read. So further questions, that way he hopefully wouldn’t give the book back. “A mead hall is not a house.” Ozpin said flatly looking over his glasses at her. “Think like the cafeteria here, but four times the size and made of long wood logs. With huge tables probably built within the hall, so long as to stretch the length of it. The ground would be stone but smoothed and cemented together, in the middle would be a massive fire pit upon which they would roast boar or steers to feed everyone. There would be raised platforms along the walls for poets, mistriels and plays. At the head would be another raised dais for the head family, so they could look down upon their home and comrades.” Ozpin’s voice fell back into storytelling mod. “On the walls would the mounted trophies, all creatures they deemed worthy to hunt, bears and wolves to monsters of all shapes and sizes. Perhaps even upon the ceiling tales of their adventures would be painted in great murals for all to see.”

He looked over to see Ruby’s eyes full of stars, she was sitting with her legs out to one side and her arms before her straight holding her up as she watched with awe growing on her face. Oz couldn’t help but bit his lip and smile. “Any other questions?”

“Will you please keep reading.” Ruby’s voice fell into a pleading sound that always worked on Qrow. Ozpin smiled slightly at that and returned his attention to the page.

:Not reckless of promise, the rings he dealt,

treasure at banquet: there towered the hall,

high, gabled wide, the hot surge waiting

of furious flame. Nor far was that day

when father and son-in-law stood in feud

for warfare and hatred that woke again.

With envy and anger an evil spirit

endured the dole in his dark abode,

that he heard each day the din of revel

high in the hall: there harps rang out,

clear song of the singer. He sang who knew

tales of the early time of man,

how the Almighty made the earth,

fairest fields enfolded by water,

set, triumphant, sun and moon

for a light to lighten the land-dwellers,

and braided bright the breast of earth

with limbs and leaves, made life for all
of mortal beings that breathe and move.
So lived the clansmen in cheer and revel
a winsome life, till one began
to fashion evils, that field of hell.
Grendel this monster grim was called,
march-riever mighty, in moorland living,
in fen and fastness; fief of the giants
the hapless wight a while had kept
since the Creator his exile doomed.
On kin of Cain was the killing avenged
by sovran God for slaughtered Abel.
Ill fared his feud, and far was he driven,
for the slaughter's sake, from sight of men.
Of Cain awoke all that woful breed,
Etins and elves and evil-spirits,
as well as the giants that warred with God
weary while: but their wage was paid them!:

Ozpin barely noticed when Ruby snuggled up to his side, one moment there was no weight on his shoulder the next Ruby’s head had made it’s home there. Her hands remained in her lap as her legs folded on the couch. He paused to look down at her, their eyes meeting for along moment, before Ruby’s flicked to the book then back up at him. The silver haired man shook his head oh so slightly a smile playing upon his lips then continued to tell the tale of Beowolf.

About half an hour into his reading, teams RWBY and JNPR crept up the stairs to find the scene. Ruby awake yet eyes lidded low, their Headmaster proving a talented bard spun for her a tale most epic. They collected upon the couches in silence as Ozpin looked up from his book but didn’t stop for them. Yang sat beside Ruby who moved to snuggle up to her sister, while Weiss and Blake sat on the last cushion. Ozpin continued though it did not take long for his arm to grow cold and he missed the warmth.

:HRothgar answered, helmet of Scyldings:—
“I knew him of yore in his youthful days;
his aged father was Ecgtheow named,
to whom, at home, gave Hrethel the Geat
his only daughter. Their offspring bold
fares hither to seek the steadfast friend.
And seamen, too, have said me this,—
who carried my gifts to the Geatish court,
thither for thanks,—he has thirty men’s
heft of grasp in the gripe of his hand,
the bold-in-battle. Blessed God
out of his mercy this man hath sent
to Danes of the West, as I ween indeed,
against horror of Grendel. I hope to give
the good youth gold for his gallant thought.
Be thou in haste, and bid them hither,
clan of kinsmen, to come before me;
and add this word,—they are welcome guests
to folk of the Danes.”

[To the door of the hall
Wulfgar went] and the word declared:—
“`To you this message my master sends,
East-Danes’ king, that your kin he knows,
hardy heroes, and hails you all
welcome hither o’er waves of the sea!
Ye may wend your way in war-attire,
and under helmets Hrothgar greet;
but let here the battle-shields bide your parley,
and wooden war-shafts wait its end.”

Uprose the mighty one, ringed with his men,
brave band of thanes: some bode without,
battle-gear guarding, as bade the chief.
Then hied that troop where the herald led them,
under Heorot’s roof: [the hero strode,]
hardy ’neath helm, till the hearth he neared.

Beowulf spake,—his breastplate gleamed,
war-net woven by wit of the smith:—

“Thou Hrothgar, hail! Hygelac’s I,
kinsman and follower. Fame a plenty
have I gained in youth! These Grendel-deeds
I heard in my home-land heralded clear.

Seafarers say how stands this hall,
of buildings best, for your band of thanes
empty and idle, when evening sun
in the harbor of heaven is hidden away.

So my vassals advised me well,—
brave and wise, the best of men,—
O sovran Hrothgar, to seek thee here,
for my nerve and my might they knew full well.

Themselves had seen me from slaughter come
blood-flecked from foes, where five I bound,
and that wild brood worsted. I’ the waves I slew
nicors by night, in need and peril
avenging the Weders, whose woe they sought,—
crushing the grim ones. Grendel now,
monster cruel, be mine to quell
in single battle! So, from thee,
thou sovran of the Shining-Danes,
Scyldings’-bulwark, a boon I seek,—
and, Friend-of-the-folk, refuse it not,
O Warriors’-shield, now I’ve wandered far,—
that I alone with my liegemen here,
this hardy band, may Heorot purge!
More I hear, that the monster dire,
in his wanton mood, of weapons recks not;
hence shall I scorn—so Hygelac stay,
king of my kindred, kind to me!—
brand or buckler to bear in the fight,
gold-colored targe: but with gripe alone
must I front the fiend and fight for life,
foe against foe. Then faith be his
in the doom of the Lord whom death shall take.
Fain, I ween, if the fight he win,
in this hall of gold my Geatish band
will he fearless eat,—as oft before,—
my noblest thanes. Nor need'st thou then
to hide my head; for his shall I be,
dyed in gore, if death must take me;
and my blood-covered body he'll bear as prey,
ruthless devour it, the roamer-lonely,
with my life-blood redden his lair in the fen:
no further for me need'st food prepare!
To Hygelac send, if Hild should take me,
best of war-weeds, warding my breast,
armor excellent, heirloom of Hrethel
and work of Wayland. Fares Wyrd as she must.”:

Ozpin paused and swallowed thickly his throat drying just as Ruby’s stomach growled. Yang giggled and poked Ruby’s tummy. “I think it’s time to feed you again.” Ruby shoved her sister’s hands away and ended up fall backwards to lean on Ozpin again. “No stop it! I was having fun listening!”
Ozpin took a mental note of his page number and said. “Well I am hungry as well, so I purpose we take an hour for lunch and then return. If my reading of it has you all so enthralled.” Oz closed the book and set it on his much thicker tomb.

“SWEET!” Nora leaped from her seat and raced down the stairs. “I’ll go make plates so we can eat faster!” Her voice echoed up the stairs as Ren sighed and ran after her to make sure everyone got their vegetables. Just like that the teams set off after Nora, Ruby pulling away from Yang. Her sister sighed but let her go at Ruby’s softly spoken. “I’ll catch up.”

Ruby waited till her friends were out of earshot, then asked Ozpin who stood up and stretched his arms high above his head fingers threaded together. “Sir could we maybe… spar again tonight? It helped and was… nice.” She hugged herself again pulling her cloak around her tight. “If it doesn’t inconvenience you.”

“It does not, same room as before Miss Rose.” The headmaster said smoothly then added in a much warmer tone. “Just try not to fall asleep on me this time.” Ozpin watched as blush tinted her cheeks, it was much preferred to her new usual paleness. Ruby dipped her head and wrung her hands before uttering a quiet. “Thank you Sir, see you after lunch.” He watched her all but flee, then turned his attention to his books. Running his fingers over the leather covers, he had noticed when she had calmed snuggled up next to him. Her breathing had deepened into a almost sleep like state, Oz smiled at that he was glad to have helped chase away her monsters if only for a little while.

He picked up the books and tucked them under his arm, picked up his cup and pulled out his cane. He extended it and walked out of the library the tap tap tap of the cane a reminder to him. Ozpin let out a long happy sigh into the brisk autumn air, then headed home, he’d have to make a thermos of hot chocolate to get him through reading Beowolf to the eight teenagers.
One Step Forward, Two Steps Back

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

That evening when Yang flopped onto Blakes bed which sat below her own there was an unsettledness about in her mind. She was worried about her Ruby, the Scythe wielder had spent most of the afternoon rather silent. While it wasn’t unusual for Ruby to be rather quiet there was something off about her today. Sighing she tried to put it down to the Breach and concluding that Ruby was just not near as tough skinned as the rest of them. Maybe there were some things she just wasn’t ready for. There was the sound of a page being flicked and Yang looked over at her team. Weiss ever studious was reading from a textbook and writing something in what was no doubt immaculately neat handwriting. Blake had forgone her own bed since Yang saw fit to lay on it and was instead sat on Yangs bed no doubt reading another one the her romance novel. Yang wanted to mess with the Faunus so badly and could already imagine the reaction.

A blur of red past by as Ruby entered the conjoined bathroom, within moments the sound of water broke the silence of the dorm and any smile that had graced Yang’s lips faltered as she thought of her precious sister. Ruby had told her some of what was bothering her about the Breach and Yang could honesty see why the younger girl was having nightmares. It had bothered her too of course, when Ruby told her what she had witnessed and it had obviously affected her greatly but Yang had no idea how to comfort her sister. Neither of them had ever been in a situation like this. The blonde haired woman debated calling their dad, surely he would know what to do. . . then again Taiyang was just as likely to come barreling from Patch like a rocket. The image pulled the corners of her lips upward.

Yang rolled over again and huffed, she wanted to beat herself up a little, she was suppose to keep her sister safe and what had happened? The minute she had taken her eyes off Ruby their team leader had been captured and could ever well have been seriously injured or worse. Then there was the train, she still couldn’t believe that she had been taken out so easily by that ice cream midget and to top it all off when the train had breached the city of Vale, the choas it brought with it. . . the buxom blonde shuddered slightly, so much damage, so many injured. It no longer surprised her that Ruby seemed so deeply affected by it. Her little sister had always been the softer one, more innocent and pure than anyone she had ever met. Being unable to protect those people, to see what became of them Yang wondered how her sister had been able to fight let alone cope with the aftermath.

Still she hoped her Rubes would snap out of this trance like state soon. It certainly wasn’t healthy but the crimsonette didn’t seem open to an intervention and with a Semblance that gave her a greater speed than most cars the brawler didn’t want to chance her running off. It didn’t seem very long before the shower shut off again and Ruby reentered the room. When she bybassed her team and shut the door quietly behind her Yang’s thoughts returned to earlier that day. Her sister had already told her that she was going to start sparing with Ozpin. She rolled over and looked up at the ceiling, letting out a long sigh. The blonde would have been worried if Ruby hadn’t told her, or if the Professor had paid her any attention. If anything he seemed to interact with Ruby with almost passive disinterest, only helping her because she needs it, more so then wants it. He had read to both teams for most of the day and the look on his face when he did. Soo impersonal, even when Ruby snuggled up into his side again, he hadn’t paused barely looked at her. Yang pursed her lips, Ruby was safe with the Professor of that Yang was sure.
Ruby paced in the cold room, she had left Crescent Rose in their rooms. She swung a training sword round and round, she was already tired though the dozing she had managed while Ozpin read to them helped. He had been a good pillow, didn’t even move when she leaned on him. His scent had been nice too, stronger than his coat too and his voice, sure it would rise with the combat scenes but it was calming. Kinda like Qrow was, only Qrow would hug too, whisper nderments, Ozpin just permitted her contact.

She heard the door open and looked up to see Ozpin standing in the doorway the light behind him silhouetting him. His cane in one hand poised on the ground, his shadow casting long into the room almost to the arena. In that moment Ruby wondered at him, he felt so cold and distant in that moment. Ruby backed away putting her back to the wall and moved into ready position tucking her arm behind her back, with her sword raised in a low guard.

A smiled pulled at Ozpin’s lips as he walked down the hall, his steps echoing through the room as his shadow drew smaller and smaller till he stood before her and spun his cane around into his ready position. Then their shadows overlapped and Ruby let out a long breath. She swung out, stabbing out for his shoulder and the dance began again.

Ozpin stepped neatly to the side, his gaze focusing on the shiny steel sword, to him it appeared to be moving at a snail’s pace. She had her footwork wrong again, he moved his cane and pushed her left foot forward a step. While stepping away again, letting her wobble and settling into the new position.

Ruby stumbled into the fixed form, then took another breath and pivoted to face him again. She slashed out twice with an underhand strike going from his left side upwards then switched around to stab forward. Ozpin stepped out of the way to the right then he only needed a single half step back to avoid the jab. His cane came up and corrected the blend of her knee and they disengaged again.

Ozpin watched her make adjustments again, unlike last night she was still awake enough to learn something. He could see her trying to copy him, but there was so much of Qrow’s style in her. The attempt to merge the two styles left her wide open, with more errors than anything else. The silver haired man raised, his cane and set the tip to elbow and pushed it in a few centimeters. Next he set it to the guard of her sword and forced the angle of the blade up, then moved to her feet stepping around beside her and fixing her foot placement again.

Ruby nodded her head and fixed her feet at his promoting, she could feel how cold his cane was through her leggings. Ozpin stepped away from her again and turned so she had a profile of him. Then forced himself to slow down for her and showed her his favoured biragge of strikes. Slowing down to deliberately show her how he changed his elbow level and the rotation of his wrist with each strike.

The Silver Eyed Warrior moved to stand beside him facing him so she could continue to watch. Then adjusted her stance again in an effort to copy, then she turned her face forward and did her best to copy him. As she started Ozpin reduced his adjustments giving her a perfect form to copy.

‘Swish, swish, swish, swish,’ the pair focused on that one strike, over and over. Ruby’s arm quickly started to hurt, she was using her right as Ozpin was right handed and it was easiest to copy him if they lined up. However it was not her dominate hand and she hadn’t practiced a sword with it before. Qrow had let up on that front, allowing her to choose where she wanted to focus.

She pursed her lips and took deep breaths in time with her breaths, it helped with how her arm as starting to ache. ‘Swish, swish, swish, swish.’ Ruby’s arms wobbled but she kept it up, looking up to Ozpin, his lips were set in a thin line and he looked ahead for the most part but he often looked down to her. ‘Swish, swish, wobble, swish.’ Ruby’s arm burned and she had to stop and rub her arm.
Ozpin paused and raised a brow at her, Ruby switched hands and started up again before he said anything. ‘SWISH, SWISH, SWISH’ Ruby refused to appear weak regardless of how tired she was. The Headmaster was giving her his time and she refused to waste it. Ozpin paused for a moment and used his cane to make corrections to her form again. Then resumed his demonstrations, moving faster but still slow enough that she could see his arm clearly. So she’s left handed, interesting, I hadn’t noticed before. We shall have to work on strengthening her right, the scythe will have assissed there but I think perhaps Qrow has been too kind to her in his teachings. From her stance I doubt Taiyang has taught her much of anything. Given her sister it is likely Taiyang focused on Yang while Qrow gave Ruby what time he could. A frown pulled at his lips but he didn’t let it show, Qrow wouldn’t have had the time to teach her much beyond a scythe. Just how many holes did she have in her education? His gaze traveled to the point of her sword and he frowned in true this time, it was wobbling not traveling the same space with each thrust.

Ruby pursued her lips when Ozpin made corrections to her again, a turn to her wrist, lifting her elbow where she had let it drop. She watched him out of the corner of her eye as the Headmaster moved to stand before her and activated his Aura in a green crackle. He raised his right palm providing her with a flat target and tapped the centre with a finger of his other hand. Ruby gave a brisk nod and tried to strike for the center of his palm.

Only she missed, over and over, scrapping the side of his hand, hitting his fingers. She clenched the fist of her free hand, it was annoying that she couldn’t do something so simple as hit his palm properly. Of course this only made her strikes more erratic, his Aura barely flickering as she hit him. Am I just that weak? That small and pathetic compared to him?

‘Swish, Swish, Crackle,’ miss, miss, Aura crackle, Ruby didn’t see Oz’s hand move when he grabbed her sword by the blade stopping her. His voice was low as he spoke, not a whisper or a softly spoken. It was firm and to the point, “Anger will only get you killed, it has no place here.” he let go and offered his palm again.

Ruby let out a long sigh and closed her eyes for a moment, she knew he would wait silently. In and out, in and out, she focused on her breathing, trying to let go of the feelings of inadequacy failing provoked. The silver eyed woman let out another long breath open her eyes and struck out again. ‘Crackle, Crackle, Crackle’ Now she hit is palm, not the centre but it was a tight cluster around that point. Ozpin rewarded her with a slight upturn of his lips, for Ruby it might as well have been a medal.

Ruby practiced with her left arm for another ten minutes, by then her strikes were starting to waver again. Rather then stopping she switched hands and started again, again her strikes going wide but slowly she honed them back in. By the time she was hitting her target again her eyes were starting to droop and her thighs were burning with the effort to stay in the lowered position. Ozpin used his cane to occasionally correct her as they went, while watching her closely. While she was cute, he did not want her latching on to him again.

Sure enough her strikes grew sloppy again, her eyelids dropped and her breathing faultured. Ozpin stepped away as she pulled back for another strike and said. “Enough Miss Rose go to bed, you are too exhausted to learn anything more tonight.” He spun his cane around and leaned on it, not that he needed to, more he had a image to uphold.

Ruby rubbed at her eyes and shook her head. “I’m fine. I can go a little longer.” She adjusted her feet out of where they were supposed to be. Ozpin turned his voice into a harder tone, quietly hoping that Qrow’s stubbornness hadn’t rubbed off on her. “That was not a suggestion Miss Rose.” Ruby flinched at his tone but straightened out of the fencing form. “Yes Sir.” She said softly and offered him the sword, Ozpin took it from her without touching her hand. “Goodnight Miss Rose.”
“Goodnight Sir.” Ruby pulled her cloak around her and walked off the arena stage without looking back. The crimsonette quickly grew cold now that she was no longer burning the same level of energy. As silent as a mouse she headed back to her dorm and found her teammates all sleeping peacefully. The curtains were drawn so only a sliver of silver moonlight peaked through, but it was enough for her to change into her pajamas with. She pulled herself up onto her bed her arms burning with the effort and paused.

Ozpin’s coat still lay on her bed, as she pulled the covers back and slipped under she reached for it and brought it back to her nose. She inhaled deeply and was happy to find it still smelled of pine. Ruby bit her bottom lip then unfolded the coat and set it out over her bedding, then pulled it up around her chin. She buried her face in it for a long breath and let exhaustion pull her into a dreamless sleep.

The next morning Beacon resumed its classes much to the dismay of some students, Ruby and her team not being among them. The first few classes held everyone’s attention but the first after lunch often put many of the students into a half sleep or bored state. That wasn’t to say Professor Port was boring, just that if the man spent half as much time teaching as he did telling long winded stories, the students may learn more then how he decimated a group of Ursa with just his skill and double edged axe.

Ruby had gotten very little sleep and she could feel her tired eyes pull and she stifled a yawn. It wouldn’t do to show how exhausted she was, already Weiss and Yang were ganging up on the smaller girl this morning, practically forcing her to eat and stay hydrated. After last night's training Ruby couldn’t help realising how wrong she was in how she had tried to dismiss Professor Ozpin’s instructions. She remembered how tired she had been and though able to stand and fight her moves had been as sloppy and incompetent as a child’s holding a weapon for the first time. The silver eyed girl thought paying attention and working on her form would have been enough to appease him but then she had forgone any actually skill and far too often her exhausted brain kept screaming at her to stop and she had paid little attention. Ruby could understand now why the Headmaster had called an end to their training and she just hoped that tonight they could continue again. Port started talking about another story from his youth and Ruby found her head gentle lowering to slump down onto the desk she sat at, her eyes half lidded as she tuned out everything in the room.

Had she been paying attention she would have straightened up as Professor Port’s observed her. His brow lifted slightly at the sight of one of his most promising students as she seemed to drift away. That being said he was not a fool, he knew that team RWBY had been front and center at the Breach and it seemed Miss Rose was more affected by the incident then most of his other students. The girl didn’t appear to be asleep, just obviously not paying attention, still he had other students to regale his tales to. Port made a note to speak with Ozpin or Glynda at some point if Miss Rose’s behaviour didn’t resume its usual bubbly interest.

Ruby’s eyes tracked over to the large window, it was colder today, the sun hidden behind layers of cloud and chilly wind. She could hear it whisper against the school walls if she tried hard enough. She tried to close her eyes as tired and heavy as they were the moment she did images of blood and Grimm flashed behind her eyes and she opened them again. Her arms were still sore from last night, Professor Ozpin hadn’t been soft on her as she held the weapon correctly. Perhaps she needed to try improving her muscles, she sat partly up and looked down at her hand. Wielding a scythe she had built a lot of muscle, Ruby had never viewed herself as weak and yet…
Her mind turned back to Ozpin, he had let her pound on his hand, his Aura and not batted an eye. The silver eyed woman knew that she hadn’t been *remotely* close to breaking it. The image of his standing in the doorway, the moon behind him casting his body into darkness. Ruby shivered, how could a man look so cold and distant? He barely smiled around her, barely even spoke, it was so different from when he had been reading to them. Even standing beside her to demonstrate he seemed so far away, he dwarfed her physically and in a way she couldn’t describe.

The bell rang and Ruby grabbed her books, slowly stuffing them into her bag. Yang helped her for a moment and as she got up Professor Port called on her. Ruby nodded to her friends and walked down to stand before Port. “Yes Professor?” She looked at him the harsh bright light making the bags under her eyes more pronounced.

“How are you Miss Rose? You seem unfocused today.” Professor Port picked his words carefully as he tucked his hands behind his back.

“Just tired Sir, I’m working on getting better.” Ruby pulled her cloak around her, hiding the rest of her from view.

“Did something happen during the Breach?” Professor Port asked, Ruby’s flinch answering his question instantly. “You know talking can be the best cure, Professor Peach would be a good woman to talk too.”

Ruby shook her head. “It’s alright, Professor Ozpin is already helping me.” Port pursed his lips then reached up and pulled on the corner of his grey mustache. “Professor Ozpin is not a counselor.”

Ruby bristled and clenched her fists but kept her voice level. “He helps though and it won’t get me kicked out of the school, we are working on it and I will be fine. I have my friends and him.” And *Qrow*, she thought looking away from the Professor. “I’m sorry I was distracted today it won’t happen again, excuse me I do not want to be late for my last class.”

“Of course Miss Rose you are dismissed.” Port could only watch as Ruby turned on her heel and all but stormed out, he saw her active her Semblance and blast down the halls.

The Silver eyed woman reformed just outside the arena that she and Ozpin used, now it was full of students with Glynda prosiding over them all. Ruby slipped into a seat high on the walls away from her friends and hopefully out of sight. As the class settled she could see the sword she had been using with Ozpin back on its rack and looked down at her hand again. Drawing a thumb across her callouses she thought back to how strange it felt to be using a sword, though Ozpin didn’t seem inclined to teach her scythe work. Did he even know how to use a scythe? She wondered at that while Glynda set up one and one sparing.

First was Ren vs Blake, their styles were similar enough that they pushed each other when they fought. Ruby pulled her hood down over her eyes and tried not to fall asleep but she was grumpy enough after her talk with Port that she didn’t wish to be called on. Unfortunately for her Glynda had a nose for grumpy students and called out. “Miss Rose, Mr. Winchester you’re next.”

Ruby sighed and left her book bag and walked down to the stage and pulled out Crescent Rose flicking it open with a spin. She was tired but she activated her Aura with a red crackle as she stared Cardin down. The much taller man smirked cocky, swinging his warhammer over his shoulders. “Hey Tiny, I have seen you in ages.”

“Just shut up and fight.” Ruby grumbled as Glynda hit the bell starting the match. She launched forward, swinging Crescent Rose up with a unhand strike cleaving across Cardin’s body. Cardin however was well rested and in a good mood, he blocked the strike and easily forced Ruby onto the
defensive. Ruby stumbled and jumped back narrowly dodging getting hit upside the head, her exhaustion making it hard to get her weapon into position.

Another exchange, Cardin caught the shaft of Crescent Rose and ripped it toward him while kicking Ruby in the stomach in the same action. The small woman was ripped from her weapon and sent flying across the arena. She picked herself up slowly with a groan Cardin enjoying his victory. “Wow you’re really off your game Tiny. The Breach bother you that much?” Ruby glanced up and saw that she had landed right next to the practice swords rack.

She leapt to her feet and grabbed a sword, her hand curling around the hilt, at his words she could see the Grimm pouring up like a black wave. “SHUT UP!” Tears slid from her eyes and she blasted forward using her Aura on instinct. The drills Ozpin put her through had sunk into her bones, Cardin swung for her head intent on slamming her back into the ground. Ruby dropped and rolled under it, rising with a slide of her back foot and stabbed with the force of a battering ram into Cardin’s back.

He spun and slammed his mace down over her only for her to take a single step forward and to the side, turning her shoulder so the mace missed her by a hair and laid into his stomach with a blurr of red strikes so fast her arm was barely visible. A second later the bell rang again indicating victory by Aura level but Ruby barely heard it she shifted her weight onto her back leg and kicked out planting her foot in Cardin’s gut and kicking him with all her might. He tumbled head over heels and slammed into a student’s seats.

A stunned silence fell over the class as Ruby panted, her Aura although low was still fine even as her muscles screamed at her. The Silver eyed warrior rubbed her eyes clearing away her tears and walked across the arena as the silence continued. She grabbed and sheathed her scythe clipping it back on her belt and returned the sword to its place. Glynda spoke softly as Ruby walked off the arena, she had already saved the video of the fight. “Thank you Miss Rose, please have a seat.”

Ruby pulled her hood back up and sat by her team, hunched over and hiding under her cloak. She could feel the stares and hated it, it wasn’t that abnormal to fight with a secondary weapon. They didn’t seriously think she was helpless without her scythe? A little voice in the back of her mind told her that she was weak without her weapon. She crossed her arms and glared at the table before her, two new students called up and began to spar.

She looked over to Cardin his friends helping him up and guilt turned over in her stomach. Ozpin had gotten, perhaps annoyed was the best word for it with her when she became angry last night. Ruby shrunk in on herself, she had just done exactly what had gotten Ozpin annoyed with her. There was also no way he wasn’t going to hear about this.

Glynda’s heels clinked loudly as she stormed into the elevator, then tapped her heel as she waited for the doors to open. A BING sounded as the doors opened and Glynda stormed into Ozpin’s office, the doors barely opened enough to let her through. “Gly—” Ozpin started to greet her when she slammed her video pad down on his desk, it was playing Ruby’s fight on loop. “When did you plan on tell me you were teaching her?!”

Ozpin showed no emotion as he picked up the Scroll and watched the fight through once, then turned it off. He steepled his fingers together and spoke calmly. “I fail to understand why you are so upset.”
Glynda slammed her hands down on his desk and glared at him. “Because I remember what happened to the last student you trained personally.” She caught the dark look that flashed in Ozpin’s eyes, he stood slowly towering over her his hands clenched at his sides. “Don’t even go there Glynda, Ruby is a young woman struggling with PTSD. I am not teaching her like I did that last student as you put it, I am providing her with a distraction.”

“Only she just won a fight that by all rights she would have lost, and she won it using YOUR moves. Then there is that kick, you’re not the only one teaching her dirty tricks.” Glynda stood her ground, Ozpin didn’t scare her. “I don’t know why you are so surprised, I thought the scythe gave his involvement with her away.”

“Teaching her how to use those oversized gardening tools and how to punt a man across the field are two different things.” Glynda never agreed with the red eyed man’s methods and he only seemed to be perfecting them with time. “You give him too much freedom you know, you’re not the only one reading the reports on the Red List.”

“Is this conversation about Qrow or Ruby? You’ve lost me.” Ozpin sat back in his chair and crossed a leg over the other. “Both!” Glynda snapped at him. “I won’t let you turn her into another one of your weapons!”

“She asked me for the lessons, she wants to learn. I am a professor it is my job to teach her.” Ozpin said firmly, he was only trying to help her sleep.

“It’s that what happened before! You don’t think I haven’t noticed, you made Qrow like you! It’s only a matter of time before others start noticing. The monster you’ve made.” Goodwitch clenched her fists she had never approved of Qrow.

“That’s your opinion of Qrow, I rather disagree with it.” Ozpin’s voice turned steel, he wove his fingers together so she couldn’t be able to see the pressure he was applying to them.

“You would, team STRQ failed but you got to keep one of them. So you made one of them to be able to makeup for losing the other three.” Glynda turned the Scroll around and pulled up a collection of photos. “This was Mistral two weeks ago.”

They were of Qrow, a grin on his face, sword in hand and blood filling the shots in great waves. His eyes sharp and focused as he cleaved through his opponents. “You give him way to much freedom, if James saw these… to be quite frank I don’t want to think about it. You gave Qrow that training, you made him capable of that, you should pay him more attention. As for Ruby, stay away from her we don’t need another Qrow.”

Ozpin stood up and walked around his desk to the window, he’d left his cane and his shoulders were pulled back as he clenched his hands behind his back. “No.” He didn’t turn to look at her, staring out at the setting sun. “As much as I enjoy it when you contradict me, this is not your call. As you say Qrow is very capable and I currently am happy with him. Ruby wishes to learn, I will teach her but that is as far as my interest in her extends.” He looked over to her and raised a brow, “As you said I have Qrow.” he looked over to the photos. “However I will have a word with him about, getting caught when he’s doing some house cleaning.”

“House cleaning! That is what you call this?!” Glynda pointed at the scroll, outrage and disbelief waring in her.

Ozpin put his hands in his pockets and turned partly to her. “Yes, that is what I call it. You safeguard the students Glynda, James keeps Atlas from doing anything spectacularly stupid. Qrow cleans up the mess that comes with it, we can’t just teach hundreds of people and expect them all to do their
jobs. Face it Glynda for every good huntsman we train there is at least two that abuse their knowledge. Qrow is both spy and…”

“Hitman.” Glynda finished his sentence, her eyes flicked away and then back to him. “So what happens when you’re not satisfied with just Qrow anymore? When he starts to get old?”

Ozpin smirked looking at her. “You already answered one of those questions yourself. After all I taught Qrow more than just how to fight, even as a Huntsman he is awfully spry for thirty seven don’t you think? Though he hasn’t told me what age he picked.”

“How can you be so calm?” Glynda snapped storming over to him, reaching out and then stopped. She looked up at him, then to her hand and pulled it back and stepped away. Ozpin watched the fear flit over her face. “Qrow made his choice, if Ruby proves capable then I will make her the same offer. I to be quite frank, need all the help I can get and…” He looked away and looked out the window. “Ruby has already shown she works well with Qrow and if she grows past this test. Then I am sure she will be an excellent partner for him. I could use another field agent since Raven has abandoned us.” The copper eyed man looked over to her, his gaze narrowing. “I don’t force them into anything Glynda, you know that.”

Glynda’s fire went out, she turned on her heel walked back to his desk and grabbed her scroll. “Don’t you ever feel guilt about any of it?”

Ozpin sighed slumping over, leaning against the window and reached out pressing his fingers against the window. “Always, but if we want to stand against Salem. I can’t afford to turn down those who show promise.”

“That doesn’t cover you sleeping with Qrow, you’ve avoided that for this whole conversation. Do you even care about him? Or is it just a way to keep him loyal to you? I never understood why to let him into your bed.” Glynda spoke softly.

The glass fractured under his hand, Glynda saw that and smiled. “Well that answers one question, does he know?”

“Get out Glynda, this conversation has become far too personal.” Ozpin pulled his hand out of the glass it crumbling in little flecks, he flicked the glass off of his fingers.

“Better keep that cane on hand Sir, you’re slipping if I can provoke you.” Glynda smiled warmly and walked out of the office. That was one thing she did like about Ozpin, for all that he did all that he had to do. Even that ironclad control of his, all she had to do was find the right button. One little push and in one little action he told her more of what was going on in that head of his then that whole conversation had. “Don’t be too hard on Ruby, she’s not Qrow and won’t respond the same way he did. She doesn’t strike me as the type to be that desperate for someone to show her even some small kindness.” On that note she stepped into the elevator and left Ozpin to stew.

Ozpin waited till the doors closed shut and heard it descend before he turned to lean against the glass and slid down to sit. He drew his legs up, rested his arms over and hung his head. “I hate it when she does that.” He took a deep breath, let it out slowly, then pulled off his glasses and set them aside. It’s not like I have any choice! They are just kids! Ruby is just a kid, at least Qrow was matured when I first encountered him. Ruby’s not, she’s just a kid in need of help and she picked me. Given that video, perhaps she is a faster study than I thought. A smile played over his lips as he stared at the ground. I do love quick students, let see if she improves mentally, it may be worth continuing with her instruction. She is braver than Raven, already more loyal than that bird as well. If she wishes, she would be perfect.
He bit his lip and clenched his fists. *And then there is Qrow, they are already family and would have no trouble working together. Heck she might even tame him a bit, which would be nice. He’s taking to eternal youth a BIT too well at times.* Ozpin smiled again, sure teaching Qrow that had been selfish on his part but a person like Qrow came around once in well… he hadn’t met another like him. He looked up and leaned his head against window and grinned. Of course Glynda had pushed on that button and got him to show his true colours. “Thanks Glynda, I can always count on you to remind me of what’s really important.”

Ozpin put his glasses back on and looked out the window the sun had just about set. *Time to go give Ruby another lesson, she still needs to perfect that stance in that video, she was all over the place.* He got up and walked over to his desk, Oz traced his fingers over his cane then picked it up and extended it. The silver haired man tapped it on the ground twice, ‘*tap tap*’ the sound resonating in his brain.

As he walked to the elevator, ‘*tap tap tap*’ he adjusted the cross on his cowled shirt and straightened his hair. Ozpin punched the button for the ground floor and looked at his reflection in the glass. He was scowling, he tapped his cane more firmly on the ground and forced a slight smile to his face. *There now I look the part of Headmaster.* The elevator arrived and he started his walk to the training arena where he would find his newest private student.

Ruby sat in the middle of the arena trying to meditate, *trying* being the keyword there. She breathed in through her nose and out through her mouth over and over in big slow breaths, but whenever she closed her eyes Grimm swarmed her vision. The Silver eyed teen snapped them open and looked up through a window to the moon. The fractures reflected in her, she curled up and held her head in her hands, why couldn’t she get the Grimm out of her head? Was this how Qrow felt when he came back to her? Sometimes shit faced drunk and fighting the monsters in his head alone.

Qrow? Gods she was stupid why hadn’t she thought of it before! Ruby reached into her pocket and pulled out her Scroll, she even had him on speed dial. The order of those being Taiyang, Qrow, Yang, her finger hovered over his name, what if he was asleep or busy? She wasn’t sure if she could bare it if he didn’t pick up, maybe it was better to not call him at all. Rather than face the disappointment when he was not there. Ruby bit her lip but then there was also the chance that he would be there, shielding her hope as best she could she hit his name and put it on speaker.

‘*Ring, Ring, Ring*’ That hope started to fracture and break, tears pricking at her eyes. ‘*Ring …*’ “Hello? Rubes?” Ruby couldn’t helped the choked happy tearful sound that escaped her. “Qrow.” She spoke cradling her Scroll, her voice was still full of tears and she smiled, it was good just to hear his voice.

“Hey Ruby, how are you holding up? I saw the news about Vale.” On his end Qrow held the his Scroll in a very similar manner his smile constant and at ease. He had raced to his tavern room as discreetly as he could when he saw her number calling. His heart ached at the tearful shuddered breath she took before he could clearly hear her. “Not so good.” She said and he could tell she was cleaning her face.

“Tell me about it please.” Qrow moved to lay on the thin lumpy bed and put his Scroll down on it’s stand so it was propped up. The little bedside table didn’t have much room for anything else. A finger traced the edge of his pillow, Ruby knew not to call unless it was urgent. As Ruby started to cry again, he slid a hand under his pillow and grabbed it, he hated it when she cried. Especially when
...he couldn’t be there to help her, hold her and make everything better again.

“I don’t know where to start.” Ruby attempted to clean her face again, taking deep breaths so she would be able to talk. “I find the beginning is a good place, I just finished work for the night so you’ve got my undivided attention, love.” Qrow spoke softly and knew the endearment would help. Ruby smiled at the soft word added onto the sentence after a moment’s hesitation. “Well, one of my friends Blake is former White Fang and has made it her mission to stop them. On a couple different times we have stopped them in Vale, interrupted there shipments and stuff like that. Eventually we learned that the White Fang was operating out of southeast Vale. Then there was a field training mission and Ozpin let us take a search and destroy in Mount Glenn.”

“He WHAT?!” Qrow sat up clenching his fists, his voice tightened with anger. “Mount Glenn is where I go to blow off steam, there is no WAY a bunch of first years should go anywhere near that place!” He cracked his knuckles while clenching his teeth. “I am going to have words with him when I get back.”

Ruby smiled at Qrow’s reaction she could finally breathe, just talking to him was helping. She found his anger kinda cute and was willing to bet if it had been any other team he wouldn’t have reacted so strongly. “We did fine Qrow, Oobleck was with us.” Qrow’s response was low and clipped. “That does not make me feel any better Ruby.”

The crimonsette smiled and giggled. “He and Zwei got along great.” The red eyed man promptly said. “Well those two would, Zwei the little round cannonball and the pyrotechnic coffee fueled hyper Oobleck. All together you got one hyper dynamic duo.” Ruby laughed in earnest, she had to put her Scroll down so she could hold her guts as she laughed. “Oh Gods, I just had the image of Oobleck and Zwei in Batman and Robin suits go through my head!”

Qrow laughed with her at that, his anger gone as quickly as it had come. He loved listening to her laugh and was glad that she still could. “So what happened at Mount Glenn?” Ruby went silent for a long minute before continuing with her story. “Eventually we found the White Fang underground, they were using a train to move weapons and had planted a bombs on the empty carts. Long story short, as we fought them and they started to detach the empty carts, they’d explode and let Grimm into the tunnel. We failed to stop the train and…” Ruby curled up again and sniffed the memories coming back.

“And the Beach of Vale happened.” Qrow’s voice turned soft and muted, he laid back down and ran a hand through his thick raven black locks. “You’ve fought plenty of Grimm Ruby, you’re even good at it. You’re smart, adaptable and for your youth you’ve got a lot of Aura and an amazing Semblance.” The red eyed man listened as Ruby giggled and said. “Charmer.” He smirked and turned his voice lower into a rich rumble. “You know it love.” Qrow then let his voice fall back into its normal tones. “So what’s eating you?”

Ruby swallowed and took a few more deep breaths, it was easier to talk about it with Qrow. Even though he was on a different continent, just hearing him helped, she knew he would be able to sympathize with her. “When the train impacted Weiss shielded us with her Semblance and Dust, but it still took me a few minutes to regain consciousness. By then the alarms were blaring and the Grimm pouring into the city.” Tears started to leak from her eyes again, that poor man… “And one of the first things I saw as a man, he had blue eyes and black hair but his head smashed in and and and,” Ruby couldn’t help but start to weep. “His brains splattered all over the wall!” she sniffed loudly as she freely cried. “I can’t get it out of my head! Everytime I close my eyes, even just for a second, whether I’m wake or sleep, all I can see is him!”

It killed Qrow listening to her cry, being too damn far away to hold her like she so desperately
needed. “I wish I could hold you.” He said softly but loud enough that she would hear him. Ruby took big deep breaths trying to calm herself enough so she could talk. “I wish you were here too. Yang doesn’t get it, she didn’t see it.”

“I’ve seen it though, more times then I care to think about.” Qrow said softly, *I’ve made it happen.* He took a deep breath and let it out slowly. “Sometimes bad things just happen Ruby and there is nothing anyone can do about them. We live in a world where we are all always fighting, each other, the Grimm. Whichever, we can only do our best, as Huntsmen we have protect everyone else. But Ruby, love, we aren’t perfect, we can’t save everyone no matter how hard we try. Our world is cruel and lives will always be lost, you’ve always been safe on Patch away from the front lines. But that one man, if you keep this job, on this path he won’t be the last one you see. You need to think about if you can handle that and if you can’t…” Qrow didn’t want to suggest it, to be a Huntress had been her dream since she was old enough to understand his job.

“Maybe I am in the wrong line of work.” Ruby finished his statement, her dream was crumbling around her. “It’s only been two days Rubes, give yourself some slack. Don’t give up. I think you’ll make a magnificent Huntress, this is just one fork in that path. You just have to keep moving forward, pick your path and stick to it. No one can pick it for you, but you know I’ll stick with you whatever you pick.” Qrow closed his eyes and imagined it, what they could have. “And I’ll be the first to admit if you pick a path that keeps you out of harm’s way. Well you won’t hear any complaints from me, keeping you safe has always been the highest priority in my life. It doesn’t matter to me if that happens where you’ve made a home for yourself away from the fighting, or fighting by my side.”

Ruby felt her tears dry again, Qrow always knew what to say. “I love it when you talk like that.” She meant every word, and she held every word he spoke close to her heart. Unlike Yang he didn’t expect her to keep to her dream, he’d just be there for her. Qrow understood that she could change her mind and he’d love her no less for it. He’d never call her coward or weak for giving up on her dream.

“I know pipsqueak, but doing what’s right for you is more important than doing what’s expected of you eh?” Qrow rolled over and closed his eyes, letting himself indulge in a dream where Ruby stayed away from the fighting and was always ready to welcome him home. He smirked when the thought that she’d get bored very quickly flitted through his mind.

“Yeah, you’re right.” The Silver eyed teen cleaned her face again and asked. “How do you deal with the memories? I know you drink, I’ve had to make you stop often enough, or go fighting by yourself.”

“You know I’m not a good example to go by.” Qrow said letting himself enjoy the dream for a little longer. “I know.” Ruby said, tracing a finger over the edge of her boot. “But I’d still like to hear it from you all the same.”

The red eyed man shifted on his bed trying to get comfy and let out a long sigh. “Well, sex does help and NO you are not allowed to try that out. It’s a good distraction though, clears the mind and then I just put the memories away I guess. Like a mind palace in concept only I have a dungeon where I put everything I don’t want to remember. Then yeah there is drinking, which I really should ease up on but it’s a way to keep moving when my other methods aren’t available.” He opened his eyes and turned his head to look over to the Scroll. “Want to know what works best though?”

“What?” Ruby asked softly, gathering her legs up and resting her head on her knees. “A certain redhead, who always smiles when she sees me. She’s got pale moon coloured skin, lovely elegant little fingers, long legs for her height and boundless energy. Beautiful silver eyes that I’ve doubt I
will never find a equal to in sheer loveliness. Who for some strange reason decided that she loves me enough to put up with all my stupidity."

Ruby giggled and the nightmares were forgotten, blush started to creep into her cheeks. “Oh really? You must tell me more about this girl, I don’t think I’ve met her. You’ll have to tell me what you like best about her.”

Qrow laughed long and warm, then continued. “Well if I had to pick one thing, I’d say I love how sweet she is, understanding and compassionate. Though she also is absolutely brilliant, it wouldn’t surprise me if she’s a genius in hiding. Sure we’ve a bit of an age gap but I’m a patient sort when it suits me, I’d wait for her till the sun expires and the stars go out if that is what she wanted.”

The Silver eyes heart melted into a puddle of warm goo. “I don’t think she’ll keep you waiting that long.” She could hear Qrow shrug as he said. “Doesn’t matter, it’s what I’d do. To me she is the greatest treasure this world has ever created and worth every second spent waiting. Heck even if she gets tired of me, I’d still treasure her.”

Ruby smiled and hugged her cloak around her pretending it was Qrow. “I think it’s safe to say that will never happen, I distinctly recall her going to you first and confessing affection.”

“It’s only been a year and with this job of mine, I don’t get to see her near as much as I’d like to.” Qrow liked this little game of theirs, he blushed when Ruby said. “Are you so sure about that? You ran away for two months when she told you.”

“Can you really blame a guy? It was a bit of a shock, though considering how she eternity followed me around the house when I was home. Even going so far as to hold on to my cape so I had to walk more slowly, eh maybe I shouldn’t have been so surprised.” He listened to Ruby giggle as she said. “Well you just have these super long legs, maybe she thought it was the only way you wouldn’t get away and disappear.”

“Well I can’t say I didn’t earn that one.” The red eyed man said fondly remembering Ruby trailing after him like some lost duckling in the rare days he was home. He should have guessed that she’d grow into a swan, too kind, honestly and frankly wonderful for him to hide from forever.

“Hmmm, hmm, you should have gotten awards for your disappearing skills.” Ruby said smiling, she felt so much better now, this was just what she had needed.

“I stink at goodbyes, that is my story and I’m sticking to it.” Qrow grinned.

Ruby laughed again, gods she loved it when he got silly. “Does my master escape artist have any idea when he can escape from his work and come see me?”

“Well, if I recall correctly, someone’s seventeenth birthday is coming up soon. Not even my boss will be able to keep me away from her for her birthday.” Qrow did a mental count, he had a few weeks yet but at least it was a date to aim for.

“Are you gonna get that someone a present?” Ruby asked with a smile, she already had a pretty good idea what her present would be. Qrow smirk and said. “Sure, it will be about six feet and two inches tall, with red eyes and kinda lanky, probably a bit dusty too.”

“Well I am sure I will love it, dust and all.” The silver eyed woman smiled to her Scroll, really wishing she could hug him right now.

The red eyed man laughed again, he could practically feel how happy she was right now. “You really are too perfect for words, I’m sure I’ll come up with a proper gift before I get home. Find some
way to shower you with affection without giving ourselves away.” Qrow glanced over at the clock and let out a sigh. “Shouldn’t you be getting to bed?”

Ruby shook her head and said. “No, I’m waiting for Professor Ozpin, he’s been teaching to fight over the last two days. I find it helps me sleep.”

Qrow pursed his lips and clenched a fist, “I see.” he said firmly. “Something wrong?” Ruby asked he usually wasn’t that short and she could hear tension in his two little words. “No love,” he shook his head, he was getting tired and he had to hit the road in the morning. “I’ve got to hit the hay here, sing for me? That’s one thing we can share despite this thrice damned distance.”

“Do you have a request?” Ruby asked, they had both gotten much better at singing in recent history. Qrow had lots of practice as to be quite frank what else did you do while walking? Composing and practicing was something that didn’t require stopping, Qrow shook his head. “No, just want to hear my angel sing.”

“Okay.” She hummed for a minute trying to think of a song, and when one came to mind she took long deep breaths. Her problem was when she got excited her voice tended to rise, this song needed to stay in the lower tones. She crossed her legs and straightened her back and softly sung out to her love.

:All alone inside,
All alone each night,
All alone I'd cry,
Thinking of you.
Close my eyes and see,
Close my eyes to sleep,
Close my eyes to escape,
From this madness.

Towers rise with souls in their walls.
The people cry is there someone?

Will you rescue me,
You can set me free,
Will you break these chains,
Stop me falling.
Will you rescue me,
Give me air to breathe,
Help these eyes to see.
Will you come and rescue me:

Ruby hummed out a long smooth melody, letting her lips part for the higher notes. In softly beautiful slow drawn out notes, her eyes sliding shut as she lost herself in the music.

:Every time I wait,
Every hour I fade,
Every corner I turn,
Looking for you.
In my heart I know,
In my head I hope,
In my body I cope,
Waiting for you:

There was silence in the call for a long time as she finished, she could hear Qrow let out a long slow breath and knew he had enjoyed it. “Thank you Ruby.” He said softly. “I will have good dreams tonight. Goodnight.”

“Goodnight Qrow.” Ruby said softly and the call ended a moment later. Slowly she picked her Scroll and collapsed it, she felt better and lighter then she had in days. Getting up she walked over to the swords and picked her one up, returned to the middle of the arena and started going through basic forms.

Ozpin leaned against the wall outside, he really shouldn’t be eavesdropping but it didn’t seem right to interrupt either. Qrow habits had changed in the last year and now he knew why. Part of him just wished they meant familiar love, but he could hear it in their voices and knew that was not the case. He also knew that they weren’t related, Summer had always favoured Tai and Qrow had been left behind. It was a factor in why Ozpin had taken Qrow under his wing, his heart twisted and he suddenly felt very bitter. He had taught Qrow to be immortal like him so Qrow could stay with him, so he wouldn’t have to watch Qrow grow old and die. Well it seems that blew up in his face rather spectacularly now, Qrow was using to it wait for the Ruby to grow up.

Ozpin clenched his fists around his cane, when she was would Qrow stop coming to him? Their relationship was strained as it was and deteriorating. Would Ruby be what broke it? It just wasn’t
fair! He wasn’t supposed to fall in love with someone else, Ozpin had no doubt in his mind that Qrow did love Ruby. While Qrow wasn’t as picky with his partners as he could have been, he didn’t like the younger end of the spectrum, period. So whatever he felt for Ruby wasn’t based in a physical attraction.

Oz’s line of thought was sidetracked when Ruby started to sing. He would have never guessed the high voiced girl could control it, bring it down to something so... ethereal. The platinum haired man leaned against the wall and slid down it to listen. He shut his eyes and let the song wash over him, it was even a song of longing. Part of him tried to be bitter about that, but how she sung it, it made that longing feel all too real and he couldn’t hate her for it. It was to beautiful as she poured the agony of separation into her words, a feeling he was all to familiar with.

As the song progressed he felt his own pain, bitterness dwindle instead her longing grew under his breast. His anger draining away to leave nothing but calm yearning, not for the singer but the man she sung to. When it ended he waited till he could hear her get up and move around before standing himself and straightening his clothes. Ozpin let out a long shuddering breath and pushed his glasses up his nose then silently entered the room.

As he walked down the alley he watched Ruby train, there were already many errors in her form but she looked less tired. Perhaps talking with Qrow had eased her mind, let her think more clearly. Oz saw her eyes widened slightly at him but she continued through the forms. Ozpin walked up and made corrections with his cane. “You should not train alone, it only compounds your errors.”

Ruby nodded and slowed down taking more time to make sure she was keeping to his corrections as she went. Ozpin saw blush dust those pale cheeks and wondered if she was thinking he must of heard her. Ozpin pursed his lips and stepped out of her sight, making adjustments to her stance as he went. Why does he love you? Oz wondered thinking back on the conversation. You are much too young for his tastes, he likes women who are competent in bed, something you are not. While she was almost a year past the age of maturity, Miss Rose didn’t strike him as the type to play around. What did he call you? Sweet, understand and compassionate? Hmm well I suppose those apply, but brilliant? A genius? He made her stop and fixed her stance, putting her into a new lower one he took her sword and balanced it on her head. “Hold that.” He said as she lifted her arms out before her and held hands up with her middle finger touching her thumb, so Tai did make her do some basic things. Ozpin mused for a moment when he saw that before his train of thought returned to the previous topic. She’s quick, I’ll give her that, but I haven’t seen anything that counts as brilliance much less genius. Though I suppose she is doing well to keep up with students a year older than her.

Ozpin walked around her watching for any signs of fatigue, surprisingly there were none. The song came back into his mind and he grudgingly admitted, she had a lovely singing voice and would enjoy hearing more of it. But there’s no way that counts as brilliance, nore would it be enough for Qrow to fall in love with her. So why does he love you? Have I just been driving him away? I give him what he wants, even what he needs. What do you give him that I do not?

The Professor tucked a hand behind his back so he clenched it without her seeing. What’s so special about you? Qrow keeps his distance from everyone he loves, because of that accursed Semblance, yet you. You he loves, you he comes back too. Seems like he’s willing to disobey me... all for you. He looked at her too pale skin, the dark circles under her eyes, those silver pools had a strange calm to them he hadn’t seen before. You are, His train of thought paused as he searched for a word to describe her. interesting to look at, but that would not tempt Qrow, much less inspire affection. Ozpin walked around her again and stopped behind her, watching the sword stay perfectly level. Though I will admit you are good at this.

Oz took the sword from her head and gave it to her, using his cane he made her turn and bring her
right leg in closer like a lung. “Show me last night’s strike.”

Ruby did, and Ozpin adjust the rotation of her shoulder and elbow. Then he stood in front of her again and raised his hand with a crackle of Aura. On that signal Ruby began to practice her strikes, Ozpin’s cane coming up to make any corrections. Neither said a word for the rest of the lesson, Ozpin sent her to bed when she started to get sloppy. That night Ruby slept soundly, her mind turning back to Qrow and his words lulling her into a deep restful slumber.

Ozpin on the other hand, returned home stepped onto his balcony. Pulled a rug off of a well developed crater in the concrete and punched into it without activating his Aura till his knuckles were bloody. Why does he love you? Repeated on a endless loop in his head as he vented his frustration. This particular part of the balcony was well reinforced and could take the beating without truly damaging it. Only when he was exhausted and running the risk of making a mess did he cover the crater, clean his hand and go to bed.

Chapter End Notes

Ardy "So there are some great references in this one, if you can find them and the song Ruby sang is 'Rescue Me' by Eurielle, here's a link for the song."
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XLxiUVKvykI&feature=youtu.be
The Obvious Answer?

Chapter Notes

A nice update though a little shorter on this one but ooooooh the ideas, the conflict, the suggestiveness! :D
Its the best part of rewriting a fanfiction, that you have a clearer plot and can add so much character depth and subplot to give the story a meaty timeline. Also that we are in no hurry and can work on multiple things at a time and the best part!

. . .
kukuku

. . . . . .
MWHAHAAHAHAHAHAH
Enjoy :3

It was the perfect romantic setting, if improbable in the extreme. A low twilight light that seemed to last forever, tall lush grass with specs of lights floating through the air. An open warm woodland surrounding this little meadow, in the centre a huge circular fine bed with bedding of red and purple silks. The air was warm and a lovely soft breeze blew softly through the air.

This was by far Ruby Rose’s favourite dreamscape, the one she always came back too. She ran nude through the long grass it caressing her thighs, laughing out with giddy excitement for she wasn’t alone in this dream. As always the individual who inspired her desire was chasing her through the grass, his own laugh growing as he closed in on her.

Arms closed around her and lifted her with ease off the ground. Ruby’s heart quicked as she giggled, enjoying the strength in those arms. He carried her over to the bed and set her down. Those calloused hands cupped her head and his kiss was sweet and tender. Their lips lingering together for long minutes, before Ruby pulled away looking into those red eyes she so adored and backed up into the bed.

Qrow followed her, kissing her again as she relaxed onto the bed. He settled between her legs while running a hand up her thigh. “Beautiful.” He whispered kissing her deeply again, Ruby moaned softly as he moved and pushed into her, oh so gently. As he started to thrust-

“Ruby wake up! We’re gonna be late for breakfast!”

Ruby lurched out of her lovely dream and kicked Yang square in the nose. She bolted upright as her sister fell and yelled. “Whisky Tango Foxtrot Yang! I was dreaming here!” Ruby could feel how soaked her panties were and her core clenched almost painful, aching for something to tighten around.

Yang rubbed her poor nose and grinned up at Ruby. “I could tell but we do have to get going.”

Ruby blushed scarlet, her cheeks burning and she really hoped she hadn’t done anything embarrassing in her sleep. “Ugh!” She face planted into her pillow and tried to will herself back to sleep, she had just been getting to the good bit!
“Oh no you don’t.” Yang bounced up and started to tickle Ruby’s foot which earned her a yelp and Ruby curling up into a ball. “I get that it was a very good dream but it’s time to get up. Glynda would kill us, if we were late for the team training in the arena. Ozpin’s going to be watching over them remember?”

Ruby groaned again and sat up, “Fine!” she pushed back her bedding and leaped out of bed. She landed with a light thump and looked around to find that Weiss and Blake had already left. Yang bounced down from the bed with a smirk on her face. “So when are you going to return Ozpin’s coat?”

Had Ruby been a cat her fur would have stood on end as she stopped mid step her shoulders rising. “Err, when I remember to bring it out for our lessons?”

Yang giggled and walked over to her sister, hands tucked behind her back. “Better not let him catch you snuggled up under it, it was awfully cute. If I didn’t know better I’d say you liked him, you seem to be snuggling up to him every chance you get.”

“That’s not it and it was just that one time Yang!” Ruby rounded on her sister very grateful that Blake and Weiss weren’t here. Her sister knew that Ruby and Qrow were connected, but there was no way Ruby was bringing it up with the rest of her team till she had to.

“Then what is it?” Yang asked sitting on Weiss’s bed and crossing her heels.

Ruby’s blushed faded and she hugged herself with an arm. “He smells like Qrow, or Qrow smells like him, I’m not sure which. He’s just calming to be around and as I said he reminds me of Qrow. I like him, he’s kinda distant at times though. It’s almost like he’s got this switch he turns on and off, sometimes like when he was reading to us, he just oozes kindness and calm. Then there are the time when we spar and he’s almost cold and cut off, like we don’t talk much during the lessons. He did give some instructions last night but they didn’t have his usual tone… it was different.” After a moment’s hesitation Ruby sat down on the bed opposite Yang.

“Maybe he was having a bad day?” Yang offered, pursing her lips and tapping her chin with a finger. “It’s kinda weird that he and Qrow would share a scent and have it be strong enough for you to notice.”

“He smells like pine trees and Qrow sometimes smells the same when he comes home.” Ruby wove her fingers together and looked down, she actually felt well rested for once. It was as if one little talk with Qrow had lifted some great weight of her heart.

“Well there is one obvious answer to this conundrum.” Yang said with a smirk, preparing to rock Ruby’s world. “What?” The crimsonette asked and her jaw dropped when Yang said. “Ozpin and Qrow sleep together, I’ve found a scent lasts about a week on a person. So when he’s done a job he goes and sees Ozpin first and by the time he comes back to you he still smells of Ozpin.”

Ruby’s jaw worked up and down, it was the obvious answer and she knew Ozpin and Qrow had a history working together. “I can’t believe I didn’t think of that. I know that Qrow sleeps around but Ozpin would make the most sense for someone consistent to go too.” The silver eyed woman facepalmed and groaned. “Gods I’m dense that explains it. I called Qrow last night and ended up singing to him, Ozpin must of heard us, no wonder he was extra short with me. I bet Qrow hasn’t told Ozpin about me, maybe Ozpin thinks that Qrow is… I don’t know, would cheating count here?”

“Hmm, I don’t think so. Qrow isn’t exactly the most exclusive of people, I mean he moves around so much it’s pretty hard to blame him. Ozpin must know that, but maybe what got under his skin is that Qrow is devoted to you and not to him.” Yang had forgotten about breakfast this was too interesting
and frankly it could have very interesting effects on her little sister’s life. Being older than Ruby their Dad had told her some of the more interesting stories of his youth. “Maybe you should ask him about it.”

Ruby’s eyes brows flew upwards. “No way! He’s my Professor it would be completely inappropriate to ask.”

“But if he’s banging your man you do have a right to know.” Yang said with a smirk, she could see the wheels turning in Ruby’s head.

“Then I’ll ask Qrow!” Ruby got up and started pacing, she wasn’t at all sure what to do with this hypothesis.

“Well it’s Ozpin who’s being short with you, if he really did hear you and he really is bedding Qrow then won’t it be awkward? And asking is sure better than ignoring it.” Yang got up and gave her sister a hug. “Come on get dressed for the day, I’ll keep Weiss and Blake busy and you can return his coat and ask him before class.”

Ruby nuzzled her sister’s neck, she’s summon her courage to do as her sister recommended. “Alright.”

Which brought Ruby to hiding in the upper level of the arena that overlooked the arena as the students of two classes filled the space below. Ozpin was already there, watching them all from above like some king high upon his throne. She took a deep breath and walked over in a silent stride. His coat hung over an arm, she picked her way over and took another deep breath as Ozpin looked over to her. That practiced relaxed smile didn’t make her feel any better.

“Hello Sir.” Ruby said softly, not quite a whisper but far from loud.

“Hello Miss Rose.” Ozpin noticed she looked much better today, the dark circles had faded considerably and she didn’t look like she was about to fall asleep. He looked down and found she held his favourite coat, he had been missing it. Oz studied her again when she made no move to give it back to him.

The silver eyed woman bit her lip and worried it for a moment, Ozpin found the insecure gesture endearing. She took a deep breath through her mouth and slowly let it out before saying. “I don’t mean to pry sir, but I can’t help but notice that you smell of pine and Qrow often does as well. I was wondering if there was a connection between the two of you.” Ruby flinched when Ozpin visibility bristled.

Ozpin reached over and took his coat from her, folding it over his own arm. “Why do you ask?” A few more aggressive responses came to mind but he pushed them out of his mind. He had vented his frustration with Qrow and Ruby last night and he wouldn’t let it surface anew now.

Ruby wrung her hands nervously together. “When Qrow comes home he often smells of pine too and I am sure it’s from you. I don’t mind if you two are together, I was just wondering because.” She bit her lip again, there he was going all cold and calculating again.

“Because you are involved with him, a man twenty years your elder.” Ozpin felt a bit bad about playing the age card but it was a fact.
It was Ruby’s turn to bristle, she glared up at him and snapped out. “You know nothing about that Sir, I’d very much prefer it if you kept your opinions to yourself on that topic.” She clenched her fists at her side and stood at her full height.

Ozpin fought down a smirk at her, *spunky she knows I could smite her on the spot yet here she stands tall and defiant.* He tilted his head and looked her up and down, seeing the blush flush in her cheeks, she had obviously caught his eyes wandering. “I apologize Miss Rose, Qrow is just a sore topic for me right now.”

Ruby relaxed and hugged herself, he was a little warmer in tone there. “You’re forgiven.” She said softly and looked down to the theater, the class had began but with so many students Glynda wasn’t likely to get through all the teams today. “I should probably go.”

“It’s not necessary, Glynda will not be calling your team today.” Ozpin said looked back to her from the students.

“Okay,” Ruby said softly and then summoned her courage and asked. “So Qrow?”

“We were lovers, that dwindled over time. Between our jobs and sexual preferences it was bound to fail. Now we use each other to blow of steam, that is all Qrow wants of me. It came to my attention that he has been favouring you of late, after last night I dare say I know why now.” Ozpin spoke softly and dispassionately so they would not be overheard.

“Oh I see,” Ruby contemplation on that and thought that something was a bit off with it. “So you two still see each other?” Ozpin nodded watching her, watching for the anger to flit over her features and was surprised when it didn’t. Ruby bit her lip again and thought about that, she did know Qrow better than Ozpin frankly. “Well Sir, while Qrow does like to roam and have sexual partners as they come. He would not be coming back to you if he didn’t care about you. I understand that you think it is casual but have you ever asked him? If he wanted something else?”

Ozpin was confused, he had heard them last night, he had no doubt they were together. Yet she was asking him if Qrow wanted more from him . . . he didn’t know though, he hadn’t asked Qrow. The copper eyed man had just assumed that Qrow wasn’t interested in anything beyond the physical enjoyment. That said they had tried in the past and it just hadn’t held together. “I have not asked him, but I am more curious as to why you are taking this so well. It’s,” Ozpin almost said confusing, this was not what he expected of a sixteen year old girl. “Odd.”

Ruby smiled up at him and shrugged her shoulders. “I think while it’s important to love someone, it’s also important to be able to let them go. If we cling even when something is broken, then it only hurts everyone more. I picked Qrow, I approached him first.” She let out a soft giggled and leaned on the railing. “I don’t think he would have ever looked at me twice otherwise, but we are both very aware that both of our feelings could change as time progresses. So I guess in a way you could say we both entered into this ready for it to fail. I understand that people change and as you said you and Qrow have been together for a long time. So maybe you’ve both changed and just not talked about it enough, but I do know that Qrow is always better after he smells of pine.” She spoke softly and looked up to the Headmaster of Beacon.

Ozpin was shocked by her, though he had to work to keep from showing it externally. He tapped his cane on the ground a few times, then collapsed it and put it in his pocket. He turned away from the students and rested his hip against the rail giving Ruby his undivided attention now. “That is a very mature way to look at things.”

Ruby smiled softly up at him, a peaceful look on her that he hadn’t seen before. Ozpin found it suited her very well. “Well, as you said Qrow is much older then me. If I didn’t think things through and at
least try to be mature sometimes, he would have turned me down. He has even said that my age is a
turn off. But we both are not in it for the physical aspects,” Ruby blushed. “Well he is really
attractive but that’s not the point. If I was some fluff headed bimbo he would have shown me the
doors. So I figured out pretty quick if I wanted him to see me as an equal that I would have to prove a
match for him intelligently. So I decided to look at everything we were and then try to think about
how we could maybe work together. Once I was confident I had figured out every possible outcome,
only then did I say that I liked him. More than I was supposed to, I presented my thoughts to him. He
ran away for two months, I can only guess to think it over himself. Then when he came back he
accepted my offer after talking with my dad about it.” The red head blushed at the little story and
traced little figure eights on the rail. “So yeah, I’ve had to learn more and grow up at least in some
respects faster than average just to keep up with Qrow.”

*Hmm, so she had tried to grow to match Qrow mentally, I was right to think the physical attraction
was negligible on Qrow’s part. She approached him with an connected based in the mind. I guess
she’s rather like myself in that respect.* Ozpin watched her, she was so calm now just oozing
serenity, very different from the bubbly girl he had first met. *Does thinking of Qrow make her
become like this, she is but a child for her friends. Acting how they think she should, but for Qrow
she becomes this serene young woman?* Oz didn’t notice his own heart slowed into a calm state, it
was almost as if she radiated calm through her Aura. *Hmm, her Aura. Probably not wise but I
wonder.* Ozpin reached out and brushed his fingers over her shoulder, teasing his own green Aura
out to hers.

Ruby let out a gasp and gripped the rail as he pulled her Aura up to flow over her skin. She scanned
the students but everyone was focused on the spar. The silver eyed woman looked down at her
hands and saw red fire flowing over them. It felt so strange for her Aura to be pulled out without her
concentration she barely felt it as Ozpin pulled her away from the rail and out of sight.

*Fascinating!* Ozpin moved his hand up to cup her neck his thumb resting just on her jaw by her ear.
*Her manifestation is the same as Qrows! I’ve never seen this before, even how it moves.* He felt her
knees give and wrapped and arm around the small of her back holding her up. He pushed a bit of his
green into her, using it highlight the dancing flames. Ozpin heard a low moan come up from Ruby’s
throat but with weapons clashing in the background no one would have heard it.

*What’s he doing?* Ruby thought distantly as her eyes closed, her body awash with sensation. *I feel
light, this feels good.* His arm was strong around her back and she was happy to let him hold her up.
His Aura explored and caressed her, seeking out every little inconsistency within her. Her mind
turned back to her unfinished dream and the sensations took a different turn altogether. Her Aura
reached out to his, fluttering against the mental walls he kept in place.

Oz studied the flicking Aura, her wildfire so chaotic in comparison to his own controlled Aura. He
barely remembered to look at her as well, he swallowed thickly when he took in her physical features
now. As the red and green Aura danced over her skin she looked both relaxed and pliant, yet there
was an almost erotic edge to her. How her lips parted, how darkness clouded her eyes, how she
relaxed into his hold like he was supporting her through orgasm. *Oops.* Ozpin thought, and focused,
withdrawing his Aura out of hers. That was most definitely not what he had been intending to
happen.

Ruby felt the strange presence pull away and leaned forward, grabbing his coat with both hands and
pressing against him. She pushed her head into his chest and breathed deeply of his scent. She very
distantly registered Ozpin freezing and putting his hands on her shoulders, a moment later he pulled
her away from him and eased her back and down into one of the benches that lined the walls. He
knelt as he lowered her down, keeping his hands on her shoulders. “Miss Rose are you alright?”
The silver eyed woman shook her head and pressed a hand to her temple, the feelings from her dream were steadily fading. “I’m okay, what was that?”

“I must confess I was curious as to your Aura manifestation, so I called it forth but something seems to have taken a turn somewhere as you became rather… distracted.” The heat from her body was sinking into his hands, he had never noticed how warm she was before.

“That’s weird.” Ruby slurred slightly, “I feel strange, I was remembering a dream while you did that and it started to feel.” she gestured weakly. “Floaty, whatever you did felt good.”

Ozpin frowned and rubbed her shoulders with a thumb, for some strange reason he couldn’t bring himself to let her go. “That is very strange, it should not have felt like much of anything. A pleasant warmth perhaps, or maybe even some discomfort.”

“Felt good, I feel more open in a way, welcoming.” Ruby’s mind was still sluggish she reached out and ran her hands over his cowl before slipping them underneath touching his pale skin. Her Aura stirred again, pushing against his only he did not expect some form of retaliation. For a few brief moments he felt as she did, his eyes dilating with the pleasure of it.

Ozpin grabbed her hands and put them in her lap, his own breath quickened and exhilarated. “Gods you are more like Qrow then I thought.” He fixed his walls and calmed his breathing till the sensations she invoked passed. He looked back to Ruby who looked to be slowly coming around again. “Are you alright Miss Rose?”

Ruby was a bit distracted by how his hands felt around her, so large and strong, making her feel like the flower she bore the name of. She turned her hands over and threaded her fingers through his, she could feel the callouses, the warmth. She let out a small pained gasp when Ozpin tightened his grip suddenly while calling her name again. “Ruby!” Ozpin snapped trying to snap her out of whatever trance she was in. The pain startled her into looking up to him, the flutter of his soul against hers still lingered in her mind. For a while he had been aware of what he was doing, she had picked up a few things from him in return. “You’re so lonely.” Her eyes drooped as her soul twisted around.

Ozpin felt what she did and let go of her scrambling away. How in the world?! How had she gotten a read off of him? There was no way she knew him well enough for that, by the time Qrow could feel as he felt through his Aura he had already been in his bed for a year. Ruby barely had any contact with him at all and she just slipped under his shielding like it was nothing.

With him out of reach, Ruby came back to herself much more quickly. Her gaze cleared and she looked up at him with a worried expression. “Are you okay?” She stood her legs a little shaky but was otherwise fine, she brushed her skirt down.

Oz let out a sigh of relief that she was back to normal, whatever strange thing that had passed between them was over. He couldn’t help but smile at her, back was that calm focus that had him so intrigued before. “I’m fine, you just surprised me. You have a very active Aura, I did not think that one could respond in such a way to a simple calling of it.”

“Huh weird.” Ruby hummed frowning and tapping her finger against an arm. Ozpin studied her for a moment as she looked at the ground away from him and took a guess. “This has happened before hasn’t it?”

Ruby nodded and took a deep breath. “Just once and it wasn’t intentional, I made Qrow promise that he would come back to me. Cause you know with his work he’s gone for months at a time. He held my hands and promised, even gave me a little kiss. Our Aura’s rose for a second and we both felt strange after it, it wasn’t a long manifestation but it was there.” The young woman blushed and
hugged herself. “It was a emotionally charged moment.”

This just gets more and more interesting. Who would have thought she’d be so interesting? Ozpin moved back so the students would see him if they looked up. Her Aura is strange of that I have no doubt, to have the same manifestation as someone else is very rare indeed. Even more so hers is the same as her love… lover? He looked over to Ruby as she sat back on the bench out of sight but still within range so they could speak softly. He had a good eye for people, though it seemed he had not looked closely enough at her before. No, not lover, crush? No, hmm maybe promised one would be a good description for them. I wonder if there is a connection between the two of them, that something in them changed that causes her Aura to act strangely. “Aura can react to emotions, though it is very rare. Most huntsmen choose not to learn the finer points of Aura control and only use it as a shield or in the case of the more skilled ones, a weapon.”

“I’ve seen Qrow project his to extend the range of his sword.” Ruby smiled fondly at the memory. “He tried teaching me it for a month straight, I never got anywhere though. But I’m really good at shielding, I even learned to let myself be more fluid with my Semblance. It’s really nice, just being rose petals and floating along with the wind, so much less energy when I don’t direct where I want to go.” She had spent many long hours floating through Patch’s trees, she’d have to rest often but it was worth it for the weightless free sensation. Qrow would come out and call for her, and she’d sweep him up in her storm, touch him everywhere at once and nowhere at all.

Ozpin could see she was remembering something and almost asked her what, instead he stayed on topic. “Perhaps you are simply not talented offensively, maybe your skills lean more to the defense or more passive uses of Aura.”

“That would suck, being a Huntress and all.” Ruby said looking up at him, she was pleasantly surprised when he smiled at her.

“I am sure you have your gifts Miss Rose.” Ozpin leaned against the rail with a hip again, turned half to her, half to the arena.

“You can call me Ruby you know, teachers are allowed to call students by their first names.” Ruby got up and walked over to stand by him.

“That would be-” Ozpin stopped himself and let out a soft sigh, with how much time they were already spending together and he didn’t intend to end their nightly lessons till she wished for it. “I will think on it Miss Rose,” He looked down at the students again. “You should head down there or I imagine rumours will start that I favour you.”

“Well you are giving me private lessons.” Ruby said and tucked hands behind her back already stepping away from him. “See you tonight Professor.”

Ozpin dipped his head to her in acknowledgement. “Till tonight Miss Rose.”

Ruby laughed sweetly a little more spring in her step. “How many times do you think I shall have to ask you to call me Ruby?”

Oz’s had to smile at that, the movie she was poking at. “As always once more Miss Rose.” The Silver Eyed Warrior laughed and turned on her heel skipping away from him, Ozpin watched her go. What an interesting puzzle she was turning out to be.
Ruby slipped into her seat beside Yang, the clash and clang of weapons drowned out her sisters voice. “So?”

“You were right.” Ruby whispered and pulled her hood up. “He actually warmed up as we talked.” She moved over snuggling up to Yang so they could talk more easily. “Maybe you two just need to talk more.”

“What are you getting at Yang?” Ruby whispered back to her sister.

“Well if he got better as you two talked, maybe it will help you figure out why Qrow likes him. There must be something there, Qrow’s worked for Ozpin for most of our lives.” Yang said softly look down at the sparring match.

Ruby opened her mouth to say 'Why would I worry about that?’ only to shut it and think about it for a moment. “I think, I’ll talk to Qrow more about it first. This is between them, I don’t want to butt in where I am not welcome.”

Yang threw an arm around her sisters back, leaning down to keep their conversation from getting picked up. “I wouldn’t be too sure about that Rubes, I mean Qrow is your man and Professor Ozpin is taking the time to help you. Are you sure there’s no connection there.”

Ruby was suddenly reminded of their interaction back upstairs, the floaty sensation when he had pulled at her Aura. Somehow she didn’t think Ozpin would want her mentioning ‘that’ to anyone else. "Hmmm, well he did call me Ruby." She muttered under her breath.

Her sister’s brows shot up and she smirked. "Really?! Is that big or something, that's great Rubes. Hey maybe he does like you!"

"Yang be quiet." Ruby studied the surrounding students, thankfully they all seemed to be more interested in the current fight rather then their conversation.

“Okay but I’m telling you there’s got to be some kind of interest on his part." There was a loud buzzer and students did a cheer as another match drew to a close. Yang’s eyes peered up above them and she ruffled her sisters hair. “Else why would he spend most of the class not studying the match and instead be looking at you.”

“Huh?” Ruby pinpointed where Professor Ozpin was and her eyes met his, they gazes held for a long moment until she detected movement besides her. Yang waved her arm up at the headmaster with a wide smile, Ozpin seemed to lift a single hand from his cane in acknowledgement before stepping back out of view.

Ruy puffed her cheeks at her sister and knocked the hand out of the air, Yang just grinned her lilac eyes laughing. “Not interested eh?”

Gunfire and curses rang out through the air, as the White Fang shot at the Huntsman who attacked them, he was so fast they could barely see him. One minute their comrades were fine the next their blood was flying through the air, one White Fang member a wolf faunus turned tail and ran from the massacre. The red eyed Huntsman grabbed a dagger from one of the fallen and threw it at the wolf.

The faunus screamed as he fell, tears started to pour from his eyes as around him bodies hit the floor
or bits of bodies. **Damn!** this job was supposed to be quiet, just guarding a warehouse in the Mistral docks. Low key, safe, it was not supposed to draw a Huntsman who seemed quite keen on killing them all. The shots finally stopped ringing out, the faunus looked up and saw red eyes for a moment before a hand grabbed him by his hair and dragged him over to a wall.

Seeing the man’s hair the faunus wondered for a moment if his attacker was a faunus. The man knelt down beside him balancing on his toes. “You’re going to tell me everything about the Vale branch of the White Fang. Your shipments, your leader, plans, everything.” The red eyed man teased a finger over the faunus’s arm.

“Fuck you!” The faunus shouted he’d never betray his brothers.

“How’s that song go?” The Huntsman mused, “Ezekiel connected dem dry bones.” he pressed down on the faunus’s arm and a moment later there was a sharp *crack* filled the air.

The faunus screamed and looked down at his arm, the huntsman had only used a finger, ONE. “You bastard you broke my arm! You broke my fucking arm!”

“Spill everything you know, before I spill your guts.” The Huntsman pulled his sword from the ground and flicked it around, posed to impale the faunus.

The faunus whimpered under the demon eyed Huntsman and started to speak. “The head of Vale branch is Adam Taurus, he’s using Roman Torchwick as a go between in the city.” He reached over and held his broken arm. “We have been focusing on hijacking Atlas trains for weapons and have been shipping dust through here.”

“When is the next move in Vale?” The Huntsman asked reaching down and tweaking the dagger in the faunus leg.

The White Fang member cried out in pain and shouted. “I don’t know!” The Huntsman pulled out the dagger and pulled a cloth out of his pocket, carefully he whipped the blade down. After which he reached into his pocket and pulled out a pair of gloves. The faunus whimpered as the Huntsman whipped down his arm. The faunus knew what he was doing. “No, please, no, I won’t tell anyone anything, please I promise.”

The Huntsman pushed his sword through the faunus chest. “I’m sorry kid, but I have orders, no witnesses.” The faunus only had a moment to look down before the sword was ripped out and he promptly died.

The red eyed Huntsman cleaned up his sword and looked around. “Dust eh?” He mused and walked over to a crate and pulled off the lid, fire dust filled it in little capsules. He grabbed a half dozen viles and started to sprinkle the dust throughout the warehouse. Taking extra care to cover the bodies and anywhere he had touched, then he transformed and flew up to the harbouring buildings roof. He returned to human and pulled the clip out of his sword and replaced it with one of fire dust. He aimed and fired, a moment later the warehouse was ablaze.

The Huntsman then turned into a crow and flew off, a minute later the warehouse exploded behind him. The crow flew up several levels and into a back alley before returning to a human form. He pulled off the black gloves and pulled out his flask and took several long drinks. In no time at all the flask was empty, he set his flask away and shoved his hands into his pockets. “Gods I need a drink.” He muttered softly and walked slowly into a tavern.
Ruby sat curled up in the middle of the arena, she had again shown up before Ozpin and the time alone was proving detrimental. It had all started when she realised she had gone a whole day without thinking about the Breach. Now it was all she could think about, Grimm lingering in the shadows of the room and her mind. Fall was closing in on them and the room felt chilled in that way as well. The Silver eyed warrior pulled her cloak tight around her, the red hood up and low over her face so she could hide under it.

Ozpin found her like this, even to him the halls of Beacon were cooling. Upon seeing her curled up he collapsed his cane and walked silently over. Unsure of where to start tonight he sat down beside her and crossed his legs. “Are you remembering?”

Ruby nodded slightly, her voice muffled as she tucked her head down. “I forgot for a whole day, had other things on my mind.” Ozpin put his hands in his lap, he couldn’t help but notice how small she was next to him. It was so easy to forget as she dashed around the battlefield and softly asked. “Like what?”

Ruby blushed slightly, she didn’t know how to approach the topic. She didn’t really want to admit that he had taken over her thoughts for the last few hours. “That thing with the Aura? What happened there? How does it work?”

Oz traced over his knuckle with a thumb, “Aura as you know is a projection of the soul to shield us from harm, that is a very stripped down version of the truth.” he nodded to her slightly and spoke slowly. “For most Huntsmen it is all they need to at least grasp the concept enough to utilize it. However it is not quite that simple, our souls are shaped much like ourselves, how we are brought up, our histories, experiences everything applies to the soul and changes it. Emotions for example, reflect through it or perhaps governed by it. They are a critical part of who we are, part of our souls, part of our Aura.”

Ruby lifted her head and rested her chin on her knee. “Okay, so following that logic what we are feeling is reflected in our Aura.” She looked out of the corner her eye to him.

“Correct, when fighting you very rarely touch upon the Aura of another person. What I did earlier was force your Aura to become active and then not allow it to recede out of the visual spectrum. Painted your soul on your skin I suppose, I was curious as to your manifestation given your connection to Qrow.” Ozpin explained, while looking over to her. “Normally I would only do such an exercise when teaching a student how to project their Aura effectively. But as I said, curiosity got the better of me, you are a delightful contradiction at times.”

The silver eyed woman blushed while saying, “Well I will take that as a compliment. Hmm,” she tapped her calf with a finger. “So while you were viewing my Aura you projected ours? I remembering feeling support for the most part, it made me feel safe and...” She blushed all the brighter and pulled her hood down to hide.

Ozpin chuckled and pushed his glasses up his nose. “Miss Rose, from what I felt as you unwittingly projected it upon me. I’d say that was a very natural reaction in a response to a feeling of safety. Not to mention it would take a great deal more than that to fluster me, I am much too old for that. Such accidental projections is part of why this level of detail about Aura is not taught. Just think...”
what could happen if two individuals were practising at it and one was depressed? That would cycle
onto the other person who would become depressed unless they posse the shielding and mental
control to control their emotions. After that it would just be one long depressive cycle what would
feed and grow till either someone intervenes or… well I am sure you could imagine all the ways that
could go wrong.” Ozpin looked at the floor, a weariness pulling at his eyes. He had been forced to
intervene with Qrow’s emotional state a few times, it had been extremely unpleasant experience.

Ruby shuddered tears pricking at her eyes, yes she could imagine that. “Have people died
practicing it?”

“Yes.” Ozpin said solemnly and after a moments hesitation reached out to hold her shoulder in a
loose hug. “As I said there is a reason it is not taught, in Aura it is impossible to lie. Take two lovers
who are so sure they are in love they wish to share their Aura with each other. Only to learn they do
not love each as much as they thought they did? Or someone trying to help their friend with grief
only to fall prey to it. I do not fear it because I have mental shields in place, practice and I am very
well practiced at maintaining order in my own mind.”

“So with me, you knew I couldn’t hurt you?” Ruby asked thinking back on it, when he touched
her Aura he had done it so casually. “Yes, though you surprised me. You projected back to me
without any difficulty or training, it was very unusual. That and you went right under my shielding as
if it wasn’t there, which I must confess I am curious as to how you did that.” Ozpin removed his
hand and cocked his head at her.

“I don’t know.” Ruby said and looked over to him again. “I just wanted to touch you, feeling all
floaty.” She was trying and failing not to think about how grim this conversation was. That line of
thought brought her back to the Grimm and she shrank in on herself again.

Ozpin pursed his lip thinking it over, he could see her pain clearly and considered very carefully.
He could control his mental state and perhaps if she remained passive, influence hers. On the other
hand it was better to learn to cope with sorrow on one’s own. However if he showed her how
perhaps she could learn to control herself on her own. He had handled Qrow after all, he was sure
the little Miss Rose didn’t have near the same emotional trauma or fatigue. “Miss Rose, if you wish, I
would like to show you how it can be used. I understand that you are distressed and I think I can
help.”

Ruby looked over to him confused. “But you just explained how it is dangerous! And how I am
weirdly good at it.”

“True, but I have done this with Qrow as well and I am confident you will not surprise me twice.”
Ozpin said calmly and rested his hand on his knee, already thinking about the best way to go about
it. Ruby thought it over for a moment and came to the conclusion that it might be nice if he could
help more directly. “Okay, what do you want me to do?”

“Find a position you are comfortable in and allow me to hold your hand. That will be sufficient
physical contract.” Ozpin changed the position of his legs, kicking off his shoes and crossing them in
a meditative position that distributed his weight better.

Part if Ruby dearly wished just to snuggle up to him, but he had already said he did not like it
when she did that. So instead she unlaced her boots and sat across from him, folding her legs in the
same position, Qrow having taught her it many years ago. There was about ten centimeters between
them, Ozpin rested his right hand open upon his knee and Ruby placed her hand within it.

Oz closed his eyes and focused inward, Aura operated in circles for they were infinite. He hoped
by not creating a complete circle with Ruby he’d maintain more control over the connection. He took
deep slow breaths to calm his mind, then slowly empty it of all but a feeling of serene calm. The silver haired man could hear her copying him and very tentatively this time, reach out with his Aura to her.

Ruby felt it barely at first, he was proceeding with far more care than last time. It felt like booping the nose of a bunny, once just see if you were paying attention. Another time to see if you’ll react, then a third to nuzzle and explore you. She peeked out and saw her Aura over her skin and much more interestingly his green illuminated upon him. The crimsonette closed her eyes again and tried to keep the thoughts of Grimm and nightmares away.

Ozpin very cautiously pushed his Aura through her’s, he could already feel her fear and pain. The emotions that lingered as a result of the Breach, he could already feel her Aura pulling at his. Both drawing him inward and seeping back toward him, even with the limited connection he had created. It was almost like it was trying to embrace him in a hug. **How very odd.** He mused, fortifying his walls as he went though he was trying to keep any emotional exchange to a minimum. At least until he was confident he could cover her with his Aura and thus contain any reaction from her.

Ruby started to feel warm, like she was sitting beside a fire, it was a external heat that warmed her skin. Oh so slowly she felt a foreign emotion of meditative calm, it eased into her with great care. The tension in her body slowly eased away and her breathing feel into sync with Oz’s. It was a nice feeling, having a emotion projected into her, sinking into her bones, washing her worries and pain away. It was almost like that floaty safe feeling from before but more controlled, rather than shielding it had a more uplifting feel without any particular emotion attached to it. It was just a steady stream of calm and of emptiness, Ruby really liked it. Her Aura much like before reached out to the source of this comfort, met fortified mental walls and with a strange ease slid around them.

While Ozpin did not have to strain to maintain the flow, he did have to block her Aura. While he did make a valiant effort, her’s washed over him and found every tiny crack. He braced himself ready to shut down any negative emotions but found only his calm returned with a undertone of happiness. His heart rate slowed as he relaxed, the flow of emotions steadying again. He felt a small hand touch his knee and he reached out and took it in his, completing the circle.

The effect was instantaneous, a gentle balance created. Very warily Ozpin eased his walls down and together they dipped their heads in unison, breath falling into sync. Distantly he thought it strange just how good Ruby was at this, with the circle completed her Aura had no trouble easing into him. He could practically feel it exploring, what it was looking for he didn’t have the foggiest clue.

Ruby really liked this state of fluidity, she could distantly feel reflections of Ozpin’s character through her Aura. These reflections were not words, they were not organized. They were fleeting moments of clarity, deeper emotions that surfaced under the one he maintained for them. She could feel he was lonely, all the time, there were instances of curiosity, fear and pain, more pain than one person should ever carry with them. Above all else she felt regret and guilt, buried deep within him, a cold unfeeling core to his weary soul.

The silver eyed woman reached for it without trying through her Aura. The next moment the connection was snapped like a toothpick and she as left in a lurch. She fell forward catching herself on her hands, pain in every pore and her heart aching. Ozpin was already across the arena and leaning against the wall protecting the student seating.

Ozpin braced against the wall, his hands spread as he stooped over, hanging his head. He felt that same pain Ruby did, he didn’t understand how she had such an easy time reaching into him. Finding things he wanted **NO ONE** to ever see. The pain came from the abrupt severing, bits of each others
Aura still with the opposite person, rather then recalled. His own Aura made quick work of absorbing the remnants of Ruby’s and that alleviated the pain slightly. Oz worked over what to do in his mind, he wasn’t angry that calm feeling still remained, he just needed a moment to collect himself.

Ruby got up slowly, bit by bit getting her feet under her and standing. The pain zapped and pricked at her skin, carefully she picked up her boots and took them with her to the edge of the arena and set them down. Beyond the pain she still felt that same calm, she was much too distracted to even think about her memories or fear. Quietly she walked off the stage and up behind him, he’s so big… Ruby thought he was after all several feet taller than her. The young woman reached up and rested her hand on the small of his back. She could feel him stiffen, then she took a step forward and to the side sliding her hand down his back then around his front.

Ozpin was not prepared for the hug, just a simple calm, normal hug. Bits of his Aura clung to hers even though he could not see it he could feel them. Those should have been absorbed by now. He took her forearm gently in hand, it nearly covered the entirety of it. Oz could feel her body heat through the thick woolen shirt, it was much better than the cold wall. The copper eyed man considered attempting to either recall his Aura from her or force it into hers but refrained. He was curious as to how long it would remain on her, when her own Aura would absorb it.

“I did something wrong again didn’t I?” Ruby rested her cheek against his back, his coat was coarse against it. Ozpin petted her arm with a thumb and softly said. “No, you just keep surprising me and I am ill prepared for it.” This was far too informal for their respective positions Oz thought, but at the same time he couldn’t force himself to push her away. The abrupt separation hurt them both and this eased it slightly.

“I’m sorry.” The petite woman said and closed her eyes, she liked being close to him. It wasn’t the same feeling as Qrow, but she felt that he needed it. Furthermore it made the pain slowly dwindle to more manageable levels. “Not your fault, I suggested it.” Ozpin rubbed her arm gently, he knew he really should push her away but couldn’t do it. Even as his soul settled he found it hard to distance himself.

Ruby could feel him start to grow unsettled again and pulled herself away. Forcing her attention away from him she walked over to the sword rack and picked her one up. “Can we spar tonight, I think we both could do with a distraction.” The Silver Eyed Warrior walked to the centre of the arena as Ozpin turned to her.

“I think that would be a good idea.” Ozpin walked over to her while extending his cane, he assumed his fencing form and waited.

Ruby took a deep breath and assumed her form as well, pins and needles playing over her muscles painfully. She took a deep breath and stabbed out with a quick jab, her breath shuddered as pain zipped up her arm. Ozpin stepped out of the way, guilt stabbing at him again, he could see the pain as she attacked. “Are you sure about this?”

“Moving helps, it’s just hard keeping my thoughts are target.” She stepped after him swinging out, he neatly deflected the strikes. “I could give you math questions again, that worked very well to distract you last time. I wish I could help but I don’t think further touch from my Aura would be wise.” Ozpin danced around her, he could see her trying to force herself faster, while their Aura’s were up they were hidden. Was her’s using his? Or was it just lingering like before?

“Sure.” Ruby said with a half smile, “I could go for some algebra right now.” she blasted forward stabbing for Ozpin’s gut. He neatly jumped over her, landing behind her standing up with his cane tip to the ground. “A grimm runs with forty kilometers an hour towards a helpless victim. You start six
hundred and fifty meters left from it running towards his target with twenty five kilometers an hour. Do you intercept the grim before he reaches his target or will you have to use your Semblance?"

The distraction was helpful, for her fighting was largely practiced into her muscles, it didn’t require much thought. Especially when it was just against one target, so her mind jumped on the math problem. She lashed out twice with her sword before saying. “Distance to victim is one thousand, one hundred and forty meters.” Ozpin stepped to the side of the first strike and parried the second, lashing out for her shoulder.

Ruby dropped the ground with a roll to dodge. “Distance to Grimm is thirteen hundred meters.” Ozpin went on the offensive keeping her on her toes as she calculated in her head. “It will take one hundred and seventeen seconds for Grimm to reach the victim.” Ruby was forced to bring both hands to her sword to defend against Oz’s stronger hits. The pain was still present but it was shoved into the back of her mind. “It will take me one hundred and sixty four seconds to reach the victim.” She lashed out forcing Ozpin to back away. “I will need my Semblance to get there in time.”

Ozpin couldn’t help but chuckle, he was really starting to enjoy how quick she was. “Trigonometry with no paper or pencil in under thirty seconds, while engaged in combat. Tickle me impressed Miss Rose.” He spun his cane around in swift arcs, loosening up as she rolled her shoulders.

Ruby still hurt all over, whatever was wrong was not going away quickly. “That’s easy!” The silver eyed woman said with a grin. “We have to do that kind of math all the time.”

“Ah but do you actually do it, or do you just see the situation and respond?” Ozpin said a smile pulling at his lips, he was already formulating a new question for her. Ruby opened her mouth to reply, shut it and mumbled with a slight blush. “Just respond.”

“There you have it Miss Rose. Now how about hmm, say your friend Pyrrha is standing on a cliff twenty meters high. Below her she can see a Grimm in the field below her thirty seven meters away and it stands three meters high. The weight of her spear is one point one kilograms, how much force does she require to hit the target?” With that he blasted forward to strike for her chest.

Ruby only barely got out of the way, the edge of his cane scratching her cheek. Her Aura flared red for a moment, Oz could see his green still lingering on her. The crimsonette stumbled away trying to get her feet under her and jumped back when he swept his cane out to the side to club her over the head. Ruby wasn’t used to him going on the offensive and having to hold the question in her head as she worked on figuring him out was much harder than before. Jumping and dodging out of the way, not even thinking about going on the offensive she calculated the velocity of the spear when thrown. “The velocity would need to be seventy one point five kilometers an hour.”

They danced around the area for a few more seconds before she came up with the force. “Pyrrha would need to apply twenty one point eighty six newtons. She’d probably need a boost from her rifle.” She finally deflected a strike and dove under Oz’s arm with a roll before coming to her feet and spinning to face him.

“Correct Miss Rose, I do however thing we need to work on your defense more.” Ozpin turned to face her again, noting the sweat collecting on her brow. “One more then I think it would be wise to call it a night.”

Ruby nodded and listened closely, he hadn’t given her the same type of equation so this one would likely require different formulas as well. Ozpin spoke slowly letting her catch her breath. “Two Grimm are threatening you. You can hit one point in their armour two times with sixty one percent probability. How many shots do you need to kill one with ninety-nine percent probability?”
The silver haired man let that sink in for a minute, before attacking again.

*Probability, I hate probability.* Ruby dodged backwards just in time, he was so tall just his reach kept her on her toes. She was able to focus on him more as they moved, he was so fast, sharp, contained. She hadn’t noticed it before, that said she had never fought anyone like him before. Ruby was starting to see how he was holding back, delaying for a few seconds extra giving her time to see the attack coming. She moved back again and felt wall, *Oops.* “Uh five!”

Ozpin stopped advancing and spun his cane down to lean on it. “Correct, though next time do not allow yourself to be backed into a wall. Distractions come in many forms. Are you still in pain?”

Ruby put the sword away, her body did still hurt, now that she wasn’t doing anything it came back in full force. “Just a little.” She lied, she didn’t understand why everything hurt, or why her Aura wasn’t already mending it. With that she turned her Aura off and the pain abated very slightly.

Oz frowned and let out a long sigh. “As you wish Miss Rose, goodnight. If you are still in pain tomorrow come and find me in my office.” Ruby dipped her head and said. “Yes sir, goodnight.” They left out separate entrances to their respective lodgings.

Fog horns blared loudly over by the docks in Mistral as Qrow leaned against one of the walls waiting for his ship to begin boarding passengers who were traveling to Vale. His jet black hair clung to his scalp while he stood in the drizzling rain that had been ongoing for the last hour now. He used his Aura to keep his body warm even as the cold rain pelted his lanky frame. The only thing that stopped him from taking shelter with the other passengers was the uncertainty of his Semblance kicking off. He never knew when it would strike next and he simply didn’t want to be responsible if the shelter caved or if the ship left without them. If it meant he had to stand alone in the rain to keep others safe in the poorly made makeshift shelter then that’s what he’d do.

Of course he could have been on his way to Vale by now if he had chosen to fly there with his crow form but again knowing his luck he’s get caught in the middle of a storm and it was a bit too long for him to make that flight in one go. Though It wasn’t like the ship would be safe from his Semblance but at least it was big enough that he could avoid many of the travelers on board once they set off. That being said if any Grimm turned up he would offer his services without hesitation. Another horn blared and from the corner of his eye Qrow saw people starting to leave the little shelter to make for the ship. He followed joining the back of the que, keeping a fair distance from the other boarding passengers. He carried only a small rucksack which was thrown over his shoulder and his weapon Harbinger half hidden under the tattered red cloak.

The rain brought a low fog which rolled in over the docks but it was thick as mist in the early morning hours and swirled around his calves in lazy circles. A tiny hand tunneled out of the fog and attempted to reach into the man’s coat pocket, his Aura flickered with awareness and Qrow spun, hand on the weapons hilt towards the thief. His ringed hand grabbed a shaking thin wrist in an almost bone crushing grip as Qrow stared through the fog and into the frightened eyes of a female Faunus child with floppy rabbit ears. Qrow’s eyes flared with anger at the thief and he growled under his breath very quietly. “Don’t even think about it.”

The bunny Faunus whimpered under his glare, head down and her body still in defeat. The thin wrist Qrow still held shook with fear at the red eyed man. Qrow turned the wrist over in confusion, most thieves would have tried to take off running or at the very least fight but this one didn’t seem to know
how to do either. That's when he noticed that the child wasn’t just thin, she was hardly more than skin and bones. His hands were large and too strong, capable of crushing those birdlike bones and he quickly loosened his grip without releasing the child. He could already imagined his hand could easily leave dark purple bruises. Sighing softly he released the hold on his weapon and dug hands into his pockets. Most of his Lien was in cards and safely tucked away in different locations but he was able to pull out several higher value cards he always carried with him.

Stuffing one of the five cards back in his pocket he carefully uncoiled the child's small clenched fist and put the cards in her shaking grasp, “You take that and you feed yourself kid.” then he added. “Food, water and shelter. I know this world is a hard one but stealing is also wrong kid, so you take that and try to make a life for yourself. Do you understand me?”

His tone must have softened because the Faunus lifted her head and with big doe brown eyes studied him for a moment and the corner of her lips turned up in what must have passed as a smile. The rabbit nodded once and when Qrow released her hand and she took off with the speed you’d expect from a child. The tall man smiled but he couldn’t help wondering, that money wouldn’t last forever and when it ran out what would she do? Go back to stealing probably or worse. . . The smile faded almost as quickly as it came, you couldn’t save them all.

The horn blared again and he realised the ship was about ready to leave without him. Quick as lightning he ran for the ship and just barely got on before they shut the gates. As he made for his room intending to change from his wet clothes the rain finally gave in and stopped. Qrow could even see the sun peeking through the clouds sparking little rays of light over the waters. As much as he would have enjoyed just watching the scenery, maybe even taken a picture or two for when he got home. The image of that Faunus and their sickly thin body kept haunting his mind. Suddenly all he wanted was to speak to Ruby, see her sparkling silver eyes and listen to her sing for him. She was his anchor and he really wanted to see her right now.

As he pulled the door open he did the quick mental math regarding the time difference. It was just past dinner for her, a good a time to call as any. He tossed his backpack and sword onto the tiny bunk, then changed hanging his wet clothes up on a few hangers to drip dry. Qrow left his sword extended by the door and his backpack on the floor, flopping onto the bed and dialed.

The dialing tone ended rather fast and the voice on the other end was quick and enthusiastic. “Qrow! Are you okay? It’s not like you to call.” Qrow smiled at the concern and purred out, “I’m fine, can’t I just want to call my girl? Wanted to let you know I’m heading back toward Vale, boat this time around so it will be a while.” he traced the edge of his battered Scroll. He had called just because he wanted to hear her and the garnet eyed man wrinkled his brain for something to talk about. “How’s the cape? Must be getting a little small for you by now?”

Ruby zipped into her dorm and up onto her bed. “Just a little.” She played with the edge of it as Qrow said. “I guess it wouldn’t be long before I can’t call you little red anymore.” Ruby flinched and sucked in a harsh breath, shaking her head trying to get the memories out of her head.

“Are you okay Ruby?” Qrow heard the sharp intake of breath, concern coloured his tone. Ruby bit her lip and tried to sound chipper, it didn’t work. “I’m fine.” She curled up and resisted a sigh when Qrow said. “That I don’t believe for a second, Tai and I have been calling you that for years. What changed?”

“Nothing, just. Well Roman Torchwick, the criminal working with the White Fang. He’s gotten into the habit of calling me ‘little red’, coming from him it’s not sweet like you or dad at all.” Ruby shivered the crime boss creeped her out, he called Blake ‘kitty’ and that was even creepier.

Qrow put his Scroll down on the bed to avoid breaking it, he had the sudden urge to wring Roman’s
neck. How dare he assume familiarity with Ruby? What else had he said? He ground his teeth for a moment before taking a deep breath to calm down. “He hasn’t tried anything right?”

“Just roughed me up a little at Mount Glenn, my team found me before he did anything.” Ruby said then winced, she hadn’t mentioned to him before that she had gotten separated from her team.

“Define, ‘roughed up’.” Qrow growled and sat up, it was suddenly very clear that she hadn’t told him everything that went down at Mount Glenn. “It was nothing, I was just out with Zwei and the ground gave way. I landed in the White Fang base and lost Crescent Rose. You know I am not very good without it yet. I tried fighting but that didn’t work very well, Roman just played with me really. Asked me how I found the place, he didn’t have more than a few minutes before my team and Professor Oobleck found me.” Ruby spoke softly but casually, she was glad her friends came fast, she really didn’t want to think about what could have happened if they hadn’t.

Judging by Qrow’s growl he already was making guesses, Ruby quickly cut in. “I’m fine though, nothing happened what about you? How’s work been?” Qrow knew what she was doing and let a long deep breath, he didn’t want to be angry right now, he just wanted to hear her. “Fine rather sluggish on some points, but slow progress is better than no progress.”

“I guess that’s good,” Ruby worried her lip trying to think of something to make him feel better. “I heard a new song the other day. It’s not quite right for us but I like it as it is.” The garnet haired man smiled and laid back down on his bunch. “I’d love to hear it, I’ve been working on something too, but you’ll have to wait till I get back to hear it. Think of it as your birthday present.”

The crimsonette giggled and glanced around the room, windows shut, door locked. She took a few deep breaths to keep herself calm and started to sing.

:These scars long have yearned for your tender caress,

To bind our fortunes, damn what the stars own.

Rend my heart open, then your love profess,

A winding, weaving fate to which we both atone.

You flee my dream come the morning,

Your scent - berries tart, lilac sweet.

To dream of raven locks entwisted, stormy,

Of violet eyes, glistening as you weep.

The wolf I will follow into the storm,

To find your heart, its passion displaced.

By ire ever growing, hardening into stone,

Amidst the cold to you in a heated embrace.
You flee my dream come the morning,
Your scent - berries tart, lilac sweet.
To dream of raven locks entwisted, stormy,
Of violet eyes, glistening as you weep.

I know not if fate would have us live as one,
Or if by love's blind chance we've been bound.
The wish I whispered, when it all began,
Did it forge a love you might never have found?

You flee my dream come the morning,
Your scent - berries tart, lilac sweet.
To dream of raven locks entwisted, stormy,
Of violet eyes, glistening as you weep.: 

Qrow basked in the sound and distantly thought Ruby had missed her calling as a troubadour. “You’re right.” He purred with his eyes closed. “That only needs a couple changes and it would be perfect.”

“I figured it would be more subtle if I left it be.” Ruby said smiling at his purr as he said. “You subtle? Be still my beating heart.” Qrow said in jest smirking when his love took mock offense. “Hey! I can be subtle… sometimes… when it suits me.”

The raven haired man laughed, long and deep, his chest shaking and he could hear the giggles of her joining in. All thoughts of despair he felt before the call was soothed away by that happy voice. “Thank you Rubs, I needed that.” He moved an arm behind his head and picked up his Scroll setting it on his chest.

“Anytime.” She glanced over to the door and sighed. “I’ve got to go, I don’t want Weiss getting all snippy with me because I locked her out of the dorm. Call you later?”

“See you soon, love you.” Qrow said softly, sorrow at her having to go made his heart ache. “Love you too.” Ruby hung up and Qrow set his Scroll aside and closed his eyes. She really did make everything better, she made something pure and whole for him in this world of theirs. After a few minutes of just enjoying the echo of the song in his head he turned his Scroll back on and typed in. ‘Roman Torchwick’, he was going home to Vale after all, maybe he could do some house cleaning while he was there.
Hope everyone is enjoying the updated version of this story and for anyone who was wondering the song is called A Wolven Storm, from the Witches 3. Here's a link if you watch to listen to it, a truly lovely song :3
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=823yuWz0lto
Ruby woke with a yawn and a stretch, she hadn’t had one single nightmare the previous night and she was definitely feeling the effects of the first decent night sleep in a week. She ran hands over her bare arms and hummed, she felt good and whatever had been causing her pain last night had healed overnight. As quietly as she could Ruby jumped down off bed and zipped over to the bathroom in the dawning light. The silver eyed woman softly shut the door behind her and stripped, turning the water on very hot and stepping under the spray.

Ruby purred softly as the water did its job waking her up the rest of the way, she had no idea why but she just felt so good today. Tilting her head back she let the water cascade down over her neck and chest. “Mmm.” She bit her lip as she ran her hands up over her thigh, to her toned stomach and up higher over her breasts. The peaks stiffened under her touch and she raised her hands to slide them behind her head leaning back and letting the water pour over her. *When was the last time I did this?* The crimonsette mused enjoying the heat, the steam curing around her legs. *Not since before we left for Mount Glenn.*

Images of the Breach rose up in her mind but Ruby shook her head free of them and focused on last night. She imagined them blurring with the steam even as they overlapped in her mind before she pulled on something within her and she felt the calm Ozpin had given her from before. *I have had enough of this misery! I will be a Huntress, one battle will not mark the end of that.* Ruby was completely unaware of the green Aura from yesterday had finally found a place to settle within her. It was making use of dormant trails as it were and it helped give sensation to the memories and dreams.

Ruby set about washing, only two days counting this day till the weekend. She wanted to go down to Vale, see how everything had been fixed and maybe she’d even get to see Penny. She hadn’t seen the little robotic girl in some time and Penny liked to wander around, the chances of seeing her were slim but it would be nice if she did. She thought about the classes she had for today, listing them through her head and almost groaned; Hunter regulation and Law, Grimm studies, History and Survival. Altogether one damn boring day, but it was better than economics and infrastructure days. She got that Huntsmen and Huntress were first responders and needed to know more than just how to kill Grimm. That said it still made for some very dull classes.

The redhead turned off the water and stepped out, while she dried off she looked into the mirror. The dark circles under her eyes had finally faded and she looked okay otherwise, almost normal again. Her stomach growled with an impatient rumbling and she sped up the drying. The rest of her team was just beginning to wake up as Ruby got dressed and blasted out of the door in a flurry of rose petals.

The hallways were empty of just about anybody as Ruby sped down. She accelerated to a speed that petals were blown high into the air, dancing as her red blur sped past. She was over halfway to the cafeteria when as she rounded a corner she slammed into a firm green chest. “ARG!” There was a crash and flailing of limbs, Ruby landed on top of said green individual and in his lap. Ozpin’s ears were ringing as he sat up with a groan and a weight on his chest. He looked down and found Ruby snuggled to his chest, she shook her head and sat up a little pressing a hand to her temple. “Oww.”

“You landed on top, I don’t think you have any reason to complain.” Ozpin groused working his way up, the little woman did not help resting against his chest. He reached up brushing his fingers over her cheek brushing her hair back. A sudden surge of energy zapped at his hand and had him
snatching the tingling limb back.

Ruby purred with the sudden warmth and slid her hands over the tall man’s chest and over his shoulders. “Good morning!” She wiggled in his lap settling with another happy purr. Ozpin put his hands on the floor and looked her up and down the way she was sitting was practically, okay it was flirty. “Are you alright?” He glanced around but no one was coming, he jumped when Ruby wiggled and traced her fingers round the back of his neck. The cowl of his shirt did very little to stop the sudden rush of Aura and sensation that seemed to pour from Ruby like a fountain. Ozpin had little choice but to grab the young woman’s hands and moved them both in a green blur. One second they were on the ground the next he had her pinned to the closest wall with a hand around her wrists.

“Ruby what has gotten into you?”

The sudden impact with the wall jarred Ruby back to attention, the strange sensations clearing from her mind. She blinked twice and looked up at him, copper meet silver and she blushed. “Uhh, I have no idea, but I’m hungry so please let me go?”

The position he had her in suddenly clinked in Oz’s head and he dropped her as if she burned him. “Oh right sorry.” Ozpin backed off and rubbed the back of his head. Ruby’s behaviour was unlike anything he had seen before, it wasn’t like the young training Huntress to act in such a way. Glancing around he noticed the lack of students and pondered, this time in the morning the student cafeteria would be pretty empty, the idea of Ruby being alone didn’t quite sit right with him. “I was going that way as well, would you like to visit a cafe? I’ll buy of course.” It wasn't really professional of him but Ruby seemed very... off today, more so then she probably should be and he wanted to keep an eye on her.

There was a weird sense of contentment in Ruby that she couldn't understand but then her stomach grumbled again. Better to think with the mind, when the body is not begging for substance. “Sure! I am kinda bored of cafeteria food, do you know a good place for stuffed toast? The stuff served at the mess hall always gets all mushy faster than anyone but Nora can eat it.” Ruby brushed down her skirt and smiled up at him.

“Potters does and I will admit that sounds very appealing. Shall we go?” He gestured down the hall. “Sure.” Ruby bounced out head of him with a skip tucking her hands behind her back. Ozpin fell into an easy step beside her, this is so very odd, even before she wasn’t usually this bouncy. It was just about eight in the morning when they arrived at the restaurant. A small hole in the wall place, with several others all lined up in a row, mostly for when students needed a change in food. It was a warm place with tables and chairs of wood, a tv and cosy booths. There were many pictures upon the walls of students and teams that had gone by and it was a place that Ozpin frequented. While he also enjoyed the food, it was the atmosphere he enjoyed most. A young woman with brown hair that she wore in a ponytail, brown eyes and big amber eyes came up to them upon entering the establishment. “Ozpin!” She said with cheer, putting her notebook away in her apron. “Right on time.” Her eyes flicked to Ruby and she put on a smile for the sixteen year old as well. “And who’s this?”

Ozpin smiled and gestured to Ruby. “This is Ruby Rose, a student of mine that shares my disdain for mess food today. We just ran into each other this morning and decided to have breakfast together.”

The waitress smile and said, “Oh of course, you’re usual?” she lead them to a booth towards the back, just big enough for two. Ozpin slid into the booth and said. “Yes please, Ruby?”

“Mistral fog please.” Ruby sat down across from him and took a menu from the waitress. “Thank you.” The brunette nodded and said, “I’ll give you a few minutes to look it over.” then turned on her
heel and walked off.

Ozpin leaned back in the leather booth watching her, seems back to normal for now. I wonder what set her off. He decided it was quite cute the way she bit her lip as she focused. It only had a few options in the morning and judging by how fast her eyes were moving she had already read the whole thing. “Having fun?”

“Trying to decide between stuff with marshmallows and chocolate or strawberries.” Ruby mused and put the menu down with a frown. “I think sugar is the last thing you need right now.” Ozpin said with a smile, their drinks arrived and he stirred his hot chocolate with a spoon.

Ruby looked between the drink and his face and giggled. “Whatever happened to not having chocolate for breakfast?” Ozpin sipped his drink suppressing a smile. “I’m not, this is just a drink.”

“It’s still a lot of sugar for breakfast.” Ruby stirred her tea and had a sip getting foam on her upper lip. She watched Ozpin smile though she could see he was fighting it. “What?”

“Oh nothing.” Oz fought to keep a straight face as she had another drink and further improved her mustache.

Ruby shrugged and sipped at her tea, watching Ozpin steadily have a harder and harder time restraining his laughter. “What?” She asked again confused as his shoulders started to shake. “Nothing really.” Oz said licking his own lips, why do I get the urge to clean hers?

The silver eyed teen was very confused, the look he was giving her was new. Oz gave in her expression was too cute, he reached over and swiped his thumb over her lip collecting the white vanilla foam. Her eyes dilated as he licked the foam of his finger in a quick move. “You had an milk mustache.”

Ruby blushed scarlet and bit her lip, his thumb had been coarse, her lips tingled and it sent sensations down through the rest of her. She focused her attention on the menu, okay strawberry it would be. The waitress returned and they placed their orders, the only difference ended up being he had blueberry filled toast instead of strawberry.

“How are your classes going?” Ozpin asked looking for something to talk about.

“Good, I haven’t had any trouble with the course load right now. Today is Hunter regulation and Law, Grimm studies, History and Survival. Everything boring! The hardest thing is keeping up with Oobleck, if only we could have Professor Port and Oobleck switch. Then Port’s story telling would be put to good use.” She sipped at her tea again, mindful not to get any foam above her lip this time.

“I’ll agree with you there, I enjoyed history the most of all those. Though my teacher was a talented storyteller, she had a voice of honey.” Ozpin smiled up at the waitress when she delivered their food.

Ruby unrolled her silverware already focusing on her food. “You should sub in for Oobleck sometime, you have a lovely voice I am sure it would make the class much more interesting.” She froze when what she had said registered in her brain, colour flooded her cheeks.

Oz laughed Gods she’s just adorable! “I’ll keep that request in mind Miss Rose.” He picked a strawberry off of his french toast, holding it nimbly between his fingers. It was even cuter when that little action had her undivided attention. She really likes her strawberries then, I’ll have to remember that. “Would you like it?”

The silver eyed warrior blushed all the brighter and reached out. “Yes please.” She took it
carefully from his grasp their fingers brushing. Ozpin found it interesting that this time there was no shock of sensation or rush of power. He watched her bring it to her lips and the red juices that seeped out when she bit into it. *Wow, stop paying that much attention to her. Juezz one little sharing of Aura shouldn’t have changed my perception of her that much.*

When Ruby finished her strawberry and started on the toast he managed to refocus his attention on to his breakfast. They ate in silence before Ozpin remembered that James had called for a meeting tonight, he had a feeling it would go late into the night. “Oh Miss Rose, I have a meeting tonight. We’ll have to put a pause on your lessons.”

“Oh,” Ruby wilted for a moment that perked up and asked. “But we’ll still have them right? I know I’m getting better but I would like to continue them, if that is okay with you?”

“Yes, we’ll pick it back up on Friday. I take it you have plans for the weekend?” Ozpin only asked because outside of meetings that only took half of the day. He had a blank schedule, though hiding out in his flat with a few books did sound like a wise idea.

“I was thinking about going down to Vale, but none otherwise. You?” Ruby cut up the last of her toast and nibbled on a piece, the icing sugar sticking to her lips.

“I have a few meetings in the morning but nothing else.” Oz sipped at his hot chocolate the wheels in his head turning. He was already giving her about an hour each night, did he even want to give her more. The professor wasn’t sure.

“Well a quiet day is always nice though I am sure Yang will have something for us to do.” Ruby said and finished her breakfast as Ozpin let that statement go unanswered, his brow furrowed in thought. The rest of the meal passed with the occasional question and response, but they soon had to part ways.

“I do not recall this being up for debate James.” Ozpin stood by the window as James Ironwood paced back and forth in his office. This was a very long and circular conversation, one that he had found himself in before. The General’s presence and insistence on this matter was driving him to a headache and he found himself missing Ruby’s cheerful company already. Oz paused on that thought, she was much more pleasant than James to be around, even if she had been acting strangely that morning but he shouldn’t be thinking of her at that moment. James was still talking.

“You can’t ignore that half of the power is already missing. You honestly think that we’ll be able to restore Amber? The Relic is not safe here.” James Ironwood said firmly, he would not back down from Ozpin, not this time.

Oz barely held the urge to roll his eyes at James in check. “And we are not moving it to Atlas.” The platinum haired man turned away from the window and glared at Ironwood.

“Ozpin flipped his cane around and forced James’s hand to stop before it could touch him. “Fine, but I will keep it with me. I am not putting it in your care.”
James Ironwood pursed his lips but relented. “Fine, but do it now.” Oz sighed deeply and lead the way into the elevator. He hit the hidden button that would take them into the basement. They stood in uneasy silence and again Ozpin lead the way into the basement, they turned down a second hall to the right of Amber’s life support machine. The green flame sconces that lined either side of the walls grew to be fewer and farther between as they walked further.

James had to walk quickly to keep on Ozpin’s heels as it grew darker and darker till he couldn’t see at all. “Oz?” He called out, reaching out into the dark, a hand quickly seized his. “This way.” The silver haired man didn’t need to see where he was going to find what he was looking for. He’d been down here too many times before.

The Atlas General guessed they must have been walking for half an hour in the dark before Ozpin stopped and let go of his hand. “Where are we?” James asked as he felt Ozpin move away.

Ozpin ran his hands over a smooth stone wall. “If I wanted you to know, there would have been more lights.” He found an imperfection in the wall barely noticed and would have been near impossible to find if you weren’t looking for it. He pulled a small flat circle of stone out of the wall and stabbed his cane into the wall and twisted it sharply counter clockwise half a turn. James jumped as he heard mechist gears start to turn within the wall. Another quarter turn clockwise, accompanied by more thunderous clinks then another last turn counter clockwise a three fourths turn.

He pulled his cane out of the hall and touched the wall, green arcs of light turned the stone into fragmented pieces that slid away to the right and left into the walls. Green light filled the dark wall as it wove through massive bronze gears, thick and heavy. There was a thunderous clicking and in rapid sections five layers of gears turned drawing their half section of door into the wall.

James thought that process was noisy but it was nothing compared to the cacophony of sound just beyond. White gold light accompanied by many heavy thunderous clicks, massive creaking gears in succession. Ozpin walked through the narrow doorway, collapsing his cane and shoving it into his pocket. Coming out into a thin stone walkway he threw out his arms and said, turning on the spot. “Welcome to my Labyrinth!”

James walked through the gate and his jaw hit the floor. Massive did not do this place justice, nor did enormous, he walked over to the edge and carefully peered over. There was the occasional walkway but he couldn’t see the bottom. Gears bigger than his airships turned within the walls, it was one massive twisted maze and he didn’t even know where to begin. “Are you sure you weren’t Daedalus in a past life?”

“No I would remember that, I did study his work extensively when I started on this place. I will confess to having a soft spot for puzzles.” Ozpin stepped over beside James his feet half off the edge of the walkway.

“How? There is no way you could have done this without people noticing.” James looked up trying to wrap his mind around the scale of the place. Equal parts city and maze, with the constant click of turning gears.

“James, really? This place is relatively small, at least in Remnant. This is just a little pocket I made folded over several times,” Oz pointed at a set of staircases that branched off to the left. “I’d stay away from those, they are a great deal less linear than they look.”

“You made a pocket dimension?” James’s brows shot up, he could barely believe what he was hearing.

“Correct.” Ozpin stepped off the walkway, the term ‘folded’ took on new meaning when as if
gravity had taken a day off, Ozpin spun upside down and ‘fell’ towards the roof. Oz looked up to look down at James. “You wanted to see the Relic, are you coming? This is by far the safest way.”

“He’s insane.” James muttered looking up, Ozpin landed on the center of a massive golden brozened gear near half a kilometer in width and he didn’t want to know how thick it was. He took a deep breath and jumped off the walkway. Just as Oz had he floated upwards, through with significantly less grace.

Ozpin grabbed James by a foot and helped right the poor confused Atlisan. “This way.” He said in a chipper manner, it was fun making James eat his words. The massive gear moved so slowly that they could actually walk in a straight line and end up more or less in the direction they intended.

Ironwood’s head was on a swivel, the walls were covered in layers of gears and he couldn’t see the walkway anymore. “Is that walkway, actually useful?”

“If you wanted to run into several decades worth of traps.” Ozpin said chearily, tucking his hands behind his back as he walked. “I’ve had a lot of time to work on this vault, I still add to it whenever I have an idea. I’ve made this place to kill anyone who manages to get through the door. Maiden’s included, the power of choice needs to be protected.” He started to run and leapt off the gear, he soared through the air like a bullet, twisting in the air and slid straight between two gears just as they moved apart for him.

James watched the golden gears that Ozpin had disappeared between, he noticed every thirty seconds the window Oz had used reappeared, the opening just wide enough for him to slip through. “He’s nuts, absolutely insane.” Ironwood continued to grouse as he waited for just the right moment and launched himself off the gear. Fear rouse up rapidly in him as he worried he’d miss the opening. That he was about to become a bloody smear on Oz’s pristine gears. Thankfully he worried for not and slipped through the opening and onto a slide.

It went on for thirty seconds then he shot out and into Ozpin’s waiting arm. “OOOOOF.” James groaned as Oz held him steady, he looked up and saw they were in a different layer of the labyrinth now. Before them was a network of stairs and paths some spirling in twists and turns, others clearly upside down. “This is crazy, you have no respect for gravity do you?”

Ozpin laughed, his chest shaking with amusement. “Not really no, that was part of the fun in folding to make this little pocket. I’ve got gravity going every which way and it’s this way.” He started off down the path, with his arms tucked behind his back again.

“Do we follow the path this time?” James stuck close, he didn’t not like this place one bit. The constant creaking turning was setting him on edge. Not to mention that if he were to possibly lose sight of Ozpin getting to the Relic would be the least of his worries.

“Of course not! None of these paths actually lead to anything! Well more traps I guess but mostly looping circles.” Ozpin nodded and then grabbed James by the shoulder and dropped to the ground.

A HUGE hammer on a pendulum swung right were they had been a moment before. James could feel it rip his coat, Ozpin grabbed him by it and hauled him to his feet at a dead run. James had no choice but to run like his life depended on it as the hammer came swing back for them. “You watch too many movies!”

“Hey! It’s a perfectly valid idea!” Ozpin leaped off the bridge and down into the darkness. James followed him with a cry of, “I REALLY HATE YOU!” Ozpin’s laughter ringing in his ears.
James cracked his eyes open to find Ozpin kneeling beside him with an amused expression. “I hate you.” He grumbled and sat up, looking around he found himself on another gear, this one moving so slowly it was a dull thunk… thunk… thunk. Unlike the others it pulsed with a heart beat of golden energy. “This the end of it?”

“After a fashion, since you fainted I carried you the rest of the way.” Ozpin stood up and walked to the center of the gear.

Ironwood shot up to his feet, “I did not!” he stormed after Ozpin as the silver haired man placed his hand in the middle of the gear.

“If believing that helps you sleep better at night.” Under his hand the metal warped into his hand like a slow ooze. He turned his hand to the right, then metal completely liquidated and turned cherry red. Oz turned his hand and shoved it down into the metal, the heat ignored. After a moment he pulled upward, revealing a golden clockwork box. He shook the molten metal off it making sure it fell back into the pool.

“Is that the relic?” James asked, he hadn’t expected a box.

“No.” Ozpin sat down and put the box in his lap. “It’s just a box, I left this Relic in its original form. Thus I needed something with which to contain it in.” He sent his fingertips at the side of the box, pressing them to the largest gears. The clicks from the box where much softer and almost musical compared to the rest of the vault.

James watched as Ozpin solved the puzzle box, the other man periodically moving his hands to other faces of the box. He found it odd how peaceful Ozpin looked with the box in his lap, wordlessly solving the puzzle without pause. He couldn’t keep track of even a tenth of the turns Ozpin made, some so small he barely saw them at all.

It took about three minutes as Ozpin wasn’t in any rush, then with a collection of clicks the box collapsed into its walls and down into a single emerald gear. The energy of the Relic glowed in a bright glowing orb as it sat on the gear. Ozpin reached out and stroked the golden glob of energy, ribbons of power slipped off it and wrapped around his fingers. “Beautiful isn’t it?”

“I thought it would have more of a… shape?” James was wise enough to not try and touch it.

“The others do, but seeing as I was staying close to this one I decided to leave it be.” Ozpin reached out into his pocket and pulled out his cane extended it. Putting it on his lap he pulled the orb from the gear. James watched as Ozpin brought the energy over his cane and with a flick of his fingers transformed the shape into a exact replica of the weapon. Then with another flick it sank into the weapon and vanished from sight. Only the slightest glimmer of golden vines as they wrapped around the length of his cane, glistening in the dim light before they too seemed to fade from sight. “There happy? If something happens to Beacon and the Fall Maiden does find her way in here, the Relic of Choice won’t even be here.”

Jame gave a nod at the other man while it wasn’t what ‘he’ would have chosen to do with the Relic he did approve of this decision. “Better than them knowing where it is. Though,” he looked up and watched the gears above them, he had no idea how they were getting out of here. “where is the exit?”

Ozpin smiled and restored the box to its original shape returning it within the molten metal. While the
metal cooled, he got up and collapsed his cane, putting it back into his pocket. “It’s a lot easier to get out then in.” With that he got up and pulled James to his feet and proceeded to get the other man hopelessly lost on the way out.

Chapter End Notes

A big juicy reference knocking around in this one, wonder if anyone will find it ;)

Ozpin snuggled into his couch with his book, oh wonderful Saturday. No meetings, no mission reports, no security reports and the festival part of the Vytal festival was in full swing. For once there was nothing he had to worry about, just him and his book with some nice blueberry tea. He hadn’t bothered with his coat today instead a dark green blanket was wrapped tight around him to ward off the cooling Autumn air. As Oz thumbed the worn page edge, a loud and very insisted knock sounded on his door shattering what was suppose to be his peaceful day off.

“Ozpin! We need to go over the student lists from the Kingdoms again.” Glynda’s voice was high and slightly annoyed as she rapped gloved knuckles against Ozpin’s door.

Oz groaned and closed his book with a soft clap. Not today, it was supposed to be his day, his day off and they’d already been over the lists several times. Looking over at the door he could almost see Glynda pacing the hallway and rolled his eyes. He put the book down on his coffee table and got up, then paused looking down at his hands as they held the blanket. “Hmmm.” The lists really didn’t need another eye, maybe in a few weeks but not now. The copper eyed man pulled the blanket off his shoulders and folded it. After setting it on the arm of the couch he grabbed his cane, collapsed and shoved it into deep pants pocket, slid on a pair of dress shoes.

Then with skill born of a considerably less reputable and more old fashioned job he sneaked across his living room to the balcony. The sliding door was carefully unlocked, silently opened and closed behind him. He took a glance around but saw no one in the vicinity, grinning he perched on the iron railing and turned facing the window. He could still hear Glynda bang on the door then did a little backwards flip off the balcony and landed as agile as a cat on the soft grass surrounding his apartment.

Rather than risk getting caught going through the main roads he moved into a sprint making quicktime into the Emerald Forest. He could double back around later and hit up the landing pads and catch a ride down into Vale. It may not be the plan he had made for today but at least it would stop Glynda from being able to steal his day off.

“RUBY!!” A small ginger haired girl soared through the air and clobbered Ruby to the ground in a hug worthy of her metallic form. Yang who had been stood by her side giggled at the sight, watching her sister get squished by the over enthusiastic Atlassian.

“How is she so strong? That's right, robotic body, duh.

“Why me?” Ruby let out a pained gasp hugging Penny back gently. “Ribs please Penny, release me.”

“Oh right sorry.” Penny leapt off of Ruby pulling her friend up with the same action. “Sorry, oh!” Penny beamed tucking her hands behind her back, her pink ribbon pinned at the back of her head. “Are you here for the festival bonfire!? It’s starting a few hours and my father suggested it, he says the music and dancing are outstanding!”

Ruby and Yang shared a look, Yang hooked a arm around her sisters waist and said cheerily. “We
were just exploring Vale for the festival but that sounds like fun. We haven’t had a good bonfire since my birthday! Where is it?”

“Just off the main north road out of Vale, pretty close to the walls to make use of the Vale’s defense grid. I saw people gathering firewood and kindling, but there are a few hours till dusk yet. That’s when they are lighting up the big one, but you can already smell some of the food.” Penny let out a long loving sigh. “It smells so good.”

“Ooo! Lets go Ruby! We can scout it out before it gets dark.” Yang grinned clapping her hands together, food always got her attention.

Penny grabbed Ruby’s hands and hauled her off with Yang. “Oh it shall be so much more fun to explore it with friends!”

Ruby had to admit the set up for this aspect of the festival was pretty sweet. One massive fireplace was being built up in the middle of a clearing near a kilometer in circular diameter. Throughout the circle were smaller fires about a dozen in all, once they were all burning the field would be well illuminated. Sure not enough to go without additional light sources, but it would be magnifest.

The redhead trailed behind her sister and Penny, the two were rapidly talking about different ways to cook meats over a fire. Many of the smaller fires were already lit with meats already slowly cooking. Ruby saw one that looked to be mutton that was being breaded and then based in its own dripping juices. Her mouth watered, that was a fire she’d be returning to in a few hours.

The sun was steadily sinking and it wouldn’t be long before it disappear. Ruby let out a long sigh, while this was nice she was getting bored. She tapped Yang on the shoulder and said. “I’m gonna go for a walk, I’ll be back before the bonfire goes up.” Yang nodded to her and engaged Penny in conversation again.

Ruby picked her way through the grounds, nodding to the people rushing about getting ready for dusk. They were outside the city defences but the giant turrets used to protect Vale cast long shadows over the camp. She found her way into the forest, it quickly became oddly quiet but it was nice.

“Crap.” She heard whispered and froze, listening hard for a long minute. Ruby could hear footsteps to the north of her, activating her Semblance she blew herself up into a tree and remained in rose petal form. Keeping her petals from drifting down required a lot of concentration and a few slipped past, landing gracefulling on the grass below. Needless to say she was very surprised when Ozpin walked right under her. Her control wavered when she saw that he was wearing tight black jeans and a button up T-shirt… with most of the buttons undone. His hair was more of a mess then normal, like he had run his hand through it numerous times and as he rubbed his arms she guess he was cold.

Ozpin walked south, he hadn’t grabbed a coat before he ran from Glynda and he grit his teeth in annoyance. He paused and extended his senses for a moment, he could have sworn he felt someone. Ruby carefully withdrew her Semblance trying to keep the use of it as quiet as she could, she moved back to physical and Ozpin started walking again.

The ashen haired man let out a huff and continued walking, he had avoided people for most of the day. Mostly because he wasn’t in his usual armour and he didn’t fancy being caught without it. The
heavy layers and cowl, a constant reminder of his position, without that he was afraid he’d slip and fall back into old habits. He hugged himself rubbing his arms and then leaped to the sky like a startled cat his hairing sticking up on end as a very familiar voice sounded from behind him.

“Professor are you… okay?” Ruby asked, suppressing a smile as he did an excellent impression of a surprised anime character. Ozpin spun his hands going up to fix his hair and while Ruby was distracted by the top of his exposed chest, colour flooded his cheeks.

Oz swiftly fixed the buttons of his shirt, Ruby mourned the loss of the white tanned skin. She knew he was strong but seeing just how that manifested was quite another thing. A rather handsome manifestation, one that if the circumstances had been different she would have been happy to drool over. She mused that Ozpin was broader then Qrow with the muscles larger and more defined.

“Miss Rose, what are you doing here?” Ozpin fought down a blush at her obvious appraisal. Yet another reason he liked his layers, less chance of the students ogling him.

Ruby giggled covering her mouth with a hand as she lost the fight against her smile. “Just going for a walk here oh Ripper.”

Ozpin pursed his lips and rubbed a hand over his eyes. “Miss Rose~.” He blushed as Ruby chortaled, this was why he had avoided people. He didn’t see Ruby till she reached out and touched his raised arm.

Ruby whistled and giggled, her hands tracing over the large muscles. “What?”

Ozpin moved his hands faster then she could see grabbing her wrists and pulling them down and behind her stepping into her personal space. “For a start,” He growled lowly, enjoying how she blushed, how her eyes dialated at his touch. “I’m not NEAR old enough to be Ripper.”

“How old are you?” Ruby asked as her body hummed at his proximity, unconsciously she pressed up closer to him they didn’t quite touch but she could feel the heat from his body.

“Not old enough for that name.” Ozpin purred dipping down as she pushed closer to him. He could feel her heat, ohh so nice, he couldn’t remember the last time he felt a woman’s warmth.

Ruby let out a little mew as he transferred her wrists to one hand, the other hand lifting to brush her hair back with a feather light touch. She could feel him bend over closer to her, the slight tilt of his head as he inhaled deeply of her scent.

Oz closed his eyes as he breathed deeply, only then catching on to what he was doing. He let go of her all at once, backing away faster then she could track. And this is why you don’t leave the apartment without your armour on. He looked over to Ruby his speedily departure had her shaking slightly but she quickly recovered and smiled at him.

“You know you didn’t have to stop.” The words were out of her mouth before Ruby caught them. The look he gave her made her gulp, she couldn’t help but back up as he strode forward, though she was out of luck when she quickly hit a tree. Ozpin invaded her space again a hand resting against the tree by her head another at an equal level with her hip. He dipped down so she could look into his eyes more easily. “Be careful what you wish for Miss Rose.” He rumbled lowly, trying to ignore the little triangle of breasts that showed through her shirt. Ozpin pursed his lips his anger with Qrow rising up as she reminded him of just who owned her hide. Oz licked his lips and dipped his head down again. “You don’t have the faintest idea of what you are getting into. Whatever romantic delusions you have of Huntsmen will come crashing down.”
He left so suddenly Ruby gripped the tree to keep herself upright. The tall man had oozed power, she could practically feel his Aura radiating in the space between them. It left her more than a little weak in the knees and it had nothing to do with fear. The silver eyed woman shook her head and stepped up after Ozpin. “Are you here for the festival?”

Ozpin glanced down at her while rubbing his arms. “I hadn’t planned on it but I will admit the sound of a bonfire is very appealing.”

Ruby pulled at her cloak feeling a little bit sorry for him. “My cloak is a little small but it would be better than nothing.”

“No thank you.” Ozpin said walking a little slower so the young woman didn’t need to jog to keep up with him.

Ruby worried her lip, she could see that he was cold, which begged another question. “Sir why aren’t you… dressed normally?”

Colour dusted Oz cheeks. “I may have snuck out of my flat, Glynda was pounding on my door trying to steal my day off from me. So I might have jumped off my balcony to escape.”

The crimsonette giggled, pulling her cloak tight around her, the sun sinking low. “Well I know I’m not as good as a book to you, but the festival looks like a lot of fun. I saw some really delicious looking roasted meats and there is going to be dancing. Maybe you could hide out with us.”

A smile pulled at Oz’s lips, he had half a mind to reach out and touch her. She was better then a book, definitely better, sure he had been looking forward to a quiet day to read but this was alright as well. “I suppose I could stick around, Glynda would never think to look for me here.”

They came upon the festival grounds just as the sun set, as they walked toward the main fire it ROARED to life! The thundering crackles, filled the space quickly followed by hundreds of people shouting in glee. Ruby jumped at the sudden noise but Ozpin wrapped an arm around and pulled her to his side. They barely had time to take in the sight of the flames leaping for the sky before Yang came barreling over.

She had changed, her usual gear had been left behind in favor of a short white dress that came to just above her knees. She was even barefoot and over her arm was another white dress. “Yang!” Yang came to a skidding halt and grabbed her hand and pulled her away from Oz holding up the dress. “We met this really nice lady that gave us proper garb! Come on let’s get you changed.”

“Yang~ Do I have to?” Ruby barely had time to look up at Oz before Yang hauled her way into the crowds. Ozpin chuckled at Ruby’s expression as she disappeared and headed inwards through the crowds as the musicians picked up their instruments and started to play.

Drums, fiddles, violins, even a hurdy gurdy started to play Ozpin smiled at the sounds, this was what he missed. As he made it to the fire another man shoved a tankard of what a sip proved to be mead into his hand and girls leaped into the space cleared around the fire. Most all wore dresses like Yang, others had their hair braided, with flowers or ribbons. Some had woven ribbons around their wrists so when then danced the ribbons flashed and glistened.

Oz picked out a large log that had been pulled into place and sat with his tankard tapping his foot and watching the girls dance. A chorus of giggles saw Ruby’s return with her sister, now dressed in just the white dress, with her hair pulled back and tied with a emerald green ribbon. Around one wrist was a green and red ribbon, the ends almost at the same level as her knee. Yang had two of light blonde and orange, unlike Ruby’s Yang’s ribbons near hit the ground. Someone’s looking to get laid
tonight. Oz thought amused at the blonde Huntress.

Yang and Penny hauled Ruby into the circle of dancers then let her go as they wove into the dance. It was a very old and traditional one, all Vale girls knew it. Yang grabbed Penny’s hands and skipped into the line of dancers, guiding the Atlassian through them. Hands clasped to together they skipped towards the fire in perfect time with the other thirty girls, spun Penny around then they skipped outward to within a couple meters of the log benches.

Men reached out trying to snag the girls ribbons but with a shortaling giggle, all the woman pulled their wrists away. Raising their hands high above their heads while doing a little shimmy of their hips. Then with elegant steps they split into two lines, facing different directions, the two lines moved as one, each girl reaching out to the girl before her creating a wave of ribbons, lovely legs and wind blown hair.

Every four meters apart a girl broke off to stand just out of reach of the sitting men. Ruby glanced around and gulped only then she was standing in the right spot for the next stage of the dance. Then looked over and the corresponding collection of men, Ozpin was front and center.

The wheel of woman broke and split down to make the likeness of spokes on a great wheel. Ruby and the other girls leapt into motion, together they jump towards the fire like ballerina’s, ending the jump with a spin on their foot. Ruby took deep breaths to keep calm as she danced, she bowed backward on her one legs, creating a beautiful arch with her back. Then swung her raised leg in an elegant curve at the level of her hip, then planted it firmly on the ground her hands back outlining the curve of her body, her thumbs touched to her middle fingers.

Ozpin swallowed thickly unable to tear his gaze from the silver eyed woman. The pose held for a long moment before the lead dancers, Ruby among them, spun again on the spot raising their hands up high to the fire. The ribbons flashed as the girls spun and flicked them with practiced ease, then with another spin they came skipping down the lines. Oz couldn’t help but watch transfixed as Ruby danced upon her toes, a perfected mazed of steps, her legs suddenly becoming the most fascinating things in the world.

Ruby stepped with little half steps spinning and twisting, raising her hands to accent her breasts. She did another quick scan of her quadrant of men and settled on Ozpin, she’d rather dance for him then a stranger. His eyes were following her as she danced and she felt less nervous, more alive and warm. The spinning jigged steps brought her to within a meter of him, all he had to do was reach out and grab her ribbon.

For this was a courting dance, the girls picked out men from the crowds that they liked and if the man proved agile enough to catch her ribbon then they were pulled into the dance and had to prove their worth to the woman. What happened after the dance was over was completely up to them.

Ruby gathered her courage and made sure to keep in perfect step with the other girls. She stepped toward him with her right leg bending forward reach down with her right hand her ribbon trailing down her pale leg. Ozpin had to clutch his tankard tight to keep from making a grab as Ruby showed off all of her assets. The tankard crunching under his strength. When did she got so utterly sexy? It's got to be the mead. Ruby spun on the spot and did a little jig, her legs kicking out high as befitting of her physic as a Huntress. Meanwhile Oz was trying really hard not to stare at her jiggling butt. It required Herculinine effort that he didn’t quite manage.

The crimsonette leaped back towards the fire, reaching out with a hand that Yang seized and with a quick switch with so Ruby became a part of the jigging line while Yang with considerably less grace then her sister. Jumped up for the sky and into the role of lead dancer. With the new leads selected the girls broke from their elegant lines each going the opposite direction the one beside her.
The steps were longer now, as they all showed off their legs, joining hands with the girls from the other lines creating a sea of legs and shadows. Ozpin lost track of Ruby in the mix but then the girls formed the two lines again and he spotted her again coming his way. Again the lines split and the leads danced down through the quadrants.

Yang with her bouncing bosom picked a young redhead beside him and Oz watched with an amused smile as the man lunged for her ribbon and caught it by the skin of his teeth. She pulled him off the log and clasped hands with him, together they skipped down the lane. Ozpin had to hand it to the boy, he had guts and was a competent dancer. He could tell by Yang’s smile she was happy with her choice and that he’d probably have to walk Ruby back to campus tonight.

All the lead dancers this round had found partners, so as the lines split again they danced up between the girls and slipped off into crowds. Yang pulled her partner after her with a giggle and a smile, they quickly disappeared into the wall of people. Ozpin turned his attention back to dancers, Ruby had been singled out again to lead.

Ozpin watched her closely as she skipped towards him again, he realised after a moment that he was looking a little bit too closely. The curve of her breast visible to him, She’s not wearing a bra… though he’d never admit it his pants got rather tight at that thought. She came up to him again and he caught a flash in her eye as she looked at all the eyes following her, oh right she’s afraid of crowds. It’s in her file, how could I have forgotten? This time when she reached out his hand snapped forward as fast as lighting and grabbed her ribbon, he moved to her as graceful as a jaguar with all that power barely contained. The copper eyed man saw her eyes widen and pulled her back into the dance and focus.

Ruby barely remembered where her hands were supposed to go, they met in the middle their hands woven tight together as Ozpin measured out his steps into something she could skip too. She let him guide her as they made their way back to the bonfire, the heat from it causing sweat to gather on her limbs. He released her with a spin, she moved with the force letting his hand go only to come to a sharp stop when he pulled her back by her ribbon.

The fabric bit into her skin as she was swept back into his embrace, he spun her under an arm and reached out squeezing her hip. Oz pulled her flush to his body, Ruby raised a leg letting his thigh slip between hers. Her breath came in rough pants as her eyes widen at the sensation. All too soon it was over and she was spinning again, their arms linked for a few steps.

Right turn, step step step, quarter turn switch arms. Ruby had to recite the dance in her mind, she had only ever danced with a partner with Yang, her dad or Qrow. Ozpin was a whole different ball game, he was so tall they both had to make adaptations and she found the sweat that was making his chest glisten very distracting.

Oz spun her around joining their hands again, he could see clear down the cut of her dress, her cleavage rising and falling with each quick breath. Hands on the small of the back, you’re only doing this so she can get out. Don’t be distracted! His pants were tight and he was both thankful of that and wishing he had worn something looser. The tall man pulled her a little bit closer than strictly necessary as they spun together.

Ruby couldn’t help but press close to him as they danced, before either noticed they were pressed skin to skin. Gods this is hot. Ozpin thought as the fire was blazing near meters from them, he couldn’t help it in another spin, Oz slid a finger down his front and undid all the buttons of his shirt. He could see Ruby’s nipples pushing hard against her dress and swelled thickly.

Oh gods, oh gods, oh gods! Look at that! Ruby was trying not to ogle but that was the torso of a fighting god! Her body flushed and got all sorts of excited, as her eyes tracked down to the thin silver
hair just peeking out the top of his trousers. Their hands managed to find each other again, though this time Ozpin’s hand took her hip while hers slid under his shirt to rest on a very firm pectoral.

The next step had Ruby released and spinning away, her leg raised up high, hiking the skirt of her dress up around her hips. The next had her jumping back to him, Oz slid a foot forward and his hips and torso back giving her a better platform to aim for. Ruby lept nimble upon him wrapping her legs tight around his waist. There hands clasped together again as Ozpin spun in a circle. Oz’s thoughts were sidetracked when he felt it. Gods above she wet.

Ruby was thinking something similar, he’s hard! He’s dancing with me and he’s hard enough to cut diamond! Her skin flushed anew as she met his eyes and then trusting him let his hands go. Oz instantly grabbed her hips, holding tight as he spun them around. Another circle then Ruby reach up and he pulled her up his body, she slid loosening legs enough for him to maneuver her. Up over his shoulder she went, twisting over his shoulders trusting Ozpin to catch her.

He did, she slid down over his front her dress riding up for a minute and her behind rubbing over his crotch. They both felt the uncontrol twitch and Oz hurried fixed her dress trying not to think about that her panties were green. Their hands clasped together, as they stepped as one towards the crowd again, Ozpin spun Ruby around to face him and they skipped down the lane. Behind them the lines of girls split up again, on the way out Ozpin grabbed his tankard and took a long drink as Ruby held his hand tight.

She pulled him as fast as she could behind a tent and before he could get a word in pulled him down by his hair and pressed a kiss to his lips. The music picked up its pace behind them and Oz dropped his empty tankard groaning into the kiss. His body was swimming in the adrenaline and endorphin high brought on by the dance. His hands went to her hips wasting no time in hiking up her dress till his hands found bare skin of her butt.

Ruby’s breath caught as his large hands tightened around her buttcheeks and he lifted her up. The little woman wrapped her legs around his waist and grinding against the very hard packet of his trousers. She merped shocked parting her lips when he nipped her bottom lip, then dived his tongue into her mouth taking advantage of her surprise. Her eyes slid closed as she moaned into the kiss, grabbing handfuls of his shirt.

The kiss broke for a moment as they panted to catch their breaths, Ruby moaning out. “Floor floor!” Ozpin didn’t need telling twice, he had her on her back an instant later, pushing and grinding against her core. He kissed at her neck, the low collar of the dress giving him almost all he could want. Her breathless moans were music to him, he kissed down her neck, while pushing her dress up higher. “Gods let me, oh please let me.”

Ruby could only nod for the raging arousal through her body, she pulled him back up for a long wet kiss. Her elegant hands went to his belt, quickly undoing it, Oz helping her push his trousers down and moaning loud into the kiss as her little hands wrapped around his length. Ruby took quick stock stroking him as his hands came around her to guide her how he liked it. Too wide for one hand, really long, hard oh so hard, her core gushed and leaked her already soaked panties clung to her skin. Firm silky head just a little give. She shrieked but thankfully the music drowned it out and the kiss muffled it.

Ozpin had ripped her panties away and pushed a finger into her sex while rubbing her pearl with his thumb. Ruby tightened her grip around him and tried to keep up with him as he quickened his fingers. He rocked into her hands with softer moans of his own as Ruby panted under him. He slid another finger inside her as she worked him more quickly, he held off just enjoying the feel of her.

Ruby pressed her chest up rubbing her aching nipples against his chest. She tightened and twisted
her hands with a long firm pump her hands were already wet with his fluids dripping from the tip of
his cock. With that in mind she palmed the head of the heavy member and left him jerk above her
and his member pulsed with firm twitches in her hand, painting the ground between her legs with
ejaculate.

Oz grabbed at her dress and pushed it up and off of her, he broke the kiss and dived for a nipple
nipping it tight between his teeth. Promoting another shriek from her, Ruby’s hands flew to cover her
mouth as he pleasured her. They smelled strongly of him but it only excited her more, her core
clenching tight around his fingers.

Ozpin worked her masterfully, all the while imagining what it would be like to drive inside of her.
She came under him with a bowing of her back, pressing tight to him as he worked his fingers side
of her the wet sound of her fluids around his fingers as he massaged her sweet spot without mercy.
He drew back to watch her orgasm, the gorgeous flush of her skin, the parting of her lips as her
hands gripped the ground, her eyes squeezed shut. He gave her a few more thrusts of his fingers
before pulling them out.

He dipped his head and rested it on her breast the high of endorphins and adrenaline only now
fading. What he had just done now slowly sinking into his brain. SHIT! He moved to scramble back
only for Ruby to feel the sudden absence of his body heat and leap on him. Oz was unprepared for
the kiss but it was the whispered, “Thank you.” that gave him pause.

The silver eyed woman left him paused and drew back grabbing her dress and pulling it back on.
She picked up her panties and quirked her lips to one side, then looked over to him and grabbed his
hand putting them in it. “A sovenour for you.” She got up and brushed herself down, making sure no
grass was sticking to her.

Ozpin got up but didn’t bother button his shirt, he looked down to her panties he’d ripped without a
thought and put them in his pocket. “Miss Rose.” He started unsure of what to do, he should have
stopped her when she kissed him, not get wrapped up in it.

Ruby giggled, reaching down, grabbing his tankard and offering it to him. “You were buzzed,” She
glanced around then said. “And no one saw, this will just be our little secret. No need to explain this
one away or apologize. I kissed you remember.”

Her smile spoke volumes and Ozpin found himself dipping his head in submission and with a smile
of his own said. “As you wish, Miss Rose.” He glanced around with a hum. “Do you know a place
to wash our hands?”

“You are this way.” Ruby set off with an extra skip in her step and Ozpin could swear blue
she was glowing.

Well. He mused, orgasm can do that to a woman. His gaze trailed down over her body resting on
her behind again. That is a uniquely lovely behind, what no, STOP, you’ve done enough no more.
He shook his head rapidly and looked up at the sky, stars were starting to peak out. They passed a
few firepits so they did not grow cold and quickly came upon the bathrooms to wash after their little
play.

Ruby zipped for the sink not because she was in a rush to scrub him from her skin but because she
was overheating. She quickly turned on the water and splashed her face, then grabbed it trying to
calm down. Oh gods, I just got down and dirty with Professor OZPIN! Her heart beat like a
hummingbird’s wings, she could scarcely believe she was brave enough to pounce on him like that.
He had been really aroused through the dance, he liked it too. She took deep breaths and started to
wash her hands. It’s not like we’re in a relationship or anything, this was just festival fun! Yeah that’s
it, I’ll tell Qrow as soon as I can and we can talk about it. Heck he’ll probably give me pointers if he’s okay with it. Then why wouldn’t he be? He sleeps around, he’s never said I can’t experiment and it’s not like I had sex with him. No way, I’m waiting for my bird on that front, Ozpin was just for fun. She turned off the water and let out a long breath, the fall draft circling around her legs. Right it’s cold in here lets see if he’s out yet.

Meanwhile Oz was thinking, I’m so dead! Qrow’s gonna kill me! That said Qrow is welcome to try, he never could beat me in a fight. Beside it was just the one time, the moment got the better of both of us. It won’t happen again! He dried his hands and walked out to find Ruby waiting for him with her hands tucked behind her back.

“Let’s find food shall we?” Ruby’s gaze flicked to the tankard and she smiled, looking back up at him.

“Sure, I’m in no rush to go home.” Like a gentleman Ozpin offered his arm and Ruby took it, together they headed back into the fires and found Yang and Penny by a fire pit that had a huge round of breaded mutton slowly being turned and basted by an elderly old woman.

“Ruby!” Yang bounced off the log that made for a makeshift bench. She pulled her sister into a fun and grinned. “Have fun with the dance?”

Ruby blushed scarlet and worried her lip, Yang looked at her sister for a long moment then up at Ozpin who’s cheeks coloured very slightly. “Ohhh, oh, oh you did have fun.” She grinned like the Cheshire cat.

“Yang~!” Ruby blushed all the brighter and tried to squirm away.

“Oh right oh right, forget I said anything but I am soo telling Qrow! He’ll be so proud! You finally had some fun at a festival!” Yang clapped her hands together and skipped over to the woman and requested two cuts of meat.

“I’ve got four weeks before I’m seventeen! It’s not that I’m some old spinster!” Ruby stormed over to her sister but got sidetracked in her rant when Yang waved a piece of roasted mutton under her nose. “Ooh.” She took the plate from her sister and carefully took a bite of the hot dripping juicy meat. “Ohh wow!” Her eyes fluttered as she enjoyed the rich taste.

Yang bounced over to Ozpin and presented the other plate of mutton. “Thank you for twiddling my sister, Gods know Qrow is determined to treat her like some holy cup only to be admired from afar and not touched.”

That’s a interesting statement to make offhand. Ozpin mused, just what is Qrow doing? Or not doing as the case maybe. He took the plate from Yang and said, “Thank you.” choosing not to really address what she had said. Oz carefully took the piece of meat between two fingers and took a large bite out of it.

Ruby glanced over at him when he purred, juices from the meat dripping down his chin. Her insides did a little flutter again, her eyes flicked down to his trousers again before she hauled her gaze away with a flush of her cheeks.

“This is really good.” Ozpin purred through another bite, the outside was crispy and the herbs were perfect. He looked over to the old woman who had been watching the three of them with an amused expression.

“I’m glad you like it sir.” The woman was at least sixty with grey hair, she wore of dress of the same
heavy cotton make of Ruby and Yang’s. However it was long enough to reach her ankles and was embroidered, layered with patterns of triangles and lined in a dark red. Her face was that homely weathered kind that set a person at ease.

Ozpin sat down on the log and Ruby picked her way over to sit beside him. Yang looked at the pair for a moment with a smile on her lips. “I’m going to go find Tam and Penny, I’ll see you around Ruby. Don’t wait up for me tonight.”

Ruby nodded colour dusting her cheeks, ‘don’t wait up for me tonight’ was code between them. “Have fun! I’ll just stick with Ozpin tonight.”

“Oh I’m sure you will.” Yang winked at her and raced off to find her date and student.

The redhead blushed at her sisters wink and bit into her piece of meat trying to distract herself. Ozpin watched her silently, she didn’t seem overly surprised that Yang was racing off to find her fun for the night. They ate in silence and said their thank you’s before departing from the woman’s fire. Only then did Ozpin speak up. “Are you alright? You seem off.”

Ruby focused on her ribbon, it was still pulled tight around her arm. She tried to picked it looser but it was rather difficult to do with one hand.

“Here let me.” Ozpin stopped and took her hand, he pulled at the knot just under her elbow bit by bit until it came loose. He pulled the ribbon slowly off revealing the red skin under it, lines of red against the moonlight pale skin. Oz paused for a long minute then, tracing the red with his thumb, before stroking over them with his fingers.

Ruby shivered, watching his fingers, she could feel the callouses the strength in them. Qrow never touched her, not like this so it was all new sensations to her and her breath quickened in her chest. She felt small and vulnerable standing before him. With a shaky breath she took the ribbon from him and took his left hand in hers.

Ozpin’s first instinct was to tell her no, but he remained silent as her elegant fingers wrapped her ribbon around his wrist. Around and around, slowly her fingers brushing over it to make sure it lay flat, she tucked the end through a layer and pulled it tight. He didn’t miss the significance of her giving him the ribbon, as she pulled her hands away he snatched the left and raised it up.

Ruby breath caught as he pressed a kiss to the pulse point of her wrist. Then bit her lip when he kissed it again drawing his teeth over the point. “Happy All Howls Night.” He rumbled pressing one last kiss to her wrist and letting it go.

“Happy All Howls Night.” Ruby said softly her wrist tingling from the contact. Ozpin offered his arm again and she took it, together they started walking around the fires. Shouts and hoots of glee echoed through the clearing and as they returned to the main bonfire they found the dances had moved away from the formal ones and more towards people doing whatever they wished, with however they wished.

Long tables had been filled with foods of all shorts, breads, fruits, vegetables, sweets as well as a whole table ladened with barrels of alcohols of all types. Another table had people clustered around with the odd shout of “TO THE KING!” being hollered out into the air.

As they two pursed their options, a few girls giggled and ogled Ozpin. Ruby glared at them, Ozpin followed her gaze and resisted chuckling. He wrapped his left arm around her resting his hand on her waist more importantly showing off the ribbon wrapped around his wrist. The women pouted but turned their attention elsewhere. “You hungry? I think I smell sweet rolls from here.” Ozpin lifted his
head and gave a experimental sniff.

“That sounds really good.” Ruby took his hand and pulled him toward the food table. She grabbed plates for the two of them and browsed the selection. Ozpin took one from her and started filling it with a sourdough bun, a few cubed pieces of roasted venison and some roasted broccoli.

Ruby sniffed at a plate of what appeared to be fried breaded something she had no name for, it smelled very strongly of garlic. “Do you know what this is?” She pointed at it while taking a little step away from it.

Ozpin turned his attention to her and picked up one and put it in his mouth. After a few mindful chews he swallowed and said. “Wok fried squid with a bit too much garlic.”

“Squid?” Ruby made a face, she wasn’t sure how she felt about eating squid.

“It’s good, if a bit heavy on the garlic, has a nice crunch. You’re from Patch and you haven’t had squid?” He raised a brow in curiosity.

“Dad’s not really into sea food.” She picked up a small piece and studied it, Ozpin did say it was good. She put it in her mouth and the batter was perfect with a nice crunky flakiness, garlic filled her senses and the squid was just right. “Oh wow.” Ruby purred chewing slowly then adding a few more pieces to her plate.

Ozpin chuckled and finished filling his plate, taking the liberty to put a bun on Ruby’s, she needed something to go with all the vegetables and meats. Ruby blushed and said, “Thank you.” they picked their way over to a long table and sat side by side. Beside Ruby was a group of people surrounding a board with seven cups on it. Die were cast and two cups moved in the same spaces as the number on the die, the board was divided into seven lines by six.

“TO THE KING!” Was houled up to the sky by one of the players and a bronze shot goblet raised to the sky. He quickly glanced around and spotted Ruby, he offered her the cup. “A drink for the lovely young lady?”

Ruby hesitated for a moment then took it and sniffed she could smell the alcohol wafting up through the air. She looked up to see Ozpin watching her but he made no move to stop her, she took a very small sip and coughed at the taste of the mead. Ozpin chuckled and took the shot for her and finished it handing the goblet back to the player. “She’s very new.”

The man caught sight of the ribbon wrapped around Ozpin’s wrist and whistled. “And picked you for an escort, lucky dog you are.” The man refilled the cup and returned to the game.

Ruby took a big bite of her squid to try and get the taste of the mead out of her mouth. Ozpin shifted to offer his chest to her as she snuggled up, he put his arm around her and set his hand on the table, the ribbon in plain view. “You don’t have to take the drinks you know.” He said biting into his roll.

“I know but I was curious and I was sure you wouldn’t let me get into any trouble.” Ruby knew what he was doing, for the ribbons had a purpose. If a woman didn’t have a ribbon then they weren’t available, if a man had a ribbon wrapped around their left wrist then they were promised to a woman. While flirting did still happen ribbon or no, Ozpin body language was essentially broadcasting to everyone. ‘This one is mine, I am her escort, anything you do has to go by me first’. It was a way to protect both genders from unwanted attentions and misunderstandings on a night where people were more liberal with affection.

The last time she had been to a ‘All Howls Night’ Qrow had worn her ribbon for she was old
enough then for other young men to start noticing her. For the reason a man had a ribbon varied from lover to escort, an escort could be a father or brother, or just a friend waiting to make sure that a good
time was had by all. For drinking did run rampant in most festivals and drunk people do stupid things. They were in short a safety measure.

“True that,” Ozpin mused, flicking his left wrist. “If you wish to try things I won’t stop you, you are old enough to make decisions on that front. Just don’t be surprised if I start taking shots from you.”

Ruby giggled and leaned against him slightly, he was warm and he cared. “That’s fine by me, I just want to taste the things.” She pulled her bread roll apart and put a piece of venison in one before popping it into her mouth.

“Well in that case.” He plucked a small dark red seed from his plate and offered it to her. “Try this.”

Ruby finished what she was eating and took the little seed and put it in her mouth. As she bit down on it the juices exploded in her mouth. “It’s bitter!”

“Pomegranate, very seasonal and from Vacou we very rarely get it shipped all the way to Vale much less Patch.” Ozpin smirked when she stole another piece of the fruit from his plate.

The young woman tested the fruit again and then declared. “I like it!”

“Well if we stick around for dessert, I’ll be very surprised if they don’t have Massacre in a snowstorm.” Ozpin worked on the food on his plate.

“What’s that?” Ruby asked doing the same.

“Pomegranate seeds in whipped cream, sometime with meringue.” Ozpin explained, finishing his food.

“Oh that sounds good!” Ruby all about bounced in the spot, imagining the sweet dessert.

“Well I guess we shall have to stick around to see if it shows up.” Ozpin said, finishing his food and waiting for her.

Ruby quickly finished her dinner and they two returned the plates and washed their hands. A breeze curled through the air and danced around her bare legs. She blushed remembering that she was just wearing a white shift. “I should probably go get changed.”

As she stepped away Ozpin grabbed her hand and softly said. “You don’t have too, I mean, uh you look lovely and we could go dancing again. That would warm you up.” He blushed slightly and let her go, he frantically tried to think of an excuse. “I mean that the woman was very kind to give you the dress and it keeps with the festival. It would be a shame to not complete the night with it, it’s rather warm for the first of October.” The fact that I like hiking it up has nothing do this with this, none! Anyway that’s not happening again. Gods she not wearing anything under that, no stop thinking about that!

Ruby oblivious to his internal struggle mused over what he said and nodded. “Yeah you’re right, the lady said we could keep them so I’ll take it home and embroider my first full festival ring onto it.” She hadn’t stayed for the entirety of the last one so she didn’t get the red thread last year. Plus he said they could dance again, that sounded wonderful.

Perking up she offer him her hand. “You promised me a dance.” Ozpin smirked and took it, she felt so small against him. “That I did.”
They walked side by side returning to the bonfire, the flames still leaping high couples pairing off the music had changed to primary drum, rebec, suka music, full of high string sounds complemented by the drums. It was a quick easy rhyme to skip and dance too.

As they stepped around the last log Ozpin couldn’t help but smirk, he swept down to Ruby and swept her off feet and into the dancing space. Ruby let out a happy giggle as he swept them into an empty spot, he let her go and they circled with laughs before facing each other. Both put their hands on their waists and with skill the non hunter people would find just not fair, started to jig.

They both had a good feel for the length of each others limbs down. First there was a hop and step for with the toe of their feet down then a switch of the same step. The music signaled the changes as they bounced away from each other a step and clapped their thighs twice and then their hands twice accenting the music.

Ruby let out a laugh as Ozpin swept in their arms linked and they moved in a bouncing circle. Chuckles rumbled up from even Ozpin’s throat as they switched sides and spun apart Ruby spinning her dress lifting slightly. He swept back to her taking a hand in his while putting the other on her waist. Ruby grabbed his shoulder together they danced out in a wide circle around and around till Ruby got dizzy.

The silver eyed maiden swayed and giggled in his arms, looking up to him with warmth in her smile. A voice called both their attention to the stage and Ozpin’s heart dropped into the pit of his stomach. Upon the stage as a bald man of bland features, he wore a yellow tunic, blue breeches with a small bag slung over each shoulder and tall black boots. Upon his head a crown of flowers, clearly made for him by someone at the festival. He gestured to the pair of them saying in a smooth silk voice that had charmed many a soul. “And now, a special treat for our guests - the hunter Garrett and his enchanting partner, Ruby. Musicians, something lovely for the loving couple.”

Ozpin reached up and touched the left side of his face by his eye, before shaking his head and gathering his thoughts. “Well it seems we have to step it up now.” Ozpin bowed low form his waist, with a arm tucked to his front.

Ruby blushed and curtiset remembering her lessons at home and from Weiss. “Well I am not so good at the single partner dances.” She took a step towards him raising her right hand.

Ozpin mirrored her their hands meeting palms flat. “Don’t worry, I will take care of you.” The stepped apart and switched hands, the music was now slower and just string instruments. They stepped to each other again, standing parrel before turning a slow circle once then they switched hands walked in the other direction. The steps were slow and measured. “See not so hard.”

They switched hands and the stepped twice forward in their small circle, then turning switched again only taking one step, getting closer and closer together. They broke apart facing each other, Ruby looked up to him for a long moment her skin flushed from the heat and how close he was. He stepped to her again, matching up his right shoulder to her left, they walked in a very tight circle. Ozpin looking down to her and Ruby up to him their gazes locked upon each other.

“You’re awfully close.” Ruby said not at all meaning that negatively, they did not touch but she could feel his body heat, his breath, her voice was soft and almost nervous in its waver. Memories of their impassioned moment after the last dance they shared, played behind her eyes, she hadn't thought he'd get this close again. They completed the circle and switched shoulders, the slow steps continuing for two more circles.

They broke apart taking a single step back facing each other. They raised a hand and stepped up
parallel to each other, their palms together then back and switched sides for the same step. Ozpin spoke as they repeated these slow steps six times. “You kissed me remember? I don’t think this dance is so different, just a little less.” He couldn’t help himself, Ozpin dipped down and spoke in a low purr. “Intimate.”

Ruby sucked in a sharp breath, her eyes dilating as she licked her lips. The music started to taper and Ruby stood still as Ozpin took a step away to stand before her. Then the taller man stepped forward and reaching out brushing a hand over her stomach, then he started to circle her running his hand over her.

“Seems the music is drawing to a close, do you know how a true dancer thanks his lovely partner?” Ozpin purred out as he circled her, sweeping along her arm and catching her hand.

Ruby said softly, as he took her hand and bent. “I’m not sure I do.” Ozpin kissed the back of her hand, then smirked feeling mischievous. He tightened his grip on her hand and pulling her to him while he stepped up and stole a kiss from her lips. Silver eyes widened in shock, then she relaxed and held his shoulders, the kiss was short and he pulled away quickly. Ruby giggled at his relaxed expression. “I think you’re letting the festival get to you.”

Ozpin smirked, “Perhaps a little.” he admitted and held her hand as they walked from the dancing ground. The musicians and dancers changed, as Ozpin scanned for the bald man that had announced them his smile fading slightly. Sure enough he remained having taken up a place by the beverages table. Ozpin released Ruby’s hand and softly said. “Stay here please I need a word with that man.”

Ruby pursed her lips but hung back, walking over to the non-alcoholic beverages table to help herself. Ozpin walked over to the man and asked sharply. “What are you doing here? And why use that name?” Ozpin crossed his arms over his chest and glared the shorter man down.

“Is that anyway to greet an old friend?” He held a long wooden spoon in one hand, twirling it lazily. “I don’t have time for your games O’Dimm.” Ozpin refused to submit, he was worried why O’Dimm was showing up now.

“Oz and I both know that we have all the time in the world.” O’Dimm took the stem of the spoon between the thumb and forefinger of each hand and bent it till the wood was just about to break. “There is no need for that.” Oz said pursing his lips, he closed his eyes and the world around him slowed. While he moved unimpeded, he dashed forward and made a grab for the spoon. Only when he opened his eyes time resumed O’Dimm had already vanished, he snapped the spoon and unlike Ozpin’s Semblance time stopped completely.

Gaunter O’Dimm now stood right behind Ruby. Ozpin spun and growled at the Master of Mirrors. “Well done, you have retained your lessons well.” O’Dimm reached out and brushed a finger along the slow of Ruby’s jaw. “This one is quite lovely, have you told her about her potential magic yet?”

“Leave her alone.” The tall man strode forward his shoulders pulled back but he stopped at the end of the table when O’Dimm gently rested a hand around Ruby’s neck.

“Ah, so while you do not fear me, you do value this one’s life. How interesting and here I thought after all this time you swore off loving anyone anymore. At least till the best of your abilities, that old soul of yours might have more control but you my dear Ozpin have ever been the more… wild one.” Master Mirror let go of Ruby and plucked a apple off the table and took a large bite.

Ozpin shuddered violently, he felt a cold chill race up his spine and arm around him suddenly felt
very cold. He bared his teeth and uttered. “The soul and I are one, we have been for a long time. I just happened to add my own take to it.”

“Yes I know, I have been watching you. Headmaster of Beacon, I must say I never thought you’d take up that role, but then it does put you in the perfect place to command your little band.” O’Dimm took another bite of his apple.

White cold pain lashed through Ozpin’s heart and he fell to his knees clutching his chest. He let out a pained hiss but refused to scream, his heart felt like it was trying to beat out of his chest and each frantic pulse only caused more pain. “Why are you here?” The ashen haired man hissed out through ground teeth.

“I was just checking in on you and your latest conquest- but then you did something most peculiar.” Another bite of the apple had Ozpin fallen to the ground and writhing as if someone as electrocuting him.

Master Mirror watched Oz twitch and spasm dispationally. He walked over with slow deliberate steps and knelt down by Ozpin’s head, he grabbed Oz by the hair forcing him still. “You are getting much to bold in your new life Ozpin. First you make a lover for yourself, now you tried to attack me.” Another bite of the apple and Ozpin’s pride broke.

His body arched in pain and he let out a scream, he was on fire every nerve awash in blinding pain. O’Dimm held his head in place till the spasmism subsided. Ozpin panted and didn’t dare try to free himself from the other man’s grasp. “I did that ages ago, why bother me now?”

“Because it would have never worked ages ago as you put it.” The plain man released Ozpin’s hair and stood up, he put on a smile and clapped his hands once. “Enjoy the festival, I look forward to seeing how this plays out.”

Time resumed but before anyone caught sight of him Ozpin closed his eyes and activated his Semblance again. Around him time slowed, he picked himself slowly up and brushed himself down making sure no evidence remained on him and moved back to the other table. He let time resume and sagged against the table the instant he let go of the power. Time was not something one messed around with casually, to do so was exhausting.

Ruby picked up a wooden tankard and filled it with water, as she finished she noticed her jaw and neck felt a little strange. She reached up and rubbed at them looked over at Ozpin, he was leaning against the table obviously out of breath. She rushed over putting her drink down beside them, she could see fresh sweat on his skin. “Oz are you alright? What happened?” She glanced around and noticed the vagrant of a man had disappeared. “Where’d he go?”

Ozpin shook his head and swallowed some bile, he’d give O’Dimm one thing, visits from the ‘man’ were always memorable. Pain still zipped and stabbed over his nerves. “I’m fine, it’s nothing I just need a drink.” He reached for a tankard but as he grabbed for it his fingers spasmed and he knocked it over.

Ruby grabbed it while saying. “You’re not fine, what happened I didn’t even have time to pour my drink.” She put the tankard under the mead tap and started to fill it.

“Nothing you need to worry about, just a-” He paused and considered his words carefully. “Old acquaintance decided to visit.” Oz took the tankard when Ruby offered it and made sure his hold was sure before taking several long drinks. He activated his Aura to a full manifestation for a moment that healed his aching body before turning it off again.
Ruby reached out and set her hands around his right forearm, worry still filling her eyes. “Well I am worried, people can’t just disappear like that.”

Ozpin finished the large tankard and set it aside, then clasped a hand over hers. “I’m fine, truly and you’d be surprised just what some people are capable of.” He took a breath to gather his thoughts and buy himself some time. He needed to distract her, the less she knew about Gaunter O’Dimm the safer she was. Oz pursed his lips and then threw on a smile to disarm her volunteered a little truth. “He and I just had a little disagreement, I didn’t want to get you involved so I used my Semblance to keep said exchange private.”

“What is your Semblance?” Ruby asked, so surprised by his statement she fell head over heels into his distraction.

“Time manipulation. I’m not exactly sure how it works, either I slow the world around me to a near standstill depending how much Aura I sink into it or I speed myself up to the point that the world appears to slow to me. It’s exhausting, that is why I was trembling.” Ozpin released her hand and moved so she had to let him go and refilled his tankard.

The silver eyed woman mulled that over while Ozpin had another long drink. “That’s a really cool Semblance, how in the world did you manage to learn how to use it?” She picked up her own tankard of water and had a long drink herself.

“Very carefully.” It wasn’t a complete lie after all. “Time does not like being manipulated and it did blow up in my face once or twice, but I learned a great deal from that.” Ozpin looked down into the amber liquid, he was sure it was already loosening his tongue but to be fair he wasn’t that drunk yet. Though he was quickly working up to a pleasant buzz. He pursed his lips, his Semblance, plus Aura and a few lessons on why human’s aged let him crack the code to eternal youth. While his Semblance wasn’t connected to it, it was what got him thinking about time and how to thwart it.

“I’ll bet.” Ruby said her brain going into overdrive. “If you can go back you could get into all sorts of trouble very very quickly.”

“Well I can’t, just slow down what’s going on around me. No paradoxes for me thank you very much.” Ozpin said with a chuckle, he’d never use his Semblance if that was possible, he got a headache just thinking about it.

The redhead giggled, into her tankard while she had another sip and asked. “Blue police box or Planet Express?”

Ozpin chuckled softly, so she was a science fiction geek too, he liked her more and more. “Both.” The tall man said with a purring rumble.

Ruby did a fist pump and sang out. “Sweet!” In that moment she decided that Ozpin was the most awesome teacher at Beacon. “We should hang out sometime! My favourite episode for the blue box show is the one with the werewolf.”

“Rather like the Shakespearean one.” Ozpin sipped at his drink he was steadily feeling better, plus he had discovered a fellow geek. Let the geeking out begin!

“That was a good one too, I love what they did to bind the Carrionites that was pretty epic and silly.” Ruby finished her water but held on to the tankard, she’d prefer to keep to one for the night.

Ozpin smiled and finished his drink as well. “Yes that was very amusing, I’m glad they were permitted to do that.”
A minute later three men, two of which were clearly more than a little drunk staggered over the table. The smallest of the bunch staggered over to Ozpin, he wore traditional garb a loose open tunic and leather breeches. His features were hawkish and he had mohawk of brown hair. “Hey you, pretty boy we’re getting ready to start some boxing! You should join in! You prance about dancing showing off all those pretty muscles you should use them! Prove you’re not some pretty prissy pretty boy.” The man slurred the last few words.

The sober man came over he had golden cat eyes and brown hair, thick brows and small eyes, he had a stubble beard. He was shorter than Ozpin significantly but still on the tall side. “What my friend means to say, is that we are gathering up fighters and you look like you could handle yourself. My friend is just incompetent and can’t hold his liquor.”

The drunk man shoved the other away. “Come on Lambert don’t be such a *hic* prick.” He staggered to the side and sang out in a horribly off key voice. “I made a lymeric! Lambert Lambert - what a prick!”

“Not bad.” Lambert said with a complete deadpan.

The third man had refilled their tankards and said in a almost sober voice. “You done yet?” He asked, his voice was low and gavelly, his hair black and body lean.

The drunk staggered over and took his tankard back. “Come on Eskil, live a little!” He leaned on Eskil and had a long drink.

“I’m telling Papa that you were hammered before the second hour was out Coen. He’ll have you cleaning the stables for a month.” Eskil wrapped an arm around Coen’s ribs and helped the man walk in a straight line as they made there way away from the table.

Lambert returned his attention to Ozpin, looking him up and down slowly. Given that Ozpin hadn’t button up his shirt as of yet, there was plenty to look at. “Still you should come by and fight, prove those muscle aren’t just to land the ladies.”

Ozpin pursed his lips and looked over at Ruby, he was escorting her. Ruby shrugged and said with a little too much enthusiasm. “I wouldn’t mind watching you fight.” Oz let out a soft sigh and looked back to Lambert. “Well my lady has spoken.”

Lambert smirked and turned on his heel gesturing for Ozpin and Ruby to follow. Ozpin offered Ruby his arm again and she took with a giggle, they set off after Lambert.

They came upon a large group of people all gathered around a circle, there had been small logs of wood pounded into the ground making a circle about seven meters in circumference. There was still grass in it and fighters already trying to beat each other up, though with no particular skill. Around it were temporary bleachers already full of people cheering and of course placing bets. Ozpin had a feeling any matches he ended up in would be very short. He tilted his head to the side wolfishly thinking that the point of this was to entertain, maybe he’d do a little bit of acting as he went.

Yang, Penny and the boy that Yang and picked up Ruby remembered was named Tam were already there. All three cheering on a fighter with a bit too much glee. Ozpin and Ruby walked over to Yang and Ruby tapped on her sister’s shoulder. “Hi!”

Yang turned in surprise and clobbered her sister in a hug. “Ruby!” She quickly let the smaller woman go. “I figured you’d turn up here eventually. Is Oz fighting?” She looked over to Ozpin who smirked at her and pulled off his shirt.
Ruby looked over and admired with her sister before striding back to her escort and wordlessly offering to take his shirt. Ozpin handed it over without a word and walked around the circle to seek out the man organizing the fights and acting as referee. Ruby folded up the shirt and set it over her arm, it was still warm and she couldn’t help but enjoy that. Yang pulled her little sister into a hug and asked. “Having fun?”

Ruby nodded and snuggled into her eternally nice warm sister. “Yeah, we food and another couple dances, you?”

“You don’t want to know.” Yang grinned and nodded over at Tam, the ginger haired boy was cheering or speaking softly to Penny.

The petite girl blushed and changed the subject. “Are you fighting?”

“Yup! I’m not gonna use my Aura of course but I think it will be fun just to box for fun. Lots of fighters lined up, it’s a mostly random draw unless someone really good shows but that’s only happened once so far and he lasted three fights.” Yang looked over as Ozpin returned, she had a feeling with him around the fights were about to get a lot more interesting.

Ruby moved back to Ozpin and he let her snuggle up to his front for warmth. They could see the fighting from where they were, Yang having created a wedge in the people for them. Their really wasn’t a lot of skill, most of the people had the build of farmers who probably only ever fought enough just to learn how not to hurt themselves.

“Garrett and Artemis!” The referee announced as the last match came to a close.

Ozpin moved and Ruby spun on the spot and stood on her very tip toes, Oz caught what she wanted and bent down slight. The Silver Eyed Warrior kissed his cheek and dropped away tucking her hands behind her back. “For luck.”

Oz dipped his head and shouldered his way through the crowd into the ring. Yang looked over at Ruby. “Garrett?” Ruby shook her head. “I don’t know.”

The tall huntsmen rolled his shoulders and stretched, causing some Oooos to rise up from the crowds. He turned and flashed Ruby a smirk before Artemis stepped into the ring. His eyebrows flew up.

Artemis was a woman of dark skin and long dread locked hair that she wore pulled back into a ponytail. She was a hundred and eighty one centimeters tall and very broad. Unlike most there she wore an armoured kilt and long steel bracers. As was the rules she wore only a tight black bra but Ozpin noted she had the bearing of a Huntress. This just got a hell of a lot more interesting.

Oz pushed his glasses up his nose, raised his hands to shield his face and settled into his preferred stance. Artemis rose a brow and settled into a boxing stance in opposition to his adapted fencing one. Ruby bit her lip looking at the two, Ozpin was much taller and had more reach but she had a feeling that Artemis had already picked up on something.

“BEGIN!” The referee shouted apparently he wasn’t big on rules.

Neither moved till Artemis took a slow step to the side, watching Ozpin like a hawk. She pursed her lips and struck out for Ozpin’s head. He neatly deflected and them caught the second jab for his stomach pulling her forward and off balance. Artemis dove the side in a roll then came up before Ozpin could press the advantage. She barked out a laugh spun, activating a amber coloured Aura.

“You’re a Huntsmen!” She slammed a fist into her palm. “Right then the kiddy gloves are off, fight
Ozpin lowered his hands and shifted his foot back, and activating a his Aura with a green crackle. There was an audible intake of breath, Ozpin raised a hand in a ‘come’ gesture. Artemis sprung forward her fist connecting with his forearm, he lashed out and missed. Artemis bending out of the way, the tall man followed up with a kick, but the woman dodged under it and clocked Ozpin in the jaw with her right hook, his Aura flaring green.

Oz’s head rung Aura or no that hurt, he staggered to the side his hand going to his chin to steady himself. He felt a hand on his shoulder and he dropped slamming his fist into Artemis stomach. They broke part both staggering, neither Aura had broken but they both hit like Ursa.

Ruby worried her lip she saw Oz shake his head an in an attempt to clear it but that hit had been something else. It was clear to her that Artemis was a Huntress and not a lightweight. She watched as Ozpin pushed his glasses up again and narrow his eyes, she let out a sigh of relief that was an expression she recognized. Yang hugged her sister and whispered into her sisters ear. “He’ll be fine, he is the Headmaster after all. He doesn’t need anyone to protect to him.”

Ruby nodded as the two Hunters fought, clearly having judged the other the blows as fast as their Aura’s allowed. The cheering intensified as their Aura’s flared with every hit, thunderous blows and cracking of Aura filled the arena.

Ozpin’s breathing was laboured, he wasn’t using any of his tricks and this woman just kept coming. He could see she wasn’t in much better shape but Gods above did she pack one hell of a punch. They squared off again and Oz really wished he could pull his cane. He had a feeling when it came to boxing Artemis was more experienced, which was an odd thought but he was getting his butt kicked.

Artemis grinned and threw out a quick collection of punches, Ozpin deflected again throwing out a left hook, but she stepped in with ease and batted it away forcing her shoulder into Ozpin’s diaphragm and laying down thundering punches into his gut.

Screw this! Ozpin thought and grabbed her by the back of her neck and ripped her away sending her spinning through the air. Before Artemis hit the ground he grabbed her ankle and swung her up into the air and then down on either side of him. BOOM BOOM BOOM, he let her go and moved away before she gathered her wits, her Aura broke on the last hit. “Yield.” Ozpin growled out pressed a hand to his stomach, healing the purple bruising with the last few flickers of Aura.

Artemis rolled over and groaned, pressing a hand to her head. “Gods, I feel punny. I yield.” Ozpin walked over and offered his hand, Artemis clasped it and pulled her up. “Good fight.”

Cheers went up as the two walked from the ring. Artemis smiled when Ruby zipped over to them then and then stopped with a blush unsure of what to do. Artemis nodded to the two of them and said, “Enjoy the festival.” she walked away toward the tree line.

“Are you okay?” Ruby asked reaching out to him, Ozpin caught her hands in his before she could touch him.

“I’m fine.” Ozpin said, he did hurt but he was more interested in Artemis, it wasn’t everyday he met someone that could match him a fair fight. He looked over to Artemis just as she hit the treeline. “Ruby look.”

Ruby did just as Artemis turned away from them one moment the woman has there, the next a huge deer stood in her place. “Wow.” Ruby’s eyes widened as the deer looked away from them and them
and disappeared into the treeline.

Ozpin tightened his grip on her hands. “We have been very lucky tonight.” Ruby looked up to him and smiled, then leaned up and against him. Ozpin moved a hand to rest on her waist, looking on he extended his senses and felt that Artemis was slowly making her way away from the camp. Undoubtedly to seek out other festival grounds to visit.

“Hey ‘Garrett’!” Yang hollowered pull off her dress revealing she was wearing the base layers of her normal gear underneath. “I want a round with you!”

Ozpin sighed and let Ruby go, she opened her mouth to say something but he spoke first. “Don’t worry, I know your sister Semblance. I’ll chose my hits with extreme care.”

They returned to ring, Ruby returned to her spot while Ozpin set about very carefully beating Yang up. Neither used their Aura’s, but what Yang lacked in skill she made up for enthusiasm. Ruby watched silently as Ozpin trounced her sister, then had other fighters clambering to have a go at him, all smiling and encouraging the taller man to keep going good naturally. It took a few rounds but slowly a smile started to appear on Oz’s lips. The sweat started to make his torso shiny and Ruby found herself pressing her legs together as he effortlessly tossed a man over his shoulder.

She had watched Qrow train often and it had much the same effect on her. Weapons were super cool and Qrow looked extra hot swinging Harbinger around. However there was something more guttural about Ozpin tossing people around like potatoes. Even when they landed a hit watching that grin widened and the force he used to respond… her juices trickled over the lips of her sex. She bit her lip harder trying to hide it, but Yang having returned looked over to her and smiled.

The fights paused for a moment, Oz spat at the ground clearing his mouth of blood then had a long drink from a tankard a spectator shoved at him. Before turning to the fight, he glanced over at Ruby and the smile turned into a smirk, he put his arms behind his head and stretched showing off blatantly. Ruby pressed her legs together harder and hugged herself tight.

The match resumed and the meaty sound of impacts were drowned out by the cheering and howlering. Bets placed, money trading hands all happening as people watched, word had spread that a Huntsmen and Huntress were brawling and that attracted yet more people. Ozpin threw one last hayemaker sending his opponent straight into the ground before he bowed to the audience finished and walked straight for Ruby.

He grabbed her by the upper arm and pulled her through the crowds, Yang quickly stepping up to keep the spectacle going. Ruby had to almost run to keep up as he pulled her through the camp to a large tent. Ruby had no idea where they were going the inside of the tent was split up by hanging fabric walls. Ozpin found one with a red card outside and grabbed it shoving the door open and pulling her inside.

Ruby stumbled and barely had gathered her thoughts before he kissed her. His hands went straight to her hips pulling her tight to him. Ruby tasted mead, she was used to smelling alcohol on Qrow but getting a kiss full of it was new. The sensation ran straight through her body and she gasped, turning her head breaking the kiss and said firmly. “You’re drunk.”

“Enjoy it while it lasts, if I was sober I would have ignored you.” Ozpin pulled her dress off and flicked it to the floor, Ruby took a step back trying to grasp the situation. Ozpin went for his belt undoing it as the petite woman sat down on the raised cushioned platform that passed for the bed.

“No sex.” She said back up to get comfy, her breath quickened as Ozpin kneeled above her. “Fine by me.” He growled and bent over her stealing another kiss, his hand trailing up her thigh, his fingers...
dipped into her dripping sex. “I know of many other things we can do, I won’t spoil Qrow’s Rose.” Ruby didn’t have time to think on the hint of malice in his voice as he pulled her deep into pleasure.

Chapter End Notes

A message from Ardianna (and Kry)
Hey, thank you for all the support and comments, we're so glad to see how so many people are enjoying the rewritten edition of Emerald Rose, this chapter is a bit (~LOT) longer and That link is for the first dance, there isn’t an easy link to the second that I found. However if people care look up the Witcher 3 marriage dance in the Hearts of Stone DLC, I pretty much copied it.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tNZXDUZu2To
ENJOY <3
Ozpin woke up with a drumming headache, he opened his eyes to the dawning light as slowly as he could and lifted a hand to rub his eyes. His legs were cold but his chest warm, and there was an arm wrapped tight around him. He blinked looking down and saw Ruby snuggled into his chest, she had a leg over his hips and was pressed tightly to him nude. He took stock for a second and realised he was nude as well, that they were pressed up very close and he was on the sticky side. What the fuck!?

Pound pound pound went his head and he groaned, he did not want to deal with this right now. The room around him danced on quick circles so he flopped his head back onto the bed. A few moments went past as Oz pushed down the need to empty his stomach, light from outside was prodding his eyelids painfully and he had to push down another wave of dizziness when he reopened them. Only then noticing they were in a spare room, during festivals people were expected to need places to sleep as not all would bring a tent if they came from the city. The tent Ozpin had pulled them to last night served as an almost motel function. The blankets where heavy wool and pulled tight around them. He glanced around the room and saw a sack with Ruby’s red cloak peeking out the top, Yang had probably put it there. Ruby stirred against his chest with a sleepy purr and snuggled up tight with a yawn, opening sleepy eyes to look and smile up at him.

“Miss Rose.” Ozpin croaked his throat raspy with dehydration and drunken sleep. “Please tell you are aren’t as hammered as I am?”

She turned her head and propped it up on his bent arm. “Perfectly sober.” Ruby said with a happy smile. “You look worse for wear are you okay?”

“Hungover and my memory isn’t so good right now, so if you could explain.” He gestured to the two of them and flexed his hips for emphasis.

Ruby jumped and flushed as he jerked against her and took a deep breath. “No sex if that’s what you’re thinking, I would not let you do that drunk. It was just…” She paused and quirked her lips thinking. “Is there a name for wet dry humping?”

Ozpin barked out a laugh that made his head hurt. “Foreplay?” The urge to bury his head back under the thick blanket and escape into sleep for the rest of day was great.

The silver eyed woman huffed and said. “That would imply actually getting to have the sex, which we did not have.” She pouted which Ozpin found adorable.

“Well I am very sure Qrow would not forgive me for deflowering you. So I’ll say that’s a good thing, plus for a maiden as lovely as yourself I would want to be sober for that. Crap.” He cursed softly. Stupid mouth to brain filter not working! I need to get some water into my system and several gallons of coffee to be sure!

Ruby sucked in a breath and turned scarlet, her eyes dilating. Oh my, he does feel something for me. She turned her head to kiss his jaw but he was already in motion. Ozpin felt her stretch out to him and rolled off the bed plank getting up. He swayed for a moment and pressed a hand to his temple. Oww! He walked over to his discarded pants and pulled them on, then found his shirt and took the time to do all the buttons and tuck the tails in. The Headmaster looked over to Ruby and frowned.
“Are you getting up? Would you like to head back with me or seek out Yang?”

“I’ll go back with you.” Ruby got up and walked over to the sack and pulled out her clothes quickly getting dressed while Oz did the same. At the bottom of the sack she found a little spool of red ribbon, she quickly tucked that into a pocket and found her dress and put it over her arm.

Ruby followed Ozpin out without a word, he seemed like he was in a bad mood and she didn’t want to push him. Breakfast smells filled the air and they had a brief meal, Ozpin drinking a great deal of water as well, probably trying to flush as much of the alcohol in his system as possible. The trip back to Beacon was sullen and quiet. Ruby tried catching his eye but he refused to allow her, instead keeping his head straight and his expression unreadable. When they got back to Beacon grounds he pulled out his cane and extended it tapping it on the ground once. “The evening was very enjoyable Miss Rose, good day.” He inclined his head to her and set off for his apartment leaving her behind.

Ruby’s jaw dropped at that, That’s it? The silver eyed woman stared after him for a moment then started off back towards her dorm. There was a pang of hurt in her chest and had anyone been watching they would have noticed the difference in the way she walked. He was fine for a little bit, but then it was just like he shut down. I mean it was just a festival but I didn’t think he’d cut like that.

When she opened her dorm room door she found the room empty, she kicked off her boots not caring when one landed across the room and jumped up into her bed. She set the White dress aside and pulled out her Scroll sitting with her legs crossed. Qrow would be up by now and as he was still on the boat very likely not busy. She dialed his number and set it for a video stream.

It only took two rings before Qrow picked up clearly sitting much the same way she was. “What’s up Rubes?” He caught her slightly downcast expression. “Something wrong?”

Ruby shook her head and forced a smile. “Na, how’s your trip?”

“Thankfully boring, I’m a bit sore I missed All Howl’s Night but we had a little party here.” He looked her up and down and quirked his lips. “You look like you had a long night? Yang take you out for it?”

Ruby laughed and said. “We actually forgot till we ran into Penny, but yeah we went.”

“I’m sensing something happened.” The black feathered haired man watched her squirm in place for a moment. “Ruby what happened?” He said worry starting to bubble up in his chest.

“I ran into Professor Ozpin and he was my escort for the night.” Ruby said it seemed like as good a place to start as any, she was very surprised when Qrow’s eyes narrowed in a way she had never seen before and his lips pulled back almost baring his teeth. “He did something didn’t he?” The garnet eyed man growled.

Ruby was taken aback by the sudden hostility in her partner. “Wait I’m confused, aren’t you two friends? You’ve been working for him for years.”

“After a fashion, Oz is a heartless bastard Ruby, I’m not angry with you but I do not like the idea of him messing around with you.” Qrow clenched his fist his voice was carefully controlled. He was worried for her, worried she’d make his mistake. “Don’t get attached to him Ruby, he’ll only hurt you in the long run.”

“You say you’re not angry yet you’re getting awfully hostile.” Ruby was trying to understand this, she had never seen Qrow like this before.
“I said I'm not angry with ‘you’ Ruby but Oz doesn’t let himself love, you’re young and impressionable. He collects people Ruby, ones with power and skill. Let me guess, you two played around a bit that’s why you called. You wanted to let me know before he did.” Qrow’s heart started to pound, he was willing to bet Ozpin was pulling Ruby down the same path he did with Qrow.

“Just a little, some kisses and hand stuff, no actual intercourse. I told him no on that front.” Ruby pursed her lips studying Qrow, *he said Ozpin doesn’t let himself love, that I’m young and impressionable, Ozpin collects people. Wait…* Ruby’s eyes flew open wide. “He collected you, you two are together! That’s why your getting all hostile!”

Qrow visibly flinched away from her. “Once yes, take it from me Ruby don’t get attached to him. I did and I’ve been paying for it ever since.”

The silver eyed woman thought he looked a mix of hurt and angry. That kind of pain that only came from love lost. “Did he leave you or something?”

“No, he just never follows through. Years we were together, just having fun, playing around. Sex for the fun of it, I got attached, he never did. Ozpin isn’t like you or I, don’t make the mistake of falling in love Ruby. He’ll never return it.” Qrow near spat those last few words.

“You gave up didn’t you? He-.” Ruby stopped and hugged herself, already starting to wonder. “He started to pay attention to you, train you, teach you, you just started hanging out and one thing led to another.”

“He collected me, just like that. Turned me into his weapon, played with me till he got bored. Seems to me he’s moved on to you, does he know about us?” Qrow asked sharply.

Ruby nodded. “Yeah, he caught me singing to you once, I don’t think he was very happy.”

Qrow ground his teeth, he already knew Ozpin was a mantiplive bastard he wouldn’t put it past the man to play with Ruby just to hurt him. “Stay away from him.” Qrow growled, he wasn’t angry at Ruby or her wish to explore just her partner.

“I can’t, we trained together. Besides when we woke up this morning he was all closed off again. He doesn’t even address me by my given name, I don’t think his interest extended beyond the festival.” Ruby said, she didn’t want to stay away from Ozpin, something deep inside her fought against that thought with every fibre of her being.

“Hmm.” Qrow rumbled lowly, still not at all happy with the idea. He didn’t want to see Ruby hurt and after what had happened to him and Oz, he just couldn’t trust the other man with her. While there was no way Ozpin would act inapproprently without a great deal of encouragement from Ruby. He was worried that Ruby would fall in love, to be quite frank Ozpin was her type, powerful, tall and mysterious, intelligent. Ozpin would use that, just like how he had used it with Qrow. “I’ll talk to him when I get there.”

“Are you sure that is really necessary?” Ruby was getting worried, this wasn’t at all like the Qrow she knew. He didn’t even seem jealous, or angry with her, but there did seem to be a bubbling rage aimed at Ozpin.

“Yes.” Qrow said sharply and caught her wince, he let out a long sigh and asked more softly. “I take it you at least had fun at the festival?”

Ruby nodded and smiled warmly. “We had three dances and the food was great! I even got to watch Ozpin box, and I think we saw the Artemis there was well.”
“Wow, you two saw a Goddess? What I wouldn’t give to see that.” Qrow leaned back trying to imagine that.

“I think so, she turned into a huge deer and Ozpin thought it was her too.” Ruby smiled and reached over to her dress and thread. “I even got the thread for staying the whole night! What do you think my first ring should be of?”

“Given that it’s your first one I’d keep it simple, maybe just a line with some faun spots to signify seeing Artemis.” Qrow offered, he knew Ruby was not a master seamstress, simple would be best for her.

“That’s a good idea.” Ruby set the two things aside again and worried her lip. “How far out are you?”

“A couple more weeks, but I am getting sick of this boat I might end up flying the last bit.” He let it go unsaid that this conversation made him want to move up his timeline. If only so he could beat the crap out of Ozpin and put himself between the two of them.

“I wouldn’t mind if you got here early, all the more time we get to have before you have to go again.” Ruby smiled warmly and Qrow’s mood finally eased.

The door banged open and Yang, Weiss and Blake walked into the room. Weiss was saying to Yang. “I can’t believe you participated in such a pagan festival.”

“Come on Weiss, just because Atlas has a stick shoved so far up its butt it sticks out its nose doesn’t mean the rest of the kingdoms do.” Yang said look up to Ruby while Blake said. “We worship Cernunn on Menagerie, even with the space limitations we manage to hold a Wylde Hunt every year.”

Weiss let out a little huff, as Yang bounced up onto Ruby’s bed with a cry of “UNCLE QROW!” She clobbered Ruby in a hug and squeezed tight. “Oh I saw Ozpin drag you off after his fights, did you have fun little sister?”

With her team in attendance Ruby blushed brightly. “Yes.” She mumble and Yang let her go to shift her attention to Qrow. “Oh uncle I pulled this super cute ginger into the dance last night! Little did I know he had a huge coc-.”

“Ack Yang, tell him when I’m not around I don’t need to hear it!” Ruby covered her ears blushing brightly.

“Aww come on little sister! You were doing the horizontal tango with Ozpin, you can totally suck up some adult talk.” Yang beamed even brighter when a thought occurred to her. “Ohh you have to tell me about what he’s packen!”

“Argh Yang no! For one we did not ‘tango’ and two, it’s not like I measured.” Ruby gestured to the space before her and said without thinking. “He does have wonderful fingers though.”

Yang laughed and started to sing, rather nicely.

:And it's twiddle ee ai dee ai dee ai
Twiddle ee ai dee ei
It's often times a man will leave you broken with dismay
And it's twiddle ee ai dee ai dee ai
twiddle ee ai dee ei

There's other things to twiddle when the men have sailed away
Lucky Annie was a lady who'd been pleased by many men
They all would sail away but then they'd come right back again
But if they never sailed her way she really didn't care
Cause I know that you don't need a man to twiddle under there!:

“Yang!” Ruby blushed all the brighter and clobbered her sister trying to get her to shut up. Yang playfully tumbled with her sister till Qrow sang out a few lines that had Ruby turning bright red and pliant. Yang got off her sister as soon as she saw the change in Ruby.

:When I feel down, I want you above me.
I'll search myself, I want you to find me.
Forget myself, I want you to remind me.

I don't want anybody else,
When I think about you, I touch myself.
I don't want anybody else, I touch myself.
You close your eyes and see me before you,
Think you would die if I was to ignore you,
A fool could see just how much you adore me,
Get down on your knees and do anything for me.

I don't want anybody else,
When I think about you, I touch myself.
I don't want anybody else,
I'm the one who makes you come running.
Gets you coming all the time,
When I'm around, you're always begging,
I wanna make you mine.

I love myself, I want you to love me,
When I feel down, I want you above me,
I'll search myself, I want you to find me,
Forget myself, I want you to remind me.

I don't want anybody else,
When I think about you, I touch myself,
I don't want anybody else.: 

Qrow could see the flush spreading over Ruby, she looked to him with eyes near black. He pulled his wolfish smirk and saw her breath catch. He didn’t touch her, he didn’t want to rush anything physical from her. That didn’t mean he didn’t find her lovely, he liked enchanting her with words alone. They were something he could use wherever he was, love her from a safe distance. He also knew she liked listening to him, with just a few lyrics he had her forgetting any embarrassment. 

Ruby shook her head trying to gather her thoughts, she sat back up and crossed her legs trying to ignore the throb between them. Trust Qrow to have her worked up with a few words, what she wouldn’t give for him to touch her with a little bit of that intent. She looked between the two only imagining what dirty thoughts were going through their heads. Fine she was a Xiao Long too, she refused to be beaten in this game. “Ugh FINE!” Then got up straightened her chest and started to groove on the spot.

:So powerful was the telephonic pillow-talking, seemed safe fantasy,
With dangerous reality.
I don't know whether our telephone relationship was more intellectual,
Or sexual.: 

Watching Qrow’s jaw connect to the floor to the floor was very satisfying. He hadn’t know that Ruby knew that one, worse yet it was very accurate. Ruby smirked at him and played with a lock of her hair. Weiss was too shocked to say a word and Blake looked like she was recategorizing Ruby in her head.
“Nice one sis, I didn’t know you knew it.” Yang was almost enjoying Qrow’s dumbfounded expression.

Ruby stuck out her tongue at her sister. “Just because you and Dad bond over sex oriented tunes, doesn’t mean I don’t listen too. I’m just more subtle about it plus, you know internet. I might not play around as much as you, but I am not completely uneducated.”

“Juezz you kids remind me more of Tai with each passing day.” Qrow wasn’t sure how he felt about that, he hadn’t known Ruby was really interested in all that stuff. He cocked his head and studied her, well she clearly was, could it be that she was just waiting on him?

Yang and Ruby walked out of the last class for the day. The blonde looked over to her little sister and frowned. Since the festival Ruby had been down, no longer giving her happy reports on how her lessons with Ozpin went. The little red head was strangely quiet and didn’t have the same enthusiasm for any of her lessons. Yang reached out and took Ruby’s hand and wordlessly pulled them out into a side hall. Keeping a firm grip on her sister’s hand she pulled them away from everyone till they came to a quiet part of the courtyard where they would not be overheard.

“Okay Ruby, what’s wrong, you’ve gone all sullen.” Yang pulled her down onto the grass to sit with her.

“It’s nothing.” Ruby said muttley, reaching out to play with a piece of grass. The afternoon sun was cool around the back of her neck and she didn’t bother fighting the shiver that ran through her when a cold wind brushed past.

“Clearly not, you’ve gone all quiet since the festival what’s happened? It has something to do with Ozpin right? You’re not talking about him like you used too.” Yang knew that partners rarely lasted beyond the night but she didn’t think Ozpin the type to change that much after some play.

The red headed huntress gave a loud huff. “Yeah it’s the Headmaster, I get that it’s just for fun at a festival but he’s been soo, so cold and distant since. He barely talks to me anymore, we were getting pretty comfy with each other now it’s like I’m back to square one or even worse.” Ruby threw her hands up in confusion. “We trade hellos, he picks a lesson and we get started. He doesn’t even talk to correct me anymore, just uses his cane to make whatever adjustment I need. He doesn’t touch me at all, it’s like he actively avoids any contact!”

“Well he is the Headmaster, maybe he’s just trying to distance himself again. It would be the proper thing to do, considering his position.” Yang said softly trying to calm her sister.

“But it’s not just that! I totally get that we have to keep our distance, student and Headmaster all that jazz. But he doesn’t even say hello when we pass in the halls anymore, it’s like he’s actively avoiding me.” Ruby hugged herself, pulling up her legs to curl into a ball. “Had I know he’d do this after the festival I would never have kissed him.”

Yang moved over and hugged her sister. “You’ll figure it out, you always do. Maybe right now he just needs some space.”

“I hope that is all it is, because I don’t know what to do.” Ruby snuggled up to Yang and tried to
push thoughts of Ozpin from her mind.

Life returned to normal for Ozpin, during the nightly lessons with Ruby they did not speak once of the festival or their actions. Something he was unsure if he was thankful for or disappointed in. The only thing that worried him was as the weeks passed there was no call from Qrow. He expected Ruby to tell Qrow about the festival and she didn’t seem the type to keep things from him. So why hadn’t Qrow confronted him about it yet?

He was just returning from teaching Ruby for the night and opened his door to his apartment and softly closed and locked it behind him then froze. The air was chilled, more than it should have been, his eyes flew to the door of his balcony but found it closed. Ozpin pursed his lips and lowered himself and silently progressed into his flat. He spun his cane around into ready position, he pushed the door to his bedroom open then stepped through it cane hand first.

That was his first of many mistakes that night, Qrow seized his wrist, ripped him into the room spinning him head first into the wall. Ozpin let out a pained gasp and dropped his cane it clattering to the floor. He felt Qrow press up tight against him, grabbing his other wrist and pinning it to the wall. “What the fuck do you think you’re doing?” Qrow hissed into his ear, exerting a rather large portion of his strength.

Ozpin groaned as Qrow pushed him against the wall. “You’ll have to be more specific.” Oz swept out a foot hooking it behind one of Qrow’s knees. He pulled sharply and as Qrow staggered he lashed out hitting Qrow in the sternum with this elbow. He grabbed Qrow by the throat and heaved him over to the bed pinning him down by his hips.

The red eyed man twisted clocking Oz in the jaw, the taller man recoiled as pain lit across his cheek. Oz made a grab for Qrows arm twisting him back on his front and forcing him face first back onto the bed. Ozpin grabbing Qrow’s other hand and pinning them to the small of his back. Qrow tried to twist and get his feet back under him, Oz kicked them both and forced them apart. He pressed down back against their hips pressed tight. The copper eyed man purred into Qrow’s ear. “As much as I love it when you get like this, I would like to know why. You didn’t even call when you came in, does Ruby know you’re back yet? You’re early for her birthday.”

“Fuck off Oz you damn well know why!” He struggled but got nowhere, his body was reacting without his input to Ozpin’s weight on him. Qrow could feel that Ozpin was enjoying himself as well, that was not the goal here.

Ozpin leaned down and bit Qrow’s ear, rolling the fleshly lobe of his ear. “I miss when you had piercings, those were fun to play with.” He ground his hips against Qrows. “But you haven’t answered my question, did something happen and you want help putting it away or are you just here for the fun?”

Trust Ozpin to not even get it remotely right, Qrow couldn’t ignore the purr in Ozpin’s voice or how he ground against him but he was determined to not get distracted. He turned his wrists trying to get a feel for them, if he could break this hold. Oz tightened his hand at the motion as if to say *nope* and moved a hand to the front of Qrow’s trousers. The belt coming undone with practiced ease. “No.” Qrow growled out and Ozpin stopped.
Oz paused confused and let go backing away, he watched as Qrow spun around and fixed his belt. He took another step away the moonlight as his back casting his features in shadow. Something was wrong here and it was a different wrong then normal. “Why are you here Qrow?”

Qrow strode up to him not at all cowed by the cold tone to Oz’s voice. “To tell you to stay away from Ruby. She loves with too much ease and we both know you don’t. I won’t let you use her.”

The taller man snarled, he did not take orders from anyone. “She came to me.”

Garnet eyes looked for copper in the darkness and he couldn’t find them. “You could have said no, you should have said no. She has been telling me about you, you’re doing the same thing with her as you did for me and I won’t let her fall for it.”

“That is not your call to make and for the record I was grooming her to work with you. Gods know you seem to need a keeper at times.” Oz’s voice grew flat and cold.

Qrow’s eyes widened for a second and then he shook his head. “Was’ being the key word there, stay away from her Oz. She deserves better than you, she deserves someone who will love her back.” Qrow walked out for the living room.

“Like you?” Ozpin called out from behind him. “Cause you’re so capable of showing love,” The sarcasm was thick. “I’ve heard a few interesting comments from Yang. You don’t even touch her, I’ve got to play with her more than you have been brave enough to even try. I’ve tasted that soft skin, she’d moaned just for me, it’s a beautiful sound but you wouldn’t know would you.” Oz moved the darkness shrouding him, following Qrow. “You’re too afraid, I know you Qrow.”

Qrow spun and threw another punch, Ozpin caught it and slammed Qrow into the wall. The smaller man groaned as his head hit the wall but Qrow growled out. “My relationship with Ruby is none of your concern.” In as cold a voice as Qrow could create he said. “We’re done Oz, we have been for a long time. I’ll find a way to make do without you.” He activated his Aura and shoved Ozpin away, he stormed out of the hall.

Ozpin was too stunned to move till he heard the glass door slide open. He raced into the living room, calling out after Qrow. “She can’t help you, not like I can. How many others will there be of that? How many others will you hurt because they can’t get it just right? You’re self destructive enough without that on your consciousness. You’ll come back Qrow, you know I’m right. Everyone has a limit to their understanding and someday Ruby will hit hers and you’ll have nowhere else to turn.” Ozpin crossed the room and grabbed for Qrow’s arm.

Qrow twisted away stepping backwards out onto the balcony. Ozpin followed for a step then stopped the dark look on Qrow’s face making him pause. “Look I’m sorry, I’ll stop teaching her if that is what you want. Please don’t go -” Three little words caught in his throat, three little words that so desperately needed to be said. Ozpin clenched his fists and looked to the ground, those three little words that were never said, instead he pleaded again. “Please don’t go.”

Qrow shook his head sadly, of course that was all Ozpin had for him. Because he doesn’t love, I’ve wanted and wished for so long but no even now. I’m just a tool to him. The raven haired man shook his head and softly said. “That’s not good enough anymore Headmaster.” He turned away transformed and took flight up up and away from the man who loved him dearly.

Ozpin stood fixed, scarcely able to believe that Qrow was really gone. Slowly it sunk in that Qrow was gone and he wasn’t coming back. Why?! Why can’t I just say it! I thought he understood. Oz shook his head and walked back inside clenching his fists. I can’t even blame Ruby for this, Qrow was right this had been building for a long time. That doesn’t make it right though! A hand closed
around the edge of his coffee table. *I gave him everything! I gave him the knowledge to stay with me!* “RAA!” He picked up the table in a almost half assed manner and flung it at the wall, it shattered into hundreds of pieces. *And he throws me aside for some tiny slip of a woman that he won’t even fuck! Just how long that this been going on! When did he really leave me?*

Ozpin had no answer for that, it defused his rage he looked down to the shattered pieces of table and fell to his knees. Tears leaked from his eyes, as he hugged himself, curling in on himself he sobbed out. “Why?” Why did they always leave him in the end?

Chapter End Notes

If you would like to know where the songs came from here is a little list for you.
Songs Super Sex World One Tone - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gUnuzt2hHFA
Misbehavin’ Maidens Twiddle - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JAvWu6pILKk
Genitorturers - Touch Myself - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AwltwPfxA

Also I would like to say thank you for all the support, Ardy has been hard at work writing and she really appreciates all the comments and kudos so a big huggy thank you  *hugs* You guys are awesome! <3
Chapter Notes

Trigger Warning - If you pay no heed then its your own plead, a little non-con in this chapter (just a little) and some darker thoughts ahead, you have been warned.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Ozpin noticed throughout the next day that Ruby was no different than normal. Which could only mean that Qrow had not showed himself to her yet. He pondered at that and tried not to feel too much satisfaction at knowing he hadn’t gone to Ruby after their ‘discussion’ last night. With Qrow’s departure there was no reason for Ozpin to keep to his statement that he was going to leave Ruby alone. So their lessons continued, unlike usual he was the one waiting for Ruby in their arena. The moment he saw her enter, the crimson cape trailing behind her he almost growled annoyance. “Good evening Miss Rose.”

Ruby froze for a half step, Ozpin’s voice sent a shiver of unease through her. The last few days she had felt miserable at the lack of communication between them now with those simple little words she suddenly wanted to go back to the silence. “Are you alright sir?” She asked picking her way down the steps.

As the silver eyed woman walked over to the sword rack Ozpin walked up behind her said. “I’m fine.” Ruby paused at that, the tone was the same, she left the swords and stood with her back to a wall. “You don’t sound fine, is something bothering you? Did I do something wrong?”

Besides steal my lover from me? Ozpin tried not to glare at her but didn’t quite succeed. “Nothing you need to concern yourself with.” The cold tone remained, it was all still too fresh, even Ruby could see his anger leaking out from behind his usual calm and restraint.

“Well you’re being snappy Sir, so I am making it my concern.” Ruby almost reached out to him but then thought the better of it. He had made it relatively clear the night after the festival that mistakes had been made.

“I don’t recall asking for the opinion of a student on my welfare.” Ozpin snapped, and realised his mistake instantly. Ruby backed away from him a frightened look on her face, he could see the rise of fall of her chest. Ozpin found his mind turning down darker paths, ways to get even with Qrow, hurt him like he had been hurt. “Fine,” He growled taking a step towards her. “My lover has left me, for someone else. I have no idea how long they have been together, but he broke it off with me last night so forgive me for my lasp in control.”

“Oh,” Ruby could barely believe Ozpin was having boyfriend troubles. She thought to her and Qrow and smiled slightly. “Well if you love him you’ll find some way to make it up to him. He must of left for a reason, maybe it was just a case of miscommunication or something?”

How does she always hit it on the head? Oz pursed his lips and growled out. “Something like that.” He collapsed his cane and shoved it into his coat pocket.

“Well if you really love him, as you obviously do. Then you’ll find a way to make it up to him.” Ruby smiled softly, rocking slightly on her heels. “Love always wins in the end.”
Ozpin couldn’t help it he laughed, deep and echoing he shook his head and looked over at her, his eyes hot with something akin to fury. “Oh you naive girl, you have no idea what you are talking about.”

“Well that is your opinion.” Ruby said flatly and wasn’t at all prepared for what came next. “I love Qrow very much and we’ve worked out despite the odds.”

There was a heavy audible sigh, “Is that so?” and much like a button had been pressed Ozpin spun, his hands gripping onto Ruby and all but slammed her against the nearest wall. There was a tiny “Eep.” from the huntress as her Aura protected her from the force of her back meeting the wall. Oz saw the flicker of red Aura and took that as an opportunity to willfully reached for it, holding it like a ribbon tightly coiled in his mind. The effect had Ruby's jaw dropping open as he began pushing his Aura onto hers, his voice lowered dangerously at the young woman. “You think Qrow’s a man you can just ‘love’? Wait till you see the real world and the darker side of desire. In fact, let me give you a taste.” Towering above her, one hand and his hips grinding her against the wall the other tilted her chin up to meet his eyes. Forcing her to look at him, his eyes penetrating through her mind as he channeled his Aura through his hands and over her body. Ruby's breath quickened as she was forced to maintained eye contact with the Professor and as much as she tried she couldn’t look away from him. Oz released her chin and let his hand wander in a downward motion, his hand just ghosting over the pale flesh of her bare arm. He could feel his own Aura shimmer over her body and his large hand just barely grazed over the soft skin of her thighs. Supple, toned and as pale as moonlight his finger inched back up and under her skirts leaving a trail of heat in its wake.

Ruby’s pupils widened like black orbs as flashes of something hot and wet coiled inside her and her jaw dropped slightly while she panted. Her body was itching for his hand to move higher, to press more firmly over her skin, to sink nails into her and rake them down her sensitive flesh. She was radiating heat and Oz stillled his hand high over her thigh, the tip of his thumb grazing at the fabric of her panties. The older man stared down at her parted lips and pushed more of his Aura onto her. The way Ruby was looking at him, so full of softness and curves, almost begging for something she had no name for yet. *Qrow doesn’t understand what he has here. She’s so... pure.* Inwardly he chuckled, the amusement must have shown on his face as Ruby tilted up on her toes, trying to reach for his lips. She was nowhere near tall enough and he would have to lean down for their lips to touch. One kiss wouldn’t hurt and besides she like a pristine canvas, makes you want to get her dirty a bit, don’t it?

The moment his lips met hers he was lost, his goal to hurt her like how he had been planning fading from his mind. She made it so hard for him to hate her and it hurt to have all these feelings bottled up inside him. What Ruby lacked in skill she made up in enthusiasm or perhaps it was desperation? Oz knew deep down that the amount of Aura and emotion he was channeling through them and the heat passing between them was likely making the silver eyed maiden uncontrolled. The way she wiggled beneath him, trying to get closer she clearly had no clue as to what she was doing. Oz tasted her again his tongue darting out and seeking hers. Coaching her as swiftly as he had when they had spared with precision and skill. Only Ruby seemed to move with passion, trying to match him in her own softer way and Oz couldn’t help but like it, want it! *I will have you.* He let the emotion ripple out over his Aura and into her.

Ruby cried out as she felt Ozpin’s Aura burning over her own, it seemed to envelop her whole body making her ultra sensitive and lightheaded. Unwittingly like before her Aura reached out to him, she felt the walls around Ozpin. The walls he built to protect his soul and her own simply ducked under them sliding through his flaring green-

“STOP!” Oz dropped his hand as though it burned and froze at the same time, thrusting Ruby from his mind and shoving her Aura away from him. Parts of his own Aura remained on her but he didn’t
dare bring it back with him. He immediately jumped away from her and without Ozpin’s hand pinning her to the wall the young woman slid down into a heap on the floor as she sat on her knees panting and shaking.

Ruby whined mournfully her hands reaching out subconsciously for Ozpin to return, everything felt different. While her eyes and ears blurred, her body felt sensitive, like a low current was racing through her. There was a heat over her breasts and the cotton bra she wore rubbed against hardened peaks. Legs still quivering she ached to rub her hands over the covered moulds just to relieve her frustration. Ruby barely restraining herself from touching the throbbing between her legs, already the inside of her legs were burning and damp with her juices.

Oz’s own body was reacting to the sight of Ruby on her knees, tiny quivering hands stretched out for him, her luminous eyes rolling back as parts of his Aura and emotions continued to play over her like a violin, her moans stroked his own desire to take her. He shook his head of the urge he wanted to hate her, make her suffer! The strong rope of his control seemed to pull itself tight as he tried to rein in the desire flooding his lower body with blood and fire. It roared between his ears, Oz watched Ruby’s hand trail up to a breast and hold it, a deep red flush coloring her chest and neck. He strained to control himself, if he moved he wouldn’t stop till he had everything, all of her and then Ruby moaned... It was quiet and breathless but it was enough to snap him, his attention and he lept forward, grabbed her by the shoulders lifted her up. This time he dove into her mouth, swallowing every moan and whimper the young woman squeaked out between short spaces of breathing he allowed before Oz poured his Aura through her again.

Ruby’s tongue tried to do battle with the older man’s but she could hardly catch her breath. Instead she wrapped her arms around Ozpin’s neck and held on as he swept her away in pleasure. Oz’s own hands found her love handles and pulled the redhead tight against his body, her softer form seemed to melt around him as he held her, so close only their clothes acted like a thin barrier between their heated bodies. Oz left the cavern of her mouth, prompting another whine from the younger woman and kissed his way down her chin, nipping at the underside of her jaw. Moving down to her neck, breathing in the sweet scent of roses. Oz closed his eyes taking the scent deep within him nuzzling the soft flesh with his lips.

Ruby heard Ozpin purr against her neck and tilted her head back, giving him rein over the bare column. Her hands came up to tangle slender fingers in his ashen hair. Ruby had to moan loudly to avoid almost shrieking when she felt the lips against her skin suddenly bite down at the base of her neck. Pleasure curled between her legs and she pressed her legs together tightly almost rubbing them together to scratch the hot itch. Oz’s wet tongue darted out again, swirling over the bite mark he’d left over the pale neck, purring at the sight of all that clear flesh, just waiting for him to devour. Large hands pulled at her smaller body lifting her easily off the wall and guiding her to the floor. Ruby bowed backwards until her head lay against the cold marble, Oz following her to reclaim her mouth again. He kept sliding her down until she lay on the ground under him, her core throbbed loudly as she felt him settle between her parted legs. The sudden weight above her set something off inside her as she mewled, coiling her body up to brush against his, feeling a hot and very heavy bulge rubbing against her panties. Bringing another wave of wetness and heat to drip from between her legs.

Ruby’s hands tightened in his hair gently tugging at the locks, the feel of her body lifting to slide against his only encouraged him to lean more of his weight onto her, pinning her down by her hips. She wiggled under him and he bit at her lip harshly only to lap at it again with his talented tongue. Hearing those sweet little moans sent shaft after shaft of pleasure straight to his groin which only made him harder and hotter to have her. He could have her, right there on the arena floor and she would let him, inviting him into her heat, clenching around him. The thought of her screaming out his name as he thrust inside her...
“WHAT THE FUCK! OZPIN!” The words barely registered before he felt a train slam into him and knock his body clean through the air. Oz was ripped clean from her, his Aura which still mostly floated over Ruby in a wave of green light and had to duck to the side when Qrow’s fist slammed into the wall where his head had just been. The wall cracked under the red eyed man’s fist and bits of plaster and concrete came away with it.

Ruby still on the floor and bright red rolled onto her stomach and got up. The cool marble not completely unwelcome on her heated body as she watched her teacher and her love fight around the arena like nothing she had ever seen before. Oz had pulled out his cane and was blocking Qrow’s fast paced attacks. Qrow lashed out with his fists with a look of pure murder on his face.

Ozpin on the other hand, while keeping on his toes, having to block and get out of Qrow’s way was smirking. “Something wrong Qrow? From what I felt you haven’t even given her a proper kiss.” He deflected a jab for his face and a kick for his crotch. Ozpin licked his lips dodging in almost dancing steps. “I’ve been enjoying her though, she likes my touch.”

Qrow wanted to geld the bastard, that was not a image of Ruby he wanted in his mind. At least not for another year, maybe two, as long as she’d let him get away with. Much less her under Oz so beautiful and willing, while he rocked against her moments away from going for his belt. “When I get my hands on you.” The garnet eyed man growled lowly.

“You’ll do what?” Ozpin stepped to the side and caught a wild punch but the wrist. He twisted Qrow’s arm around and swept his feet out from under him. Qrow fell to the ground with a thump, as Ozpin grabbed his throat and pinned him to the ground. “You know how this ends, try as you might you know that I always get it.” He moved his hand from Qrow’s throat to his hair and pulling him up by it to look at Ruby. “Maybe we should show her, I have a feeling she would enjoy that.”

Ruby caught the look on Qrow’s face, while she wouldn’t admit it to either of them soon but Ozpin dominating was hot as hell. She would have never guessed what lurked behind the steely copper eyes of her controlled Headmaster. From her place sitting on the floor she shouted. “ENOUGH!” Both men’s gazes snapped up to her, Qrows eyes lingering on Ruby’s and her still recovering breathing while Ozpin studied the quiver of her legs Ruby tried so hard to control. Immediately he released Qrow and sat on the floor ashamed of his actions tonight. This had been his doing and as much as he wanted to lay the blame on Qrow or even Ruby it was his first move that had sparked this and he was loathed to admit it. He was being petty, he knew it, for the stupid actions he took. Trying to get in the way of their happiness, all because his had been ripped from him.

Qrow shoved himself away from where Oz was sitting, it was only Ruby’s steely gaze that kept him from trying to wring the other man’s neck. Instead he settled for a verbal jab. “Last I checked she was your student and you had more honor than to play with them.” He settled to sit about a meter away from the bigger man.

“Never heard you complain.” Ozpin said with a smirk, two could play at that game. “And last I heard you were her uncle, yet here we are.”

Qrow snarled at him, clenching his fists. “That was Raven’s idea! We aren’t related and unlike you, I have kept my hands to myself.”

“She was enjoying herself till you came along, she is well above the age of consent. I was merely educating her, your little maiden is a innocent and pure as a midnight rose. You can’t blame me for wanting to enjoy it just a little.” Ozpin did not feel at all threatened by Qrow, if anything with all the shit he put up with from the other man this was rather fun. He got the girl and there wasn’t a damn thing Qrow could do about it.
“And I’ve gone to some effort to keep her like that! Something I don’t need you spoiling!” Qrow almost lunged for Ozpin, the last thing he needed was Ozpin giving her ideas. He blinked twice abruptly when he realized what he had said, Ruby was standing above them both. Hands on her hips, with a look he was sure she undoubtedly got from Tai the ‘you two are so dead’ look. “I didn’t mean it like that!” Qrow scrambled back away from her, rightly fearing her wrath.

“Yes you did.” Ruby glared at him, he didn’t after all tell her what his work was. He didn’t touch her, although she was well above the age where she could do what she liked. To be quite frank he wasn’t teaching her about the world beyond Patch and school. If anything he avoided telling her about the darker side of the world and himself. Something Ozpin had taken a bit to much enjoyment in showing her just now.

Ozpin smirked watching Qrow cower under her gaze, she was even better than him at putting Qrow in his place. Unfortunately for him Ruby saw it from the corner of her eyes and rounded on him. “And you! What is going on with the two of you? I’m not some prize for you two fight over!”

“Yes you are.” Muttered both men quietly under their breaths, but not quietly enough. Then she looked between the two and glared, using her Aura just so she could move fast enough she slapped both of them across the cheek before they could react. Twin red hand prints for them to share. “Gods, you two are little better then children!”

Neither denied her claim, she was doing a fabulous job of making them both feel small. “Answer my question, what is going on? You two have worked together for years, publicly your fine, privately you two seem to be out for blood.”

Qrow glared at Ozpin, where the fuck to start. “Well that one doesn’t know when to keep his hands to himself.”

“Excuse me? One you come to me, two you don’t get a say in who I play with.” Ozpin leaned forward and dug his fingers into the ground. “Let’s not forget you,” He pointed at Qrow, it was only Ruby lording of them that kept him from lunging. “dumped me for a girl you won’t even fuck, and didn’t even have the decency to TELL ME!”

Now Qrow did laugh then tried to lung at Oz only for Ruby to catch him by the ear and force him to sit back down. He bared his teeth and growled out, “So what I didn’t tell you right away? Well sorry for hoping that maybe you’d come around, I just…” he glanced away to stare at the floor.

“You just started favouring her over me! I am just someone for you to fuck whenever you like? You’re walking stress relief ball? Is that what you want?” Ozpin moved to stand but Ruby shoved him down by the shoulder standing as mediator between them. She didn’t say a word, for her realivate slight count of years she was very intelligent.

“That’s not it!” Qrow snapped out, he attempted to push Ruby out of the way gently with a hand but she grabbed it and twisted it back so hard he yelped. “Stay put and talk.” She ordered, there was still pain from the harsh severance of Aura but she was ignoring it, if anything it helped her be nice and menacing. The red eyed man didn’t dare contradict her, glaring at Ozpin instead. “You’ve made it abundantly clear you don’t want anything more then that. Gods knows I’ve tried in the past.”

“What are you talking about?” Ozpin snapped, this was fraying even his patience. “Your attempts at proper submission? We don’t match Qrow, we have never been happy when it’s just us, you never like to submit. You fight me for every action! It was fun while we were on the road but when the chips were down you LEFT.” He pointed at Ruby. “I am willing to bet you went straight to her, all those years ago. You took what I taught and used it for HER, not to stay with me.” Pain raced through his heart and his fire went out, he hugged himself his expression falling. “You left me.” He
shook his head and tried to reconstruct his walls. “You sleep around with whoever damn well pleases you and only use me a place to come home too.” His eyes fell and he spoke softly. “Though you made it clear you don’t even want that anymore.”

“They are my family.” Qrow said, he couldn’t frankly remember the last time he’d seen Ozpin look so... defeated. “But fine, yeah that aside the sex is strained now and no you don’t scratch all the itches. Don’t always give me what I want and to be frank, I don’t think you could. You don’t have a submissive bone in your body. Hells it’s outside of the sex where you are lacking. As I said, I tried and it was like trying to swim through Atlas’s oceans.”

“What are you talking about?” Ozpin was at a loss, while Qrow was right about the sex, the other thing he had no idea.

“Argh!” Qrow pulled at his hair, how could Oz be so dense? “Gods above!” He turned and yelled forgetting that Ruby was there for a moment. “I LOVE YOU! I TRIED TO SAY IT!” He breathed heavily his chest heaving, his eyes wide and then he recoiled, turning away from them both. “It was on the tip of my tongue so many times, but I never got even a hint you felt the same way. You were kind, considerate, you taught me everything I know. You seemed to care, make stuff for me, but you never once said you loved me. And I do love you, as stupid of me as it is.”

He curled up as it would shield him, he drew his legs up and rested his head on his knees staring at the floor rather than Oz. “I stopped trying when Ruby came along, because unlike you, she loves me for who I am. With her it doesn’t matter what I do, I can always count on her to love me. I don’t need sex to be happy with her, heck right now anyway, I don’t want it.” Ruby sat down beside him and reached up rubbing over a shoulder.

Ozpin was at a complete loss, he hadn’t thought that Qrow loved him. Like Qrow he had missed what signs had been there, he had thought it was just fun between them. He had no idea what to do, he was bitter that Qrow loved Ruby, it wasn’t that he didn’t love Oz. The raven haired man had just been too afraid to say something and he’d be the first to admit that he wasn’t very good at communicating feels anymore either. “I-,” Oz bit his lip, trying to slow his pounding heart and utterly failing. “I’m sorry. I didn’t know.”

“Well now you do, so would you kindly fuck off?” Qrow grumbled refusing to look at Oz. Ozpin looked over to Ruby, she flicked her head toward the door. The platinum haired man took a deep breath and got up, his cane found its way into his pocket as he softly said. “I’ll be in the Emerald Forest if you want to talk.” He fled for the nearest door, not even trying to hide it.

They listened to the door slam shut and Qrow let the first few silent tears fall. Ruby wordless laid down pulled him with her. He curled up around her his head on her breast, her shirt quickly growing damp. He reached out with an arm and held her tight, he was utterly silently in sorrow.

Ruby wrapped her arms around him tight petting over the back of his head with one hand. Her body still hummed with excitement but it was slowly ebbing away to make room for comforting her Qrow. While he cried she frantically thought about what to do, it slowly became clear to her that Ozpin had used her to get back at Qrow. That Ozpin was angry, bitter and sad because he felt that Qrow was leaving him behind. Her whole body still ached but where he had bit her so very hard hurt all the more. It wasn’t a place that would be easily spotted, but it would be one visual to Qrow if she wore more casual clothes. That bastard. Had Ozpin been more juvenile she was willing to bet that was his way of saying to Qrow. Na, nana nana na, I got here FIRST. The crimsonette glared up at the ceiling, she was most definitely going to have words with him about that.

Qrow’s tears faded and he hugged her all the tighter to him, his voice was thick as he asked. “Please say you don’t love him too. That before that was all him.” He squeezed his eyes shut as Ruby’s hand
paused in his hair. “He can’t love you back, I tried for so long.”

Ruby closed her eyes and kissed his head. “I don’t know, where he is concerned I don’t know what I feel. Right now I am very annoyed with him and will go and beat him up in a bit. I do love you though, that I know for sure.” She turned slightly so he could snuggle up tighter, the ground was hard under them but neither cared. “Qrow love, I think that Ozpin does love you, but like you was to afraid to say anything.”

The silver eyed warrior stroked Qrow’s hair. “From what I’ve seen of him, he plays his emotions very close to the chest. Whenever we share Aura and I reach for him, he shuts me out, runs away from me. The few times I have delved deeper, his soul is… a very cold place, I mostly feel pain, fear, guilt and regret. That’s about it and he shoves me away. When you look at it like that, he doesn’t seem to feel good things at his core like we do. It must haunt him everyday, so when you think about him as a whole, as someone who is always in pain, one way or another. Doesn’t it make a little sense that he would be afraid of love? He is the Headmaster, he must be used to people dying around him, that probably contributes to that fear. Does that make sense to you?” She only asked because Qrow had his walls down and was taking shelter in her embrace.

Qrow listened to her, he could always count on her to be the one to think things through, her compassion knew no grounds. “I suppose so.” He muttered, he knew how fear of letting someone in was like and fear of losing them. Ruby pulled him gently by a shoulder and they sat up, the little woman held his hands. “So why don’t you give me a chance to talk to him first. Then you to have another talk if I think it will help, I understand that you are angry with him and you have every right to be. Heck, I’m angry with him, but I will touch base with him and see if now that the truth is out. Maybe something can be made out of this.”

“But I don’t, want him anymore.” Qrow held her hands tighter and was surprised when she laughed a small musical thing. Then utterly shocked when she pulled a hand free of his, put a finger under his chin and tilted his head to and pressed a kiss to his lips.

The little pained noise he made in the back of his throat broke Ruby’s heart. Yes you do. “Shh.” She whispered, sliding her hand through the scruff of his beard and kissing him again.

Qrow fought to keep from touching her, she was so soft and gentle, so strange compared to what he was used too. He let her go when she pulled at her other hand, it moved to rest on his shoulder. As she tilted her head oh so slightly, he gave in doing the same. His hands came up to cup her head, his thumbs stroking over her jaw. Lips parted a bare fraction, kisses grew longer, soft breathless moans crept up from throats. Eyes slid shut, shaken breaths shared, they molded to each other, Ruby learning quickly what felt good. For kissing Qrow was a whole world of difference to kissing Ozpin. They were as polar opposite as Venus and Neptune and yet so close their hearts beat together.

Eventually they parted, Ruby rested her forehead against his and spoke softly. “You still love him, you can’t hide that from me. You wouldn’t be hurting so much if you didn’t, let me handle this please. I am okay with you loving him and I want you to be happy.”

“I’m happy with you.” Qrow squeezed his eyes shut tight his fingers curling tight into her hair. Ruby reached up and petted through his thick feathered black locks. “I know, but Ozpin is right about many things. There is so much I don’t know, things I can’t do for you that he can. Now that the truth is out, maybe you can both learn to trust each other again.”

“I don’t know.” Qrow whispered, he didn’t want to talk to Ozpin anymore, it hurt to think about him. Ruby kissed him again for a long minute, stroking his jaw. “Let me handle this one, you don’t even have to look at him alright? I’ll figure it out and let you know okay?”
"Okay." The garnet eyed man pulled away as he felt Ruby do the same. "Come on, you’ve a place on campus right?" Qrow nodded, it would be a pain to have to go down to Vale for a inn every time he came to visit. Though that place was usually Oz’s flat, he did have a small one in with the temp teachers. "It’s in with the teachers flats, room twenty one."

"Then go to bed and I’ll join you there after I talk to Ozpin." Ruby got up pulling Qrow with her, the sudden movement sent pain through her limbs but she bared with it. She knew from before it would be gone after she had a good night’s rest. "I don’t want you talking to him alone." Qrow said mutely not letting her hands go.

"That wasn’t up for discussion." Ruby said sternly a smile playing over her lips as Qrow laughed. "Yes Ma’am." The petite woman leaned up and kissed his cheek. "Now off to bed you, I’ll be around when I’m done." Qrow nodded and let her go, Ruby watched him slowly walk away and pause to look back at her when he opened the door. She gave him a smile and nod, reassured he headed off to his little flat.

As the door quietly shut Ruby put her hands on her hips and let out a long sigh. "Okay, now for Ozpin.” She turned and headed out the north door, it was the closest one to the Emerald Forest. She needed to give the Headmaster of Beacon a piece of her mind.

Ruby walked through the forest quickly, it wasn’t hard to find Ozpin. She could hear the snapping limbs of Grimm and sure enough she found him surrounded by white Grimm bones and black ash. The full moon illuminated the clearing and shined through Ozpin’s platinum hair. She strode over as he turned to her, Oz’s shoulders sagged and before Ruby could get a word in he spoke. “I’m so sorry, for being so forward earlier and hurting Qrow. I was angry with him and you were just a means to an end.”

Hurt stabbed at Ruby’s heart, that he would use her like that. “Was that all it ever was? You only took an interest in me because you were angry with Qrow?” She stepped away from him tears collecting in her eyes, they had been having such fun together. "I thought, I thought you liked..."

Ruby wiped at her eyes clearing the tears away.

“Oh Ruby.” Ozpin crossed through the damp grass to her before she could flee. Grabbed her small hands in his. “I do like you, I took an interest in you because. I.” His throat closed the truth wasn’t very nice either. “You were in pain, I thought I could help and you proved so interesting I couldn’t help but want to know you better.” He reached up and ran a hand over her cheek and into her hair, “Everything else just,” Oz sighed. “Happened, I don’t know how but I found curiosity changing and.” Gods why couldn’t he talk to her? The words kept getting stuck in his throat, he ached for her, he’d almost go as far to say he was more attracted to her then Qrow at this point. He shook his head. “I was more relaxed at the festival, honest with you. I shut down afterwards because I am your Professor. Then yes I was wrong to manipulate you like that, I am sorry.”

Ruby shook her head and pulled her hand free of his. “I don’t believe you.” She said in a harsh whisper, attempting to blink the tears from her eyes. How could he do this to them, he knew that she and Qrow were happy together and yet, he’d tried to hurt them. Yet now he was professing that he did like her, if there had been any truth to his actions before he wanted her too. She shivered, she’d almost let him have her as well, if Qrow had been any later...
“Ruby~.” Ozpin pleaded, his first instinct was to kiss her, he reached out to her again his hand coming to her waist and pulling her to him. Ruby looked up to him confused, that was all the opportunity he needed. Oz dipped down and pressed a kiss to her lips, only for her to yank her hand away and thump him on his chest with both hands. “No don’t you dare do that again!” The silver eyed woman tried to step away but Oz tightened his grip on her waist holding her tight to him.

“Ruby please.” Ozpin pleaded not letting her go, if he let her go she’d run and he didn’t want her to go. “Let me go.” Ruby cried, how dare he be so forward with her after what he did. Oz reached up again with his free hand and brushed her hair back. “Please Ruby, I’m sorry don’t go.”

Ruby cried and grabbed his jacket, his hand was forcing her tight to him, she couldn’t get away without her Semblance. “Why shouldn’t I? You said you just used me to get back at Qrow.” Ozpin dropped his hand from her face and hugged her to him. “I didn’t know Qrow loved me, I didn’t think he wanted more from me. I was bitter and angry because I love him too. It’s just been so long and I’ve lost so many… Please Ruby believe me I didn’t know. I’ll try to make amends to him.”

“Why didn’t you ever say anything? You know he’s afraid to be alone, you could have prevented all of this if you just said something.” Ruby cleared her tears and rested against him, all this drama was exhausting.

“Qrow is not the only one with an inability to voice their emotions.” Ozpin admitted, he looked up at the moon and softly said. “I had hoped teaching him how to be immortal like me would have made my feelings for him clear. I guess that wasn’t enough.” He fought down a wince, this was a time to let her know some of the truth. At least the version he told everyone, he spoke again before Ruby could cut in and express her disbelief at his statement. “You know the story of the Four Maidens? I was the wizard and after that I was the King of Vale in the Great War. I’ve been many many people, this soul of mine reincarnates with every death into a like minded individual. Though just what a ‘like minded individual’ is has changed over time.”

Oz took a deep breath and held her a fraction tighter when she wiggled again. “I hate it. I hate stealing another person’s body, I hate feeling the confusion, revulsion, the loss of freedom they feel every time it happens. So with this body I decided to find a way to make sure it never happens again. I can’t break my curse, but Aura heals and I can manipulate that. Unlike the average person my Aura is always active on a minor level. We get old because our cells make mistakes, flaws, well that’s oversimplified but it’s the jest of it. I learnt how to make my Aura teach my cells to replicate perfectly, I am not degrading like every other thing on this planet. Immortal, for so long as I have my body programmed like this, I will never age. So baring something killing me, I will never have to reincarnate again.” He looked down and snuggled her. “No more body changes, just watching everyone I love get old and die around me. I, I do love Qrow, that is why I taught him to do the same. I thought he would stay with me, that I wouldn’t be alone anymore. But then you happened, though I can’t just blame you. I made a mistake in my cowardice with Qrow I see that now. As I said I was angry that he was leaving me, for you.”

That was a lot to absorb, Ruby stared silently into his chest or out to the clearing. “That sounds crazy.” She whispered, was this all just a lie? Things like what Oz was talking about didn’t exist, but then why was he telling these lies? Did he really think that knowing this would change things? Make what he had done acceptable? “Ozpin~”

“Ruby, you must of have noticed there is not a grey hair on Qrow’s head that he doesn’t look older than the graduating year. You can confirm all of this with him but please don’t go.”

“Ozpin, the things you are saying, I don’t.” Taking a breath she pushed her head from against Oz’s hard chest, just enough to look up slightly. “Even if what you’re saying is true then it doesn’t change
a thing about what is going on between you and Qrow and even less so with me.”

“Ruby please try to understand.” Ozpin started to speak but Ruby cut him off.

“I don’t think I can understand Ozpin. You talk about all this stuff and expect me to believe you right off the bat. Is this part of your ‘goal’? You knew that Qrow is with me, and still did what you did, and then went off to taunting him that you got a taste of what is his. Now you expect me to believe that your doing all this because you love Qrow and what? I’m just a means to an end? A distraction, a prize? Tell me Oz, what is it you want?!”

She wasn’t sure what she expected from the man who held her so tightly. Excuses, angry shouts, demands but she hadn’t expected silence to be the only thing he gave her. Obviously this wasn’t something he had thought through and maybe he even regretted it. “You have always seemed to pride your students for thinking for themselves and not looking at the world to give them a handout. Back when I first came to Beacon you said that ‘knowledge will only carry you so far, it is up to you to take the first step.’ Perhaps Professor you should take some time to look at the direction your heading towards and figure out what it is you really want from life.”

When the arms around her grew a little slack Ruby pulled away and Oz let her go, as much as he didn’t want too. “I intend to speak to Qrow again about some of the things that have gone on tonight and afterwards, when you find your answer maybe you will come find me and let us both know. Goodnight Professor.” She turned and walked away it took of her willpower to not look back when she heard. “Goodnight… Ruby.” It only occurred to her then, that this was the first conversation he had used her first name constantly.

It was late by the time Ruby found her way to the staff apartment complex just off school grounds. Thankfully there was no-one around as she rounded the building looking for the room Qrow would be staying in and nearly shook her head. He would leave the window wide open, curtain flowing through the gap, beckoning her. Wanting to spend the night with her Qrow Ruby activated her Semblance, letting her physical body meld away into petals and gently floated up with the wind towards the open window. It was of no surprise to the young woman when she floated in and returned to her physical form that it was so cold. The rooms for temporary teachers were small, a kitchenette in the corner of the living room was separated by a narrow bar and two stools. A bathroom in one corner of the room and the bedroom in the other, both doors were open and the rooms beyond dark.

As quietly as she could Ruby slipped into the bedroom and just took a moment to study Qrow as he slept on the bed. Another window was open and Qrow slept on his front fully clothed, he hadn’t even removed his dress shoes. Ruby gently pried off the black shoes and placed them on the ground by Qrow weapon Harbinger. The man in the bed didn’t even stir, his messy hair flowing down, curtained over part of his face.

Looking around Ruby saw a thick fleece blanket back in the living room and returned for it before draping it over her loves body. After removing her own boots, hood, skirt, Ruby slipped under the blanket and snuggled closer to the sleeping man. Qrow looked so tired, the shadows under his eyes appeared heavy and dark against slightly tanned skin. Ruby lifted a hand to gently stroke the growing stubble that rested over his chin. She leaned up and pressed a slow soft kiss by the corner of
Qrow’s lips and settled back down under the blanket. “Goodnight Qrow.”

Just as she started to close her eyes Qrow’s arms shifted up to wrap themselves around her smaller body and pull her against his chest. Ruby could smell the soap that Qrow favored and just under it was the barely recognizable scent of pine. Ozpin’s pine. A leg draped over hers pulling her body even closer so. The silver eyed woman inhaled the scent, taking it within her, a single tear escaping her closed eyes. At least for tonight she had Qrow and they would hold each other, right now that’s all she wanted.

Chapter End Notes

Ardy: Now before you all get out your pitchforks, I wanted to do a few things differently this time. I’ve changed the form of communication Ozpin, Ruby and Qrow use.
Ozpin communicates more physically, in cannon I get the feeling Ozpin has lied a very great deal. So he doesn't have the same trust in words, and finds speaking the truth more difficult.
Unfortunately for him, Qrow and Ruby are more verbal this time around. At least around each other, they have no trouble communicating.
These last few chapters have all been about, miscommunication and old pain. Showing that Ozpin and Qrow, do not have the same relationship at this point as they did in the original story.
Now I want this to be very clear, Ozpin has been a BAD dominate here and friend. This is by no way acceptable behavior, in any circumstances!!!! I wanted to show everyone a negative before I gave a positive.
This behaviour will be talked about extensively in the next chapter, you'll see more of Qrow's side as well, he made many mistakes as well.
This was all about giving Oz one last major fuck up to get the ball rolling towards better pastures. What he did with Ruby, I almost cut several times and make no mistake, Ruby's not going to forgive him in a hurry. It was wrong. There are several aspects that I am not comfortable with, it was a huge breach of trust and manipulation of a person. Not to mention to me it toes the line of dubious consent very finely. Again, this was very bad behaviour on Ozpin's side and will be address in the future.
That cover all my bases people? This is the end of this kind of thing, lots of going up from here planned. Chapters 9, 10 and 11 are all very tight together, there events happening in quick succession, so I shall try to have them out as quickly as Kry allows.
I will admit, I'm eager to get Oz's head out of his butt and to bring back the Ozpin of the original story. If a great deal more conflicted and with a better internal dialogue. That's all for me, take it way Kry.

Kry: hehehehehe please enjoy and thankyou for all those lovely comments, you really make my day ;)}
Qrow shivered and shuddered in his sleep, sweat gathering on his skin as he grabbed for the blanket it pulling it tight in a fist. “No, please . . . ‘m sorry, . . . had to kid . . .” He suddenly lurched upright the blanket falling to the side and his chest panting, his body trembling. He looked around in the dark room his heart hammering, eyes peering and searching out all the shadowy corners. He could just barely see Ruby on the bed beside him, she was turned away and partly curled up. He ran a hand through his hair and took deep breaths, damn Ozpin for being right. He did need help with the memories damn it all. “Ugh.” Qrow rolled his shoulders and grimaced at the pull of his sweat soaked clothes on his skin.

Carefully he pulled the blanket off of him and tucked it around Ruby who continued to sleep peacefully. He walked over to his backpack and pulled out his flask, sat on the ground by the open window and took several long pulls. The garnet eyed man traced over his emblem engraved into it, its eye staring back at him.”I hate this.” He whispered softly. He hated that he needed it, hated that despite everything he found himself missing Ozpin. He hated his work that forced him to such extremes just for the privilege of forgetting.

Qrow shook his head and set the flask aside and started undressing. He put the dirty clothes aside and rummaged around in his bag for clean ones only to come up empty. “Damn it.” The raven haired man cursed and looked over to Ruby, a mere two weeks from adulthood. Now was totally not the time to be giving her any ideas. He rubbed his eyes with the heels of his hands, what the hell was he going to do?

He liked this long distance courting thing they had been doing for near a year now. She had grown to be beautiful, kind and loving, everything he longed for in a partner. Yet he didn’t want anything more, hoped that he wouldn’t need the physical relationship. Yet Ozpin the immortal bastard had already dabbled where he had no right too. He was glad that Ruby had found some pleasure not as a result of her own fingers but at the same time she was going to start asking questions soon. Questions he didn’t want to answer, he looked back at her, the blanket creating a smooth line of her features her bangs fanned over her face.

She loved the stories of Huntsmen and Huntresses, the romantic bull shit. Qrow couldn’t bare to break that illusion she held, though after the breach it seemed like she was starting to see things for how they would truly be. Soon she would see that he wasn’t this super awesome powerful Huntsmen capable of defeating any foe. He was just a sad broken crow, a spy that wouldn’t even find out where Salem was focusing next. The young woman also didn’t know about his Semblance, didn’t know that the more time she spent with him the more likely something horrible was going to happen.

Qrow took one last long drink from his flask before putting it away and heading back to bed. This time pulling the sheets back and sliding under them while Ruby remained on top with the blanket. The raven haired man resisted for a minute then spooned himself around her as tight as the layers of blankets would allow. He nuzzled her neck and breathed deeply, as his arm came around hugging her chest his hand on her shoulder.

Ruby stirred and let out a soft little tired sigh, her eyes opening blearily. “Qrow?” She asked turning her head slightly, brushing her cheek over his hair. She pulled an arm out from under the blanket and set it over his, petting over his knuckles with a finger. “You okay?”
“I’m fine, go back to sleep.” Qrow snuggled tight to her breathing deeply, however his voice was tight and the petite woman heard that.

Ruby turned so she could face him, his arm moving to settling over her back. The silver eyed woman brushed a thumb through beard along his jaw. Qrow found himself relaxing his head onto the pillow, as much as he didn’t dare taint her with his misfortune he did enjoy it when she touched him like this. Little touches intended to soothe and calm nothing more. The graceful hand rested over his jaw, fingers easing the corner of his ear while her thumb brushed over his bottom lip.

“Ruby.” He cautioned her with a dry rasp, not opening his eyes. He heard her sigh but the hand moved he tilted his head up slightly as Ruby snuggled down to his chest. What she asked next made his eyes snap open. “Are you really not aging?” The words were so soft quiet just for him.

Qrow could feel her pull his crooked cross out from under the blankets and stroke it. It was engraved with vines, wrapping around it like they would a tree. Ozpin believed in the Brother Gods and Yggdrasil was part of their mythos and Qrow could stomach the idea of a much larger universe more than he could one divine god. “He told you about that did then.”

“And that he is cursed, but that can’t be real there is no such thing as magic.” Ruby said she didn’t want to believe it, a world with magic as even more terrifying than one with just Grimm.

“I’m not aging Ruby, haven’t been for a very long time and magic is very real. I’ve seen it, fought against it.” Qrow spoke mutely, he wasn’t in any hurry to volunteer information, yet for her he’d walk down through painful memories. He closed his eyes his heart aching, thinking how he had been too slow to save Amber completely.

“So Ozpin really was cursed by the Gods?” Ruby asked her mind turning this new information over. Qrow petting her shoulder with a thumb and shook his head. “We’ve only his word there, but I don’t see a reason why he would lie about that. I believe him, he gave me the power to turn into a crow.”

“That’s not your Semblance?” Ruby asked confused all of a sudden.

“No.” Qrow said mutely and offered nothing more, Ruby wisely didn’t pry. Instead she turned her mind back to her conversation with Ozpin and softly said because she knew it would hurt. “He told me he loves you too.” As soon as the words left her lips, Qrow’s grip around her tightened and he shuddered violently once. “Shh.” Ruby cooed softly and started pressing kisses to his neck. “It’s okay, he was just afraid as you were to say anything. I don’t forgive him for what he did but I think he’s just as lost in what he wants as you are.” Ruby petted her lovers face with her thumb, stroking over the stubble. “He was a jerk to both of us but I believe that was because he was hurting from learning that you were distancing yourself from him. I told him to think about what he wants, what path he’s on, threw his own words back at him. He just went silent and let me go, so I think he will be really thinking about it.”

Qrow didn’t say anything for a long minute, he wasn’t sure he could forgive Oz or that he even wanted to. “I’m not sure… that I even care Ruby. We had been together for so long that we just assumed we knew each other enough. But it seems like we never really knew each other’s hearts.” He chuckled in an exhausted manner. “it’s kinda sad that a outsider to our relationship figured it out faster then we did, that we needed an intervention to face the things we weren’t talking about. I’m not sorry I ended it with him, maybe we should have never been more than friends. Falling in love just complicates everything, I hate complications sometimes.” Qrow blinked for a second realizing just who he sounded like and got up so rapidly that Ruby tumbled back a bit. He stormed over to his backpack and pulled out his flask again.
Qrow took several long drinks before walking over to the window and closing it. Remnant’s moon was full and bright but setting in the sky, he pulled the curtains shut. Ruby could hear him drinking in the dark, she pushed the blankets aside and slowly got out of bed. The floor was cold under her feet but she slowly walked over to Qrow finding him with ease in the dark. With the slosh of liquid she found the flask and stopped him from taking another drink by putting her hand over the top. “You know I hate it when you do that.” She said into the darkness.

Qrow loved this type of darkness, the type that while it hid her from him. Ruby also couldn’t see him, he could feel her though the heat from their bodies filling the space between them. In this darkness he didn’t hide from her, the red eyed man said softly. “I don’t know what else to do. I don’t have another way to fight the nightmares anymore and just then.” He paused and wrinkled his nose up in distaste. “I sounded like my sister just then.”

“And you don’t like her, I know.” Ruby said with a smile and took the flask from him stepping away and setting it on the bedside table. Qrow could hear her move around, the temptation to follow her was great. Without Oz drink was his only coping mechanism, he wasn’t going to go whoring with her in the same city as him. He reached out for a moment partly extending his arm, she was so close, it would be so easy to touch her. Qrow shook his head and sighed deeply withdrawing his arm and letting his hand fall to the side. No he wouldn’t ever ask that of her, he didn’t want to show her anymore of his problems then he had to.

Ruby walked back over and reached out placing her hands on his chest before stepping up to him and sliding them over his shoulders. She let her head rest on his chest, listening to the thump thump thump of his heart. “You know I am here for you, you can talk to me about what bothers you.”

The red eyed man was well aware of that, well aware of how close she was, how warm she was. Maybe, just one touch would be okay, he didn’t want to taint her and yet here she was, willing and offering. Qrow slowly raised his arms and wrapped them around her middle, dipping his head to breath deeply of her scent. “I know.” He said softly, enjoying the simple action of holding her.

Eventually Ruby drew him back to bed, neither speaking another word as they settled wrapped around each other. Qrow ended up with his head upon her chest, listening to the thump of her heart lulling him into a dreamless sleep. Meanwhile Ruby lay awake petting through his dark hair, thinking quietly about what to do.

Ozpin slowly opened the door to his flat, closing it behind him mutely his mind was still turning over what Ruby had said. He had several more mistakes to add to his very long list. Sometimes he wished for the days when he just hadn’t cared about any of it, back when his choices hadn’t put other lives in jeopardy. Stupid changeable soul, stupid Salem and this infernal war. He toed off his shoes and pulled off his coat putting it on a hanger before striding into the living room to see the bits of his table that still remained.

Oz let out a long deep sigh, he really should clean that up and get something new but he really didn’t feel like mentioning it to anyone. He stretched out a hand and closed his eyes, taking a minute to visualize the table whole. Then he turned his hand to the right opening his eyes and holding onto the image. Then activated his Semblance holding the table in his mind and focusing on the pieces. He slowly rotated turned his hand to the left, the pieces flew back together and the table tumbled over itself ending exactly where it had been before he tossed it.
Exhaustion swept over Oz and he staggered falling against a wall, white and black spotted over his vision and the last thoughts he had was. I really need to practice more. Then he fainted falling forward barely catching himself not to fall on his face.

It was morning when he woke again, his cheek pressed flat against the cold ground. His muscles were stiff and sore all over, Oz groaned loudly pushing himself to his feet. Thank the Gods it’s the weekend. The tall man staggered down the hall to his bedroom shedding his clothes as he went. He flopped face first into his bed, his muscles screaming at him. It was one reason he didn’t use his Semblance often, he had thought he was in good enough shape to fix the table but evidently not. He had used a rather lot of Aura on Ruby after all and when his Aura was exhausted his Semblance went after his physical stamina. Thank you O’Dimm. He thought sarcastically, then groaned remembering Ruby.

He and messed up on so many levels in records speeds, even for him. Oz forced himself onto his back and put an arm over his eyes, what he wouldn’t give just to go back to sleep again. However now that he remembered there was no way he was going to get any sleep. Guilt twisted his guts up in knots, a very familiar feeling but still unwelcome. Oz turned onto his side and curled up, he’d been so stupid and cowardly. Though Qrow could have said something too, then maybe this could have all be avoided, he didn’t believe it was entirely his fault. Didn’t mean that he didn’t still feel guilty about it, he had started to like Ruby for her own self.

Jealousy was an ugly emotion and he had let it take command of him, his actions his words. Ruined something that could have been so very good, memories of how she felt under him rose up in his mind and he shoved them away. He’d been keeping to Qrow for a long time, a female partner had just been so utterly tempting. Then he had gone and ruined any chance he had of making it work, of getting both of them because he couldn’t give Qrow the support he desired. Support some sixteen year old girl had offered him so easily, fallen so deeply in love with someone so utterly broken as Qrow.

Ozpin felt ill at that thought, he’d been the one to break Qrow. With the missions he gave the man, not to say Raven hadn’t already done a number on her brother by the time Oz got to him. For which she would always be on his list of people to never trust again. Still Qrow and guilt were getting pretty synonymous in his mind, now Qrow was cutting him out entirely in favour of something that just couldn’t work long term. It couldn’t, Ruby didn’t have the knowledge base to help Qrow, even if he told her every dirty secret he had. She had no way to cope herself and he had messed it up for all three of them. Had he just told Qrow or not used Ruby so illy, he could have made it work with the three of them and they all would have gotten what they wanted.

Ozpin’s eyes snapped open with that thought, ‘what they wanted’ what did he want? Qrow back first and foremost, yet Ruby was… well Ruby. The copper eyed man was sure they were a package deal, if he wanted one he’d have to learn to love the other. He had a feeling Ruby would make that very easy, he pursed his lips. He needed to fix this! Ozpin swung his legs out of bed only for the world to spin and fell back into the bed. Oz pulled himself back properly onto the bed, he’d fix this after a nap.
After a decent nap and with the sun high in the sky Oz looked around at his apartment, his gaze falling to the small pile of papers he had yet to remove from by his door. Glynda had pushed the lists she wanted him to go over under his door probably thinking that he wouldn’t be able to ignore them for too much longer. Truth be told he had forgotten about them, in the past day he had all but locked himself in his home, brooding and silently thinking of Qrow and Ruby. He had taken one look at the neat pile of work and shoved it away with his foot in an attempt to ignore his obligations.

Now the lists stood stark against his bache carpet, demanding he sort through them. His head still spun a little when he stood up but nevertheless Oz walked over and plucked them from the floor before sitting on the couch and dropping them on the newly fixed table. Head resting in his hand he began looking over the finely printed list of names and their schools. Each student’s face was barely more than a blur to him right now as he wasn’t reading so much as gazing over the words, his mind kept veering off with thoughts of Ruby and Qrow. His stomach growled, sounding much too loud in the lonesome apartment, when was the last time he ate? Oz pushed that thought to the back of his mind and resumed reading.

The lists were endless and he had been neglecting them for the last few days. Now they taunted him on what his life had become. How he gave up fighting to teach others, children to fight for him. Such a disgrace, all those children, innocent little lights he has swept them away from their happy free lives and for what? To turn them into weapons, pawns, in his war. He owed those lights everything and yet here he was, sat in a cushy but empty apartment with all this knowledge, parts of the truth that no one knew about. Not even him, Gods that was a depressing sentiment.

The firm knock at the door had him jumping in place, he looked down at his clothes, he was only wearing slacks. Not having really bothered to get dressed as he hadn’t planned on going out today. With a resigned sigh he got up, it was probably just Glynda, already he could hear her nagging voice about work but as he opened his door he quickly collected his jaw up from the floor. Ruby and Qrow stood outside his door, Ruby had Qrow at her back and their hands woven together over her hips. They looked comfortable with each other, though Qrow had a nervous edge that Ruby seemed to be soothing by petting the back of his hand with a thumb. Ozpin swallowed thickly, opening the door more and stepping aside. “Please come in.”

Ruby smiled and let go of Qrow stepping forward, Qrow followed giving Oz a look with pursed lips but followed the little red head inside. Ruby picked a spot on the couch and Qrow walked over to assume it, after which Ruby commandeered his lap as her rightful property.

Ozpin closed the door with a long breath out, he looked down at his clothes, he had so much he needed to say and if Ruby and Qrow were here seemingly giving him this chance he would gladly take it. “Would either of you like hot chocolate?” That was right fall back on what he had learned, get his head out of his ass and start behaving properly. Step one, making everyone comfy, step two grovel for forgiveness.

“Yes please.” Ruby said leaning her head on Qrow’s chest looking back to Ozpin. Ozpin gave a little nod and headed into his kitchen. The silver eyed woman pressed a kiss to Qrow’s neck, feeling him tense and relax. “Are you sure this is a good idea?” He murmured, he forced himself to relax she had respected his boundaries, he’d try to let her expand those boundaries.

“Yes, staying apart too long will only leave us all to stew and while a little stewing is good. You both seem to over think things if left alone too long.” Ruby said softly to Qrow’s neck, inhaling his scent whisky free for once.

Ozpin returned and set three cups of hot chocolate on his coffee table and sat on the cushion as far away from the two as he could. He ran his hands through his hair bending over with this elbows on his knees, before rubbing his face with his fingers. Gods where to even start? “I’m sorry Qrow, I
have been a terrible dominate to you of late. I deserve all of your malice.” There that was a start, he
groaned and hung his head. “Gods Lydia would skin me alive and put it up on display for all the ass
I’ve been. Not taking the time to keep in touch with you, or checking in properly. I just-.” Ozpin let
out a shaky breath not looking up. “I just assumed that you were happy.”

“Well you know what they say about assuming.” Qrow said he hadn’t been expecting that from
Ozpin right away and it was kinda nice. He was actually speaking to him, seeing his own mistakes.
Qrow bit his lip and reflected a bit on his own life these past years. “It wasn’t all on you, I didn’t say
anything either. Trusting you is part of the deal and I should have trusted you enough to tell the truth
of my feelings.” Qrow looked down to Ruby who sat silently in his lap and pressed a kiss to her
temple. “I ran from you when we should have talked, I am sorry as well. I’ve just been a horrible
partner to you, not holding to my responsibilities as your sub. I am as much at fault as you are. I just
don’t know where we went so wrong.”

Ozpin sat up and crossed his legs, putting his back to the armrest so he was facing them. He watched
Ruby snuggled Qrow for a moment and then shook his head, as that ugly emotion reared again.

Enought of that! You are not some stupid teenaged idiot! You know better than this. “Ruby I wish to
apologise again, my actions towards you have not at all been proper and I am frankly ashamed of
them. I am not usually like that, I was jealous of you and bitter about Qrow pulling away from me
and going to you.” He lifted his hands in a helpless gesture. “I am so sorry about all of it, if you’ll
allow me I will endeavor to be better in the future.”

Ruby looked over to him, shifting her head to watch him, she was silent for a long minute before
saying. “I’ll think about it. Depending on how much you to cover here and I have something I want
to do. But you guys need to talk first, I’ll only poke either of you if you start to close off.”

“Well I guess that is only fair.” Ozpin said wringing his hands together and thinking back to himself
and Qrow. Right time to start doing his job properly, he was a fully taught, well trained dominate
damn it. It was high time he started acting like it and using his words. “When do you think we were
best Qrow? I think we were, when we traveled together after you graduated. I enjoyed that the most
of our history together, I liked the talks we would have and the songs we made up.” Oz visually
wilted, looking down to the floor. “We stopped with those didn’t we?” There that should get this
conversation rolling, core of BDSM and any relationship the very thing he and Qrow had been
neglecting. Communication, to talk to each other with trust and respect.

Qrow appreciated that Ozpin gave an example first, it made talking easier when someone took the
initiative rather then having to take the lead. “I liked when we used to play around when I was still at
school. I miss going out for breakfast or,“ Qrow couldn’t help it he laughed at the memory. “Or the
times when we took over that old attic! I still remember tying you up in there and going for a ride
when Glynda caught us!” The laugh got harder and he held Ruby to him. “Gods the look on her
face.”

Ozpin resisted laughing them remembered that this was Qrow , he could laugh around him. So he
did, he let to roll out of his chest till tears pricked at his eyes. He remembered that time fondly as
well. “I seriously considered asking if I could borrow her riding crop. I wonder if there are still rope
marks on those beams, considering it was the first time I let you tie me up I hope there are.”

Qrow snorted, pushing his bangs up out of his face. “I bet they are still cracked, serious what do you
did for muscle building?”

“Bench press Ursa of course!” Ozpin said smiling like a loon, he couldn’t remember the last time he
and Qrow had talked like this. He reached over and grabbed his hot chocolate, he felt better then he
had in weeks already. “We should do that again sometime.” He took a slip looking over the edge of
his cup and pausing at Qrow’s stunned expression. “What?” The silver haired man asked confused.

“You haven’t offered to sub in, AGES.” Qrow wracked his brain, it would have been at least a decade maybe more.

“Well don’t go that far you dusty old crow, I’ll bottom for a bit maybe… if it makes you happy. I miss watching the fun you had with that, I’ll put my toys in your hands.” Ozpin shivered it was a good anticipation shiver, then remembered that Qrow had put an end to them. His face fell and he took a muted sip of his hot drink. “Nevermind, I just forgot for a moment.”

The mood killed Qrow’s face fell and he flicked his bangs so they fell forward again. “We should try this again, do this more often. I think just from this how quickly we… I don’t know maybe this is part of why we broke. We stopped talking just for the enjoyment of it.”

“Just talking?” Ozpin asked a little bit confused, at what Qrow was getting at.

“Yes, think about it. We were both happiest when we were talking. When I was a student, you were a, no, you were my safe place we used to talk for days on end. Sometimes to no one but each other, we only started having sex in my last year and there was years of just talking before then.”

Qrow’s mind turned down tracks it hadn’t in years. “I think we only really started breaking when I started working for you. Where there just wasn’t time to talk anymore.”

Ozpin looked down into the brown liquid, softly saying. “It’s not even that we didn’t have time anymore, we stopped making time. I guess I just got used to how we were, but then you got worse and worse.” He didn’t feel like drinking anymore, he set the cup aside. “I didn’t know what else to do, how to help you.” He drew his legs up and buried a hand in his hair seeing yet another thing they had down wrong. “Gods I am such an idiot, we chased the curve, just because I wasn’t paying attention!” He couldn’t help it he got up and walked for the window, turning his back on them. The energy was building inside him, that thing a tense person feels when they have to do something but don’t know what.

Qrow nudged Ruby off his lap, he could feel it in Oz. Like in the space of just this one conversation they were starting to fall back into sink. Mutually seeing where they had gone wrong, walking over he said. “Hey I get you’re the dominate, you feel it’s your job to catch this shit. But I fucked up too, I didn’t see it either. You can’t pin this all on yourself, you are the guide. It’s still my job to give you cues, communicate back to you.” He reached out and touched Ozpin’s shoulder hesitantly for a moment before resting his hand on it. “Then I ran to Ruby, because she reads me so well. With her I didn’t have to communicate the same way, you weren’t the only coward here.”

Oz looking into the window, he could see Qrow’s reflection in the window. Gods I want to kiss him. He leaned against the window his forehead hitting it with a dull thud. No, that type of thinking that got you into this mess, doing not saying. Not asking first… still want to kiss him though. Lydia would totally kill me if she heard about this, or my ass would be red for a week! Fuck! Get a grip! You know what to do so fucking do it! The coppered eyed man pulled away from the window and pushed up his glasses. “May I kiss you?” He asked, it felt so weird to ask, but assuming had made an ass out of him. Oz watched Qrow’s eyebrows shoot for the sky, the bob of his Adams apple.

Qrow’s heart and brain waged a quiet war, he had just shoved this man away less than three days ago. Yet here they were, actually talking he could practically feel the bridge coming back together brick by brick. He found himself wetting his lips, wondering what it would be like. How it would be different, wondering if it would be different, hoping it would be different. He swallowed again and nodded but Ozpin didn’t move.

“Say it.” Ozpin said softly with no command in his voice, just a quiet plea. No more assuming, no
more just going with the flow. He so desperately wanted this to mend, for them to heal. Ozpin reached up and brushed his thumb through the stubble along Qrow’s jaw. It was neat and tidy for once, he wondered if having Ruby around made Qrow more inclined to take care of himself.

Qrow licked his lips again, Gods this was what he missed. The softness in Oz’s voice, the gentle touch he found himself leaning up his hands sliding up the bare torso before him. “Kiss me.” He uttered, quietly hoping that this would call back to years gone by. It did, oh gods it did.

Eyes mutually slid closed and the kiss was soft starting as just a meeting of lips. Ozpin’s hand sliding forward to cup Qrow’s head tenderly. They moved in practiced actions twice, the kiss deepening a fraction before Oz pulled away letting his hand drop to his side. “I missed you.” Ozpin said softly, he liked the feel of Qrow’s hands on his chest just resting, not gripping or throwing punches.

Qrow let his hands trail over the thick corded muscles, he looked down between them taking the time to really look. To trace over the curves and divots, he paused at the other man’s love handles, they had always been on the prominent side of the spectrum. Ozpin spoke again watching Qrow but trying to remain relaxed about it. “I missed this, I missed just being without the expectations.” Qrow’s hands found Oz’s, hands that were so good at destroying but ones that could also mend. They closed partly around his, bigger stronger but it was a loose hold that Qrow wouldn’t even have to try to withdraw if he wished.

Qrow pressed his hand into Oz let the hold tighten comfortably. “Me too, I miss movies with you. I miss talking about scenes when we did something new. I miss the showers together were you would snuggle up and just hold me.” Qrow couldn’t help it, this made him feel so good not in a sexual way but like a great weight had been lifted off of him. The red eyed man stepped forward and rested his head against the taller man’s chest. Pressing his ear to it so he could here the dull thump thump of the other man’s heart. “I’m sorry that I hurt you like that, I’m sorry I didn’t tell you the truth about what I was feeling and Ruby.”

“We both made mistakes, as you have said.” Ozpin squeezed Qrow’s hands gently once then moved them to the small of his back, resting his arms around Qrow pressing his palms to the smaller man’s body. He remembered now that Qrow liked a firmer hold but still loose enough that he could run if he felt the need. “It’s just a matter of what we want to do with this now.” He dipped his head and closed his eyes, giving into temptation and pressing a kiss to the crown of Qrow’s head. He took a deep breath and let the words out, or forced them really. Time to stop being a coward. “I love you and when you are ready. I would like to try this again, we both quickly saw where we went wrong and I don’t want to live without you.”

Qrow froze like a deer in headlights, it was one thing to hear it second hand from Ruby. It was another altogether to hear it from Oz, to listen to the steady thump of his heart it’s beat unchanged. “You’re telling the truth.” He spoke softly, listening to the thump it had always been quick but there was no elevation that always came with a lie. Qrow closed his eyes and took a deep breath of Oz’s scent that sweet pine, his arms quickly coming up to hug the bigger man. A smile formed on his lips, oh for so many years he had wanted to hear those words.

Ozpin almost said that there would be no more lies, but then there would always be things he didn’t want to talk about. Past lives that had to be frank, been absolute assholes! The conditions of his curse, how he had come upon it. There would always be things he just couldn’t… wouldn’t talk about. He closed his eyes and rested his cheek on Qrow’s head. “I’m sorry I ever gave you a reason to doubt me. There are parts of me, past lives and actions that I will never want to talk about. But when it comes to us, I will never withhold information again.”

“You weren’t them, not really.” Qrow said he could understand this, Ozpin was a man he’d probably
never know all the secrets off. “But I understand, I won’t push unless I need too.” The smaller man chuckled lightly and pressed a kiss to Oz’s chest. “Besides, I doubt I could remember all your histories even if you did tell me. They aren’t you now and now is what is important.” He pulled away, Oz’s loose grip moving with him as he did. Qrow looked up into those deep copper pools and reached up pulling those glasses down the bridge of Oz’s nose. “I’m with you, I love you as well. We both forgot for a while why we were even together, I think maybe this cock up was just want we needed to remember again.”

Ruby smiled from her place on the sofa, she’d been perfectly still and silent. She was already starting to love watching them, there was a reverence in Oz’s touch that she hadn’t seen before. The crimsonette liked what she saw immensely this was what all of it was about. The young woman got up and said. “I think I’ll leave you two, you clearly have a lot to catch up on. You don’t need me.”

Both men looked over in unison and said at the exact same instant. “No!” They looked to each other and with a sheepish laugh stepped away. Their hands meeting and lingering for a moment before Ozpin stepped away. “Thank you Miss-, Ruby thank you. Thank you for this much needed kick in the ass to get my head screwed on straight. Please don’t go.” He looked over to Qrow and worried his lips picking what to say. Oz looked back to her and said. “That one still loves you and I don’t wish to get in the way of that. I am fond of you, I’m sure maybe if you want to, we can possible work something out.”

Ruby looked over to Qrow who only shrugged. “It’s up to you Rubes, Oz is willing to give this a go and I’d much rather… uhh. Well I don’t want to pick between you, we should at least talk about it.”

The silver eyed warrior nodded a slow smile spreading over her lips. “That was what I hoped too.” Ruby looked over to Ozpin her expression turning steely. “But I have one condition applying to you.”

“What?” Ozpin asked, both curious for and dreading her answer. She had a look in her eye that he did not like, the kind he had a feeling he’d be saying ‘Yes Ma’am’ to a lot.

“Whenever we touch Aura, you run away. I want to do it again and you will not run away.” Ruby crossed her arms, she wanted to know what Oz had been hiding from her. She was in no rush to trust him, not after what he did. She wanted a little more than his word before she let her guard down.

Oz visibly paled and took a step away from her. “I really don’t think that is a good idea, you always act strangely after we do that.” Qrow stepped up and put a hand on his shoulder, a steadying force. “You’re just making an excuse.” Ruby said putting her hands on her hips and cocking one to the side. “You were just talking to Qrow about secrets, you forced your Aura on me. You can’t even teach me about it without fleeing.”

“For good reason, your Aura is strange!” He gestured to her for a moment then crossed his arms over his chest and hunched inward. Somehow the body language made him look childish, almost enough so for Qrow to start chuckling. “I can’t shield from you, I’m very good at them and you just go right around somehow.”

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Qrow raised a brow at that, he had never noticed anything odd about her. “She does?”

“Yes!” Ozpin looked over to Qrow, bit’s of their lessons flitting through his mind. “You I could always keep at bay, but her.” He gestured to Ruby again, while still looking at Qrow. “I can’t make her Aura do anything! Stop, be calm, nothing! The minute I let myself get even the littlest bit distracted, heck even if I don’t. It just sinks into me and I can’t stop it.” Oz shuddered and shook his head, it wasn’t even a unpleasant feeling but he was afraid of what she would find. “I’m not ready to
give anyone that kind of access to my being. I’m not even sure if I can teach her, I worry about just what prolonged contact would do to us.”

“Well I still feel strange when you’re around sometimes.” Ruby pursed her lips and said. “I can even tell where you are if you are close, I think once I even picked up on your emotions. Whatever you’ve already done has already changed something within me.” She took a deep breath trying to calm herself. “To be honest Ozpin, you hurt me too. You hurt me every time we share Aura, because you rip away and it hurts for hours after the fact.”

Oz’s jaw dropped and he stepped to her raising his hands to hold her before letting them drop. “Why haven’t you said anything?!” He sat on the middle of the couch his brain going a thousand kilometers a minute.

“Uh you ran away each time? Well once you ran away, the other time Qrow ripped you away. Yeah that hurt a LOT, it only stops after I sleep for a while.” Ruby reached out and touched his shoulder, this time there was no spark but there was a tug that they both felt. Ruby only just resisted pouncing into his lap and Oz had the cushion in a death grip to keep from grabbing her.

“What on Remnant was that?” Ozpin slid away from her forcing himself away as much as he wished to go to her.

“That was how it feels when you rip away, only milder and no I did not do that on purpose.” Ruby said sitting down she felt a little odd after that, not weak but definitely not normal.

Qrow walked over and sat beside her, wrapping around to her no adverse effect to himself. “You and I have never had any problems, and I’m the one who woke up your Aura. If something was off with it, one would think we’d have noticed long ago.” He kissed her temple, her happy purr made his heart warm.

Ozpin watched them jealousy flaring up again, get stuffed! He shook his head and took several deep breaths. Maybe if he let her in it would be easier to stop being jealous, help him see her as a potential partner. “Alright.” He said in a thick voice, he licked his lips. “Just… I don’t know. Be careful? I’m not a particularly good man at times.”

Ruby looked over to him surprised, she hadn’t expected him to change his stance, not so quick. “I’ll try.” The red head pulled away from Qrow and crawled over to him, straddling his lap and reaching out resting her hands on his shoulders. “You start, I don’t know how.”

Ozpin’s breath was shaky, he did not what to do this. “You’ll probably want to lean on me, this will take longer.” He put his hands on the couch, trying to show he would not touch her. Ruby took notice and shifted, slowly setting her head on his left pectoral. It was strange to touch his bare skin but she did enjoy it.

Oz closed his eyes and activated his Aura, he could feel Ruby shiver it was harder to direct without the use of his hands but he managed. This time he didn’t project any emotion, just pulled hers into activation and braced himself. He was going to try and be passive, he didn’t want to hurt her again.

Ruby could feel him pushing on around her, with her eyes closed like this it was easier to feel. She tried to remember how she reached for him in the past, but as she eased forward his Aura flowed down the path she created. Like Oz she could that she could not stop it’s flow, something was happening that neither had control over. Ruby started to feel heat play over her skin, not quite burning but not pleasant. “Wall’s Oz.” She said softly keeping still and her eyes closed.

Within she felt a very slow shift, it grew easier to push inward. Her Aura then acted without her
input, rushing forward for that place that had been denied. The flip side was that Oz was yanked into her, Oz tried to turn away from her but found himself held fast. Ruby felt panic wash over the pathways, her heart beat swiftly turning to a pounding pulse. His eyes flew open and he grabbed her shoulders pulling her away, only now he felt the pain, strain she had spoken of before.

Qrow lurched into motion, pouncing on Oz and ripping his hands away from Ruby and pinning them to the couch. “See it through.” Garnet and coppered locked for a moment before Ruby reached up and wrapped her arms around Oz’s neck and holding herself tight to him. The look of pain on Oz’s face made Qrow dip and press a kiss to the other man’s lips. It was slow and lingering but not deep, only intended to soothe.

Ruby felt love and warmth pulse through her and she knew it wasn’t coming from her. Her own emotion changed, becoming less forceful she took deep breaths relaxing and very distantly she could hear Oz calming down. Maybe it was Qrow’s kisses as the content happy feeling still saturated Ozpin’s Aura. As she relaxed her Aura started to act on its own mandate. Delving into Oz, seeking out and exploring like before. The deeper she deviled the colder she felt, feelings not her own started to wash over her. Pain, guilt, fear with them came flitting memories, Qrow was in many of them. She saw flashes of nightmares of death, but of Qrow’s death not his own.

Her soul pushed forth and heartbreaking loneliness washed over her. Tears leaked down her face without her knowing, she could feel him reflecting all around her. So much pain, such agonizing grief, yet so much strength to keep on going regardless of how he felt. She saw a memory that was not Ozpin, she could tell that the body was too short but the monster in it would haunt her dreams.

It as not Grimm, it spoke like an old woman *Got you now sneak thief!* Then there was physical pain and she looked down to see a long gnarled fingers impaling her guts. Her hand rose from her side, a key shaped scar stood stark and red over the skin. It started to glow, a bright white flash filled her vision and the monster dropped her. She screamed in a masculine voice, looking up there was a fountain mere feet away. She crawled over the ground to it, reached up she felt a small divot. She reached up to her face and... Ruby felt very very ill, Ozpin this old Ozpin. Pulled out his eye, but even as her vision changed half of it lost she could feel that it wasn’t really an eye. It was too hard, some sort of stone, in the memory he put the eye in the divot and the ground thummed.

He rolled into his back watching a bright blue light fire up into the sky he could hear the stone gargoyles moaning in pain. There was a boom and Ruby could feel the magic humming through her very bones. She felt satisfaction, turning her head she could see where once there had been the monster now there was a old woman. Terribly old, withered with the skin hanging off her bones, limbs twisted and frail. She was crying, sobbing. “Back, back with you, old so old. All ruined.”

She felt herself smile, a crooked thing that would put Qrow’s to shame. She raised her hand again, the key glyph burned on the back of her hand. “Return them.” She heard the voice, low and smooth like silk. She felt her magic flare, the key burning with blue light and saw. A chalice simple with a smooth cup and thick straight bottom fairing like a pyramid. Lastly one one side was a simple mallet imprinted into it. The image quickly faded and was replaced with a grove, trees so thick it was amazing anyone could walk through them. A mummified paw now sat in the cup of a gnarled tree. *I’m sorry Viktoria, I miss you.* Ruby saw the image of a woman, only her skin was a soft bark and her eyes vivid green. Her vision faded turning black as the blood drained out of her.

Ruby felt Oz rip her away from the memory, a flare of fear only it was for her not him this time. She felt the budding affection for her, worry around her and Oz’s soul grew less and less calm. The emotions became a jumble of memories, all moving too fast for her to focus. She quickly became lost in the sea, *too much, too much!* Even as she felt it her soul withdrew, leaving bits of itself behind but taking so much more.
Her eyes snapped open as she came too, she shuddered as their Aura’s separated but there was no pain. Just strange feelings of settling deep within her. She looked over to Oz, his head was reared back, mouth opened slightly and he was staring wide eyed unseeing to the ceiling, tears leaking down his cheeks. “Oz!” She asked slightly panicked, reaching out to him and pulling his head down while rising up.

Ozpin barely heard her, the memory she had relived burned into his eyes. He ached on levels he had forgotten he could. “Viktoria.” He moaned only his voice sounded wrong it sounded like the man in the memory. He raised his left hand weakly, turned it slowly to look at the back. Where is my glyph? Garrett wondered, turning his head back and reaching up to this face, he touched his right eye only to find it soft. Where’s The Eye? Why can’t I hear it? He looked down to the woman in his lap, she was too young for his tastes but her eyes were the most stunning silver. A silver eyed warrior? I don’t remember meeting one of those. He reached up and cupped her face, his hand was strange and much too big.

He drew on her cheek with a finger, white light flowed behind it. “Lunamera.” Garrett purred out in a silken voice, the glyph formed on Ruby’s cheek like two XX fused together. She yelped her power filling her eyes for a moment before fading. “Oz stop, what are you doing?!”

Qrow grabbed Oz’s hand and looked into his lovers eyes. They were grey, not copper, the red eyed man’s heart pounded. “Oz?” Qrow asked again, worry and fear filling him as there was no recognition in Ozpin’s gaze.

Garrett tumbled Ruby out of his lap and stood, then wavered for a moment. What the hell? I’m not this tall. He looked around the room, this was all wrong, where was he? He glanced at the sheets on the table and saw the date, when was he?

Ozpin slammed back with force and groaned, putting a hand to his head. He took several large heaving breaths, trying to rein everything in. “We are never doing that again Ruby.” The world reoriented and made sense again.

“What was that?!” Ruby asked going to him and grabbing his hand.

“That was Garrett.” Ozpin said squeezing her hand to help ground himself, his head hurt all sorts of feelings not native to his current mindset rising up. He got the sudden urge to check in on all his valuables and he had glyphs swimming behind his eyes. He found himself extending senses he hadn’t used in centuries, seeking, hunting and then not finding. Ozpin let himself crumble to the ground, taking Ruby willingly with him. “He’s potent, sorry about that.” Garrett rubbed his temples, his face felt wrong, too elegant and his right eye was wrong. Where’s The Eye? How could I have forgotten about it? He wasn’t worried about the others, the Heart, Crown, Chalice, Paw. His eye, something inside him wanted it back. A memory rushed forward, Viktoria and the Trickster, they tricked him to get the Stone, the Sentient that had gone blind. They were talking, fear was making his heart pound, then Viktoria took her wood nymph form and plucked his living eye out and merged it with the Sentient restoring it to life.

Ruby was calling his name again, she came back into focus the memory fading. Ozpin shook his head trying to push Garrett away. “I’m sorry, that hasn’t happened in the last uhhh, I wanna say near century. I don’t get the old lives pulled on that often, average day to day stuff doesn’t do it.” He forced himself up again, staggering towards his bathroom. A new memory swarmed over him and he collapsed, Qrow catching him before he could hit the ground.

He was in Auldale, deep in a cold mansion his leathers pulling against his skin as he hid behind a pillar. Garrett watched The Hag, Gamall, the woman he had broken into this place to steal the Paw and Chalice back from her. Hold onto them himself as the Keepers had done jack all for keeping
them safe. She looked bigger in this memory, stronger then she spoke as she walked to a statue of a man with no features and began drawing a glyph speaking to them. For there were six statues in all. “Termenous, Animious, take the power. The glyphs, the bindings, live, walk, talk and obey!” Her voice was horrible, high and rasping. “Yes, my will, my desires, Termenous, Animous AWAKE!”

Garrett could feel the power humming through the building, he hated the glyphs. He only read them, he didn’t use them despite the other Keepers leaving them everywhere for him to find. More friends then I know, humph. I can’t forget the damn things. The power reached it’s climax and the statues spoke. “What.Is.Your.Will?” Their eyes glowed blue with the power of the glyphs.

“Garrett is here upon you somewhere. Seek, fetch, find him out. Crush him till breathing stops, cut him till bleeding stops, do not let him escape!” That horrid voice issued its orders and the statues boomed a dull slow. “Yes.”

Garrett moved silently around the pillar, clinging to what shadows there were. He moved to see her more easily as she spoke again. “I must leave you now my helpers.” She drew the glyph of doorways as she spoke. “My minions, my stone warriors and secret myself away. Yes must stay secret, must stay hidden a little while longer. Oh so many secrets.” She faded through the glyph and it vanished slowly with her.

Ozpin lurched back into awareness shoving Qrow away and snapping. “GO away! You are DEAD AND GONE! So is Gamall! Whatever you’re concerned with is gone by centuries!” Garrett looked down and ran a hand over his stomach, What the hell? Where are the scars? If I lived I would have had scars, did the Keepers save me again? Ozpin shook his head trying to regain control. “You are dead, go AWAY!” The coppered eyed man shouted into his house, his mind a jumbled mess of memories between himself and Garrett. “Fuck off! You damned thief!”

Qrow could not take this, he reached up and pinched off the blood to Oz’s brain in a single deft move. Oz crumpled unconscious, Qrow catching him and fixing his neck. He heaved Ozpin over his shoulder in a fireman’s carry and lay him on the sofa.

Ruby still sat on the floor, too stunned to move she looked up at Qrow her mind processing what she had just seen. “He wasn’t lying when he said he had lived many other lives. We just met one didn’t we?”

“I think so Ruby.” Qrow sat down lifting up Oz’s head and setting it on his lap. He stroked through the straight ashen locks. He had never seen one before, he hadn’t known they could do that to Oz. He licked his lips, worry for his lover filling him. “Come here Rubes, let’s make sure he’s got lots of sensations about this life. It might be the best way to help him regain control.” Ruby nodded getting up then pausing, the tv remote was on the table. She turned it on and set it to the news, so Oz would be hearing current events.

“Think he’d be okay if I snuggled his chest?” Ruby asked, looking down, Ozpin took up the whole sofa and then a bit, on him was really the best spot for her.

“He might mind, but I don’t think he’d complain when he catches on to our thinking.” Qrow said as Ruby nodded and pulled off her boots she carefully climbed onto Oz’s sleep form. Her head on the center of his chest and legs stretched out over his. “Do you think he’ll be okay, I didn’t know this would happen.”

“Ozpin seemed to know what was happening, I’m sure he’ll come out on top.” Qrow said with some hope colouring his voice.

“I’m sorry, I did this.” Ruby leaned up and kissed Oz’s cheek, tears dripped down onto it. She
moved back down and snuggled to him, hugging him tight.

“No one knew Ruby, it’s not your fault.” Qrow said softly and he meant it, they couldn’t have known. Even Ozpin himself hadn’t know this could happen, they were in uncharted territory and it was becoming clear to him that magic was running amok.

Chapter End Notes

Everyone having fun~ I know I am ;)


Cognitive Reset

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Ozpin came to with a purr, someone was petting his hair, graceful fingers shifting through the layers of his hair. The darkness behind closed eyes was a blessing to his senses and he was so warm and cozy he almost fell back asleep from the pets. There was a soft weight holding him down on the couch and as he reluctantly opened his eyes with a deep breath he discovered his head was in Qrow’s lap. The garnet eyed man was watching the tv, fingers playing idly in Ozpin’s hair. The tall man looked down and saw Ruby snuggled into his chest, her crimson cloak acting as a blanket. He could tell by her breathing she was dozing lightly, her hair splayed out over his chest and he couldn’t help but reach up and wrap a lock around his finger. Its rosy tips brushed over his thumb like spun silk.

Ruby stirred and looked up at him, big silver eyes met soft copper ones. Ozpin let a little smile grace his lips, working at not hiding his emotions would be a new thing but he was sure he’d get there eventually. In the back of his mind he could visualize the walls he built up to protect his heart, small particles of stone were coming away like fine dust in their presence. Realizing there was a question in the young woman’s eyes he raised a brow. “You’re feeling better?” She asked to her, there was no trace of confusion or fear lurking in the depths of those eyes.

“Yeah, did I faint?” Ozpin looked up to Qrow, who’s fingers had stopped playing in his hair just as soon as he heard Ruby’s softly spoken question.

There was a tiny smirk playing around the garnet man’s lips but there was a great deal of concern lining lip. “I knocked you out.” Qrow said transferring his attention to Oz, the copper eyes were back he let out a sigh of relief. That had been a scary thing to see, he knew parts of Ozpin's past lives were still carried within him to some extent. It’s what helped him to grow and evolve, though it seemed that sometimes those memories came with something more, something like what he and Ruby had seen today. Qrow shuddered inwardly, he just really hoped it never had to happen again. To see the man he loved so confused about his identity, no it had been more than that. His train of thought was pushed aside to listen and catch what it was Oz was saying now.

“Ah the good old cognitive reset.” Oz titled his head and kissed Qrow’s thumb. “Thank you, that was the right call.” He could see Qrow relax all at once and he asked. “You okay?”

Qrow nodded his hand moved back into Oz’s hair. Feeling him under his hand, knowing and recognizing him shoved some of his worries aside. “Yeah I was just worried, what brought that on?”

Oz shrugged, “Ruby got stuck in a memory I had to relive it as a result, that doesn’t usually happen. Garrett was a very potent personality, he and I really did not get along at first, he had plenty to say and was disorientated having me inside him. Though I don’t think it will happen again, if I stay clear of any triggers for a while. Garrett was one of the few souls I didn’t get fully merged with which makes him ‘different’ from the rest who got assimilated. I think it was how strong the memory was, it had me shifting back to his thought pattern.” He heard a sniff and looked down, Ruby had sat up still straddling his lower abs but now her hands were in tight fits together over his chest and there was sheen of tears coating her eyes.

“I’m sorry,” She sniffed and rubbed at her eyes with the back of her fist. “It’s all my fault I shouldn’t have pushed you.” The crimzonette pulled her cloak tightly around her.
The ashen haired man sat up, pushing her back so she was on his waist. Then he stroked up and down an arm, he wanted to hug her but he'd refrain from doing so for now. Try to figure out what she needed, what form of affection she responded to best. “I offered. I thought it might help me feel a bit less jealous of you and Qrow. You did not force me and I do understand why you wished for it.” He let his hand rest on the side of her thigh palm up so she could take ahold of his hand if she wished.

Ruby took it and held it between hers, she had a feeling some suggestion in the corner of her mind telling her what he was doing. “I’m still sorry.” Ozpin squeezed her fingers gently. “It was not your fault, nor mine, we simply did not know this would happen. You cannot blame yourself for not seeing the future, mistakes are a part of growing and learning.” He rubbed circles onto the back of her hand. “I do not blame you, there are triggers in those memories that this experiment has made me aware of. Honestly I am glad something like this happened here and now, had I run into those triggers in the field I wouldn’t have had Qrow to rescue me.” He brought their hands up to his lips and pressed a little kiss to her fingers. “This was not your fault.”

“I still instigated it.” Ruby said, this was so different from what she had experienced with Ozpin before. However she felt that he was being honest, she could see it in his features, the soft expression didn’t fit lies. Oz traced his thumb over the back of her hand in circles again. “This was no different then what happened at the Breach Ruby. No one blames you for that either, you couldn’t have done anything then and neither of us knew any better now. We did as best we could.” Oz pondered what to do for a moment, he had feeling him repeating it wouldn’t get through to her. She wouldn’t believe it, she was still holding his hand and seemed to like that. “Repeat it for me Ruby.”

“What?” She asked confused, why would she do that?

“It was not your fault.” Ozpin reached up with his free hand and cleared the tear tracks. Keeping eye contact with her, he ached to help her a soft longing in his chest. He wanted to heal them, to restore the trust lost. He had messed up with Qrow, but he did not make the same mistakes twice.

Ruby studied him, then took a deep breath one after the other. Oz used his free hand to pet up and down her upper arm with the back of his fingers. She knew he was trying to make her feel better, but as she watched him. There was no trace of anger or of that restraint he had used to hide anger. “It wasn’t my fault.” She said softly while looking into his eyes, she raised his hand and pressed it to her head. The young woman’s eyes partly closed as he gently cupped her cheek, brushing his thumb over the high bone.

“No one blames you.” Ozpin said softly, he liked holding her head like this. The tall man noticed that she pushed her head oh so slightly into his hand. That her breaths got slower and deeper, so she likes to be touched just gently. Hmm maybe rose should mean more than just her surname regarding her. Those silver eyes closed partly, his hand was bigger then Qrow’s the calluses were different. She leaned forward and snuggled to his neck, Oz’s arm moved hold her gently. He heard her murmur the repeat against his neck and hmmed thoughtfully. “Ruby, how often do you, how to put this. Take responsibility for the actions of others? I recall you taking responsibility for Weiss’s … outlook on my choice to make you leader of team RWBY. Have there been other cases beyond this case now and the Breach?”

Ruby shrugged not saying a word, she liked this he was bigger then she was used too but all the more to snuggle. Qrow reached over and pulled Ozpin back down by his shoulder. The garnet eyed man said softly. “She takes after her father.”

“Ahhh.” Ozpin said softly moving his hand to pet up and down Ruby’s back. Well that explained that. Taiyang hadn’t been the team leader of STRQ but that hadn't stopped him from developing a
habit of taking responsibility for everyone. Whether or not if truly had anything to do with him. Oz closed his eyes enjoying sensation of Qrow’s hand in his hair. “Well we will work on that then.”

“Work on what?” Ruby asked wiggled to move down and put her head on his pectoral. She turned to watch the tv without really seeing it. The ashen haired man adjusted, her hood so it wasn’t falling onto her face. “Taiyang took care of everyone, even when he needed the care himself. While an admirable trait, it can become a bit self destructive.”

_He called me admirable._ Ruby glowed and giggled softly, just as her stomach growled mostly amusingly in time with Qrows. Ozpin snickered lifting a hand to hide his smile before giving up and laughing so hard his chest shook. The petite woman sat up on his torso holding onto his shoulders as he laughed. It was a nice thing to see, Oz cleared the tears from his eyes still chuckling. “Well then, I guess it’s high time I feed you both.” He patted Ruby on the back a few times still full of mirth.

“Alright you, as warm and nice as this is, I need you up we both know Qrow is more of a hazard than anything else in the kitchen.”

Ruby giggled and got off of him looking over to Qrow the smile pulling at his lips saying everything. He shifted in his seat parting his legs a bit and rested his arms over the back of the couch. “Hey I won’t stop you, so long as I get to have at your blender for dessert Oz.”

“Ooo!” Ruby knew what that meant.

“Only if you don’t lick it again.” Ozpin said standing up and stretching.

“That was that one time Oz!” Blush coloured Qrow’s cheeks as he gestured a lazy one with a finger.

“That’s not the story dad tells.” Ruby said with a sing song voice, following Ozpin into his kitchen. It was on the small side but it was well furnished the cabinets a dark maroon, the counters were a black marble top with smooth edges. The stove was electric and spotless and the oven mounted into a wall. In the middle of the room was an oval breakfast table in the middle of it a basket of apples and bananas. The counters while clean had a cutting board out with knife, there was oils pushed up against the wall by the stove. Ruby decided it looked lived in, like Ozpin spent a great deal of time here. “Wow with a set up like this I don’t get why you ate at the cafe at all.”

Ozpin shrugged and opened the tall stainless steel fridge against the far wall. “I’m not much good at breakfasts. Admittedly I’m more of a lunch and dinner guy.” He surveyed the rich supply of fresh produce trying to decide what to make.

“Well I happen to be good at breakfast, plus even Qrow can’t burn eggs.” Ruby pulled a bar stool out from the table and bounced up on it, it was scaled to someone more of Oz’s height. Ozpin pulled out a chicken and pasta, he figured a pasta dish would be a good start. They were distracted by a deep raspy laugh from the living room.

“Oh Gods! Oz! I can’t believe you kept this!” Qrow burst into the room with a photobook in hand he plopped it down before Ruby and starting laughing again. He pressed a kiss to her temple as he held his gut as laughter over took him again. Ruby looked at the page, a smile blooming over her lips she clapped a hand over mouth.

Ozpin looked over and peered at the page. “Ohhh.” He facepalmed with a very audible smack, blush burning his cheeks. “Not one of my finest moments.” Taking up the whole page was a picture of what Ruby guessed was dance, in the middle of the picture was Ozpin… in a shiny emerald green strapless dress looking VERY nonplussed, he was even wearing white platform heels and white gloves that make up past his elbows slightly. She saw her dad in the background laughing his butt
off, with who she guessed was Raven beside him.

The next page was also just one picture, Ozpin was dressed the same only he was dancing with Qrow. Ruby couldn’t contain it anymore, she burst out laughing. Qrow was wearing a skirt, very alike her own with very fine stacked shiny black leather boots giving him a much needed inch and a half of height, that went up to his knees. In the picture Ozpin had pulled him close for the dance, clearly a tango, Qrow had a thigh over Ozpin’s hips and Oz was grabbing Qrow’s behind. Ruby could see the black leggings that Qrow was wearing clipped up into a garter. Like Oz he wore a strapless corset, but it wove over his torso like raven’s feathers, red accented with black. Unlike Oz Ruby could see that Qrow had makeup on. A light blue, almost sky but accented with gray that slowly turned into a red gradient under of his eyes. The red spanned down and took up a third of his cheek bones in a rounded triangular form. Upon his eyelashes of a darker blood red feathers were drawn with a darker navy blue along his cheeks tapering into larger baby blue ones into his hairline. There was also one skinny long elegantly flowing baby blue feather flowing from the center out to the corner of each eye that curved down to the corner of his jaw. Finally Qrows lips were also a shimmery pale pastel pink.

In his ears were more feathered designs, pierced in three places with a shiny group of black metal feathers making his ears look elven. His hair was longer then she had ever seen it, coming down to his shoulders and styled like his sister. What Ruby couldn’t take her eyes off of was the bodypaint, someone had painstakingly drawn feathers accenting his neck, down over his shoulders to his back of the open dress. They looked glorious and Ruby had to yank her eyes away to take in the rest of the details, the feathers continued over his arms all the way to his wrists tapering as they went. Lastly his nails were painted black, he was the spitting image of his name sake. Completing the look he had the stem of a blood red rose between his teeth.

“Wow.” Ruby still smiled but the laughter dwindled as she took in just how good Qrow looked. Then there was Ozpin, he was nowhere near as painted up, but he had his glasses pushed up his nose and was smiling at the shorter man in his arms. His outfit was simple in contrast to Qrow’s complexity, if anything it only complemented the pair. “You two look really nice.” She giggled seeing Tai in the background again holding a camera. “But why would you guys do that?”

“We lost mutual bets.” Ozpin leaned over and flipped to the next page before returning to the shove. He pulled out a pot for the pasta and filled it with water before setting it on the stove and turning to the precooked chicken to start cutting the breasts off. “I foolishly thought I could do a handstand longer than your mother.”

“And Tai beat me at Nevermore juggling.” Qrow said looking over the photo’s those were good days, he picked up the corner of a page and lifted slightly so he could peer under then brushed scarlet. He let the page fall and smoothed it out.

“They made you cross dress?” Ruby chortled holding her sides, she could barely imagine how her parents had pulled that off. Qrow shrugged smiling so much his cheeks dimpled slightly. “You’re mom did my make up and paint, she had far too much fun with it.” The young woman leaned over and kissed his cheek. “I think it makes you look gorgeous. Next time there is a Masquerade going down in the area you need to get painted again.”

Qrow glanced over to Oz and raised a brow, Oz looked over his shoulder at the silence from Qrow. “Hmm.” He looked at the book while tapping the tip of a small knife against the cutting board. Qrow’s unspoken question hung in the air as Ruby looked between the two, almost like they had a whole conversation without speaking a word. She watched the subtle changes in expression, Qrow looked down to the book when Oz looked over. Ozpin pursed his lips as if to say ‘no’, then Qrow put his elbow on the table and rested his chin on his raised hand. Oz sighed softly as Qrow relaxed
with a little slump and when Qrow bit his lip for a second before licking it Oz finally spoke again. “Alright you can show her.”

Qrow perked up in an instant and grabbed the book flipping the page. “You’ll love these.” He watched as Ruby’s eyes went wide and her hand flew to her mouth again. Her insides did a little clench she was starting to know all too well.

They were of Qrow, as in he was the subject of the image each picture took up a whole page and the detail was incredible. The first was taken from an overhead view, it showed Qrow nude laying on his front with his head to the side had Ruby not know better she would have guessed he was asleep. Upon his back was a depiction of a dragon, red and sapphire roaring as it took to the sky, it’s wings taking up most of Qrow’s back. Upon the dragon’s back was a knight in armour of silver, bow raised in triumph. The rest of the scene was a mountainous backdrop, a valley with a river flowing through tapered out over Qrow’s right butt cheek. Lastly Ozpin was in the image, sitting beside Qrow thin fine brush in hand painting in a highlight to a dragon’s wing. Ruby wished she could draw half so well as Ozpin could paint, the detail was astounding.

The image beside it had Ruby blushing for this time Qrow was still almost naked only wearing thin painted shorts, he was and sitting in a reclining chair with Oz sitting on a stool beside him. Again Oz was painting upon Qrow, this time thought it was jaguar spots, a base layer of orange and white had already been placed covering Qrow head to toe. Oz had brushed Qrow’s hair back and it was cut short again, but his face was already painted share that of a jaguar.

She turned the page and found Qrow and Tai standing side by side with Ozpin beside Qrow looking upon his work with a critical eye while… Ruby’s breath caught in her throat. Her mother had a airbrush in hand and was shining up one of Tai’s golden scales. For he was painted as a dragon, from the background Ruby guessed they were backstage at a club or something.

Beside it was another full page, this time Qrow and Tai upon a stage, with other people made creatures around them. Qrow had himself lowered and prowling like the great cat he shared a pelt with. Flanking Qrow was a panther woman and a huge tiger man. Tai was up a few steps on a raised platform breathing fire. Ruby guessed a little Dust made that possible. She turned the page again and found two pictures. One was of Taiyang and Summer standing side by side holding up a small trophy between them, it was a simple gold platform with a gold brush mounted upon it.

The next made her smile because it made it very clear that Qrow and Ozpin weren’t at all sore about losing. Oz had Qrow pressed against a wall and appeared to be snogging the smaller man as if his life depended on it. Qrow had his hands woven tight into Ozpin’s hair and a leg hooked over the man’s hips. The next picture was a close up of the one before, only Qrow and Oz had parted to catch their breaths and the angle was a little better so she could see shine in their eyes, the moisture on their lips.

Ruby’s heart was beating a million kilometers a minute and she pressed her thighs together. She could see the shear want in their eyes when they looked upon each other. Ozpin paused in his cooking watching the colour flush Ruby’s cheeks, how her posture changed. He couldn’t help but smirk slightly as he saw what her eyes were glued on. Maybe we’ll work together better than I thought. He stepped over to the fridge and pulled out, milk, butter and a few types of cheese. “Your mother could be a bit of a shutterbug at times.”

“These are her pictures?” Ruby’s eyes widened, flipping back through the pages with a new wonder in her eyes.

“Not all.” Qrow said as she flipped back to the first two of him and Oz while Oz was painting him. “Oz used a tripod for those and the one backstage was Raven but the rest are your Mom.” The garnet
eyed man reached over and wrapped an arm around her waist, he pressed a kiss to her temple.

“That’s so cool.” Ruby turned the page back to the ones of Qrow nude. She couldn’t see his manhood, just the angle of the photos but she tried studying the rest of him. Mentally trying to compare her limited knowledge of his body under his clothes to what was before her.

Ozpin pulled out another saucepan and put a sizable portion of butter into it to melt. “You look perplexed.” He turned to look at her while he pulled out a whisk and pushed the butter around. For practice’s sake he activated his Semblance, fetched a head of garlic from a cupboard and an onion from the fridge. An instant later they were cooking in the butter.

Ruby looked between the fridge and Oz, her head going back and forth a few times then she pouted. “Now that’s just cheating!” Qrow burst out laughing beside her, he patted her head affectionately. “Hey he needs it if he’s gonna cook while I am around. A bit of bad luck to forget the garlic!”

Ruby looked over to him puzzled wondering what having him around would have to do with forgetting the garlic. Ozpin caught the look and pursed his lips, he hasn’t told her about his Semblance yet. He decided to draw her attention away from it, if Qrow hadn’t said anything yet there was likely a reason. “Do you like the pictures?”

The silver eyed woman nodded, looking back to them. “I can’t find any difference between then and now.” She looked over to Qrow studying his face. No age lines, or wrinkles he was maybe a little more tanned but it was very slight, not a grey hair on his head. Ruby saw Qrow’s smile falter, but only for a moment.

Qrow reached up and traced a thumb over her lips, watching her eyes dilate at the one little touch. “Oz taught me to be like him a couple years after that photo, I was twenty three I think. In a way still am twenty three.” He saw those silver eyes widen, he was willing to bet she was thinking about how close they were in physical age.

“I think it is a good age to have picked, the height of your beauty.” Oz admired the two from the stove, adding flour to the butter, garlic, onions and whisking the three together. “At least without a few touches of my own.”

Qrow blushed while Ruby giggled at him, she looked back to the book and asked. “Have you changed since then?” Her companion thumbed a nipple out of habit. “Yeah I had more piercings back then, a few in my ears and my nipples but I stopped wearing them when I started working as a spy. They were rather distinct and giving people a feature to remember or something to grab is never wise.”

“That’s a shame, I bet those looked really sexy.” Ruby flipped through the pages past the ones at the stage. Her eyes near popped out of her skull for a second, she quickly turned the page back. Her cheeks were burning scarlet and pointedly looked away from the book.

Ozpin said suppressing a smile, he remembered what pictures he had next. “I still have your nipple shields Qrow, if you wish we could redo your piercings.” He bit the inside of his cheek and trying to be innocent about it asked. “Are you alright Ruby?” Oz noticed that Qrow was staring at him, his lips pressed into a line and the furrow to his brow that Oz knew meant that he was deep in thought.

“I didn’t-, umm, err…” Ruby blushed and tried to divert her gaze away from him. Ozpin poured milk into his rue and started vigorously wisking. She didn’t know what to say, she certainly wasn’t going to admit her knickers were utterly drenched seconds after computing what the picture was of.

Ozpin couldn’t help but chuckle, “Qrow come stir for me please.” he pulled off his glasses as he
walked around the little island. Qrow smiling as he took up Ozpin’s spot by the stove and started to stir. Ozpin walked slowly over to Ruby, enjoying how her gaze was fixed upon him often darting down below his beltline. He trailed his hand off the table and to her hip, looking to her for permission to touch.

Ruby melted against him, leaning into his chest as Ozpin stood behind her. He reached up with his other hand and turned the page, Ruby looked away her chest starting to heave. Oz brushed his fingers over her neck, feather light that caused Ruby’s skin to tingle. He spoke softly in a honey’d rumble. “You like it don’t you? I can see it on you.” He slid his hand forward to rest it over her thigh, tapping his fingers on her inner thigh. “Say something if you want me to stop.” He uttered dipping his head to kiss her neck in a long slow lingering action.

Ruby squeezed her eyes shut and whimpered, she most certainly did not want him to stop. The stool was high enough that it was perfect for him to play with her. Qrow looked over watching the flush bloom over her and found himself wishing she was wearing a little less. He couldn’t see below her waist but knew Oz had a hand on her thigh, he knew how it felt when Oz would slide those fingers upwards. “She’s not looking Oz.”

Ozpin drew his lips away from her neck and uttered into her ear. “Now we can’t have that. Look upon us my dear Ruby, if you do I will touch you, if you don’t I will stay my hand.” He nipped her ear rolling the fleshy lobe gently between his teeth. Ruby forced her eyes open to look at the page, it was of Qrow and Ozpin, bare as they day they were born. From the angle she guessed that a tripod had been used for it. Qrow was suspended from the ceiling, his arms above his head tied with hemp rope. The rope spun down his arms to his chest were a harness had been woven over his skin and then pulled at the back to help suspended him from the ceiling with his arms. Ruby couldn’t help but stare at it, Qrow was pulled up onto the tips of his toes and there was nothing shielding him from her gaze.

She could see the white fluid her brain didn’t wish to name right now beeding up and dripping off the tip of his manhood. Ruby had to swallow thickly as saliva gathered in her mouth, she wanted to suck on it. Her core clenched at the mere thought, on her knees before him and... her breath caught as she tried not to get wrapped up in the fantasy. Ozpin started tracing circles on her inner thigh as he spoke to her. “Glorious isn’t he? Do you like it? I’ll admit this is one of my favourites. What does it make you think of my dear?”

“I-.” Ruby’s eyes roamed but up their joined bodies, Ozpin was standing behind Qrow, his hands on the other man’s hips. She could tell by how he was standing and the look of utter bliss on his face he was within Qrow, thrusting, taking him and Qrow’s expression made him look like he was moments away from release. The silver eyed woman swallowed again, “I like it.” the words were breathy and soft. She could feel Ozpin smile against her neck and she jolted in her seat at his next words. “Spread your legs.” He spoke them like an order, but he had given her TWO ways to stop this at anytime. With that in mind knowing it was not truly a demand, she shifted slowly on her seat doing as he asked. She looked over to Qrow who was cutting cheese and putting it into the sauce, watching her out of the corner of his eye.

“Good girl.” Ozpin purred the praise and it made Ruby’s insides melt. He stroked her inner thigh easing very slowly upwards. “What’s your favourite part of it?” He asked as Ruby trembled in her seat, her hands grabbed the counter as she bit her lip trying to keep desperate whimpers at bay. It was just how he speaking to her, the picture was one thing, having him behind her all hot and hard, touching her. It was making it very hard to think, but she had a feeling if she didn’t answer he would stop. Ruby looked over the page again and forced the words out. “I.. I like the rope, I like how you both look.”
The silver haired man chuckled into her ear and rewarded her moving his hand up her thigh. “Oh? Hmm.” He purred deep in his chest, the sound made Ruby’s core clench and drip. “Do I have a little Rope Bunny that needs to get introduced to her new favourite thing?” Ruby couldn’t contain the whimpers anymore as his hand moved up her thigh once more and he moved his hand pushing her skirt up and placing it over her soaked panties in a teasing brush. She let her head fall back on his chest, given how he stopped moving she had a feeling he wanted another answer. “Maybe? I don’t know. I like the idea.”

Ozpin pulled her panties aside with a finger and rested them over her now exposed sex. “What else does it make you think of?” He could feel how wet she was, his slacks started to feel very confining, but he wouldn’t do anything here. This was for her, a slow introduction to what they liked. The petite woman’s eyes flew to Qrow, he was watching her with an expression she hadn’t seen before. It wasn’t quite that same want she had seen in the picture of him and Oz but it was there, if a bit more concealed. She bit her lip hard and Ozpin’s hand moved away from her sex. “Ruby.” He said softly, he wasn’t going to continue without an answer.

“I!” She licked her sore lip still staring at Qrow, she yanked her gaze away from him and back to the page. To that stiff erection all exposed to the air and neglected, Ozpin moved his hand away slightly and she grabbed it keeping it from moving farther. She turned and tried to whisper her response to Ozpin.

Qrow watched Ozpin’s eyebrows fly upward then the smile then bloomed over his lips. Whatever Ruby had said made the tall man very happy, he looked back over to Ruby. Ozpin moved his hand back up her thigh and said. “Louder Ruby I didn’t quite catch that.” He felt her squirm against him and almost whine. “Please don’t make me say it aloud.”

“No say it again, look at him as you do.” Oz traced on her inner thigh, waiting for the words to come from her, then he’d help her out. Ruby looked back to Qrow her throat threatening to close, he was looking at her again. “It makes me want too… I want to.” The little woman tried to force the words out as his gaze was fixed on her, Ozpin stopped tracing on her thigh. She took a deep breath and without looking away said. “It makes me want to suck your cock.” Ozpin’s hand slid up her thigh the moment she got the last word out. A finger traced over her vulva before pressing gently inside his other hand came up and with two fingers he rubbed in little circles over her clit. Ruby wailed arching against him grabbing his arms, Oz pressed another finger inside of her with ease seeking out that little change of texture. Ruby couldn’t contain the moaning cry when he found it and started rubbings his fingers over it in short strokes in time with the others upon her pearl. She clawed at his arms panting between the high cries, she came swiftly under his knowing touch tensing for a long moment as his fingers continued to play over her before slumping back against him. Ozpin didn’t not remove his fingers as she relaxed with a dreamily little purr, he liked the feel of her. He slowed his movements making them more exploratory.

Ruby took a deep breath it was easier the second time. “It makes me want to suck your…” she looked into Qrows eyes. “Cock.” Ozpin’s hand slid up her thigh the moment she got the last word out. A finger traced over her vulva before pressing gently inside his other hand came up and with two fingers he rubbed in little circles over her clit. Ruby wailed arching against him grabbing his forearms, Oz pressed another finger inside of her with ease seeking out that little change of texture.

Ruby couldn’t contain the moaning cry when he found it and started rubbings his fingers over it in short strokes in time with the others upon her pearl. She clawed at his arms panting between the high cries, she came swiftly under his knowing touch tracing for a long moment as his fingers continued to play over her before slumping back against him. Ozpin didn’t not remove his fingers as she relaxed with a dreamily little purr, he liked the feel of her. He slowed his movements making them more exploratory.

What he wouldn’t give to pick her up and take her back to the sofa, keep her like his against his chest and faced away from him. Spread her legs and see just how much of her he could touch, how much he could get her to dilate for him. Qrow could watch, his own member hardened further at the thought, Qrow watching him spread the little woman. Letting Qrow see all of her, maybe he’d come
over and join in, kiss and lick at her little rose. Or maybe he’d drive his member into the woman while Oz held her, kiss them as he took Ruby in his lap. Idea after idea rose up in Oz’s head working him up very quickly. Reluctantly he pulled his hands away from Ruby’s sex and stepped away. “You should go wash up.” He rubbed his fingers together feeling her thick juices upon them.

Ruby with a wobble jumped off the stool and looked over to him, her eyes dipping southward she reached out and he grabbed her wrist with his dry hand. She looked up to him confused, Oz shrugged his shoulder. “I’m fine, go.” Ruby nodded taking a step away from him and saying. “Okay, if that is what you want.”

“It is.” Ozpin said watching her nod and turn around, he called out after. “Bathroom is in the back off of the bedroom.” He saw Ruby nod before returning his attention to his wet fingers. Oz walked back around the island still looking at them, he had have a mind to lick them clean as he went to a hand grabbed his wrist. He looked down into garnet eyes and swallowed thickly when Qrow took a finger into his mouth and sucked it clean. Ozpin’s member gave a twitch of approval as Qrow made a show out of cleaning his fingers, slowly one at a time.

Oz then pressed them together, so Qrow would have to take both if he wished to continue. Qrow smirked locking gazes with Oz and drew his tongue over them in a long wet line, Ruby’s taste upon Oz’s skin. He wondered if he had a new favourite thing. Qrow took Oz’s two fingers slowly into his mouth and sucked softly, sliding his head forward to take them deeper, playing over them with his tongue. Ozpin groaned lustfully and had to forcibly remind himself they had to make food. “Qrow~.” He rumbled and slowly pulled his fingers away. “As much as I’d love to let you continue, I don’t think it would be wise to jump straight back to it after what has happened.” He stepped away and to the sink, washing his hands as Qrow let out a mournful sigh. “You’re right.” He turned his attention back to the stove the water finally boiling, he poured pasta in and started stirring.

Ozpin came up behind him and wrapped his arms around the smaller man hugging him his hands over Qrow’s hips. “Though I am curious why in the world you brought that book out.” He supervised Qrow’s cooking, nothing looked like it was about to burn or boil over.

“I didn’t think it was one of those books! I just saw the crossdressing and thought Ruby would find it funny. What was one of those books doing in the living room anyway?!” Qrow leaned back into Oz, minus mutual erections that would be ignored and would go away eventually. This was nice, it reminded him of Ozpin’s early attempts at teaching him to cook. The red eyed man smiled softly at the memories and stirred the cheese sauce.

“I must confess I forgot that book was there. I do look through them often when you aren’t home.” Ozpin petted Qrow’s stomach with his thumbs before stepping away to find a colander to put the pasta in.

Qrow’s heart melted a little bit at the admission as he watched Oz pull out a colander and put it in the sink. He stepped out of the way as Ozpin came over, took the pasta from the element and drained it into the sink. “Get out the cast iron pot please, I’m in the mood to spoil you.” Qrow did as asked, remembering where it was and greatly enjoying the idea of Ozpin spoiling him with food.

Together they poured the cheese sauce, chicken pieces and noodles into the pot. Qrow then stepped back and watched as Oz mixed the three together. Added a layer of shredded mozzarella and parmesan with a sprinkling of papakea. He loved watching Oz move about his kitchen, it was almost like watching a dancer. The oven was opened and the dish put in, turned on to ‘broil’ and the dishes dealt with in moments. He half wondered if Oz was using his Semblance again, which was a bit odd. “You using your Semblance?” Qrow asked after moment thinking on it.

“Just a bit, I think I am woefully out of practice.” Ozpin stopped moving around his once again
spotless kitchen, everything returned to its place. He put a dishcloth away and pulled out oven mitts setting them on the counter before returning to Qrow. He licked his lips and hesitated.

Qrow saw it and had a pretty good guess what was going through Oz’s head. With a smirk of his own reached out, grabbed Oz by the waistband of his pants and pulled him over. A hand went up into Oz hair and pulled the taller man down into a slow kiss. The moan he pulled from Oz made him smile as the bigger man’s hands found their way to his hips again. Qrow purred at the feeling, deepening the kiss with tongue and drawing Oz’s into his mouth.

Ruby peeked into the kitchen watching the two kiss and pressed her legs together again trying to not get worked up. She had forsaken her panties and feeling mischievous put them under Oz’s pillow for him to find at a later date. The silver eyed woman had a feeling he’d enjoy the gesture, she had taken a second to explore his room. It was more personal than the rest of the house, not as clean and the guitar he had in one corner made her pause and wonder just how many hobbies he had.

She quietly picked her way into the kitchen the two men eventually noticing her but in no hurry to separate. Ruby pulled the fridge open and surveyed it, after a moment she pulled out a large bottle of orange juice and put it on the island. Ozpin reluctantly pulled himself away from Qrow and said. “Cups are in the upper cupboards by the fridge. Shall I put together a salad or do we want to just have the juice?”

Qrow traced a finger over the curves of Oz’s abs, he never found it fair now the bigger man had more muscle mass then him. He chalked it up to been on the slim side and a difference of body type. “I vote just juice, it’s only lunch no need to get really fancy.”

“I’m good with juice too.” Ruby said pulling out three glasses for them. Ozpin watched her thinking over what to spend the rest of the day doing. He had several ideas it was must a matter of what they could do without drawing attention to themselves. A voice not quite silenced in the back of his mind suggested a museum would be a good start to the day.

Chapter End Notes

Ardy: So I was originally gonna do this as one chapter but I’ve been struggling to get back into the swing of this story so I figured I’d split it up. The themes are different enough between the two chapter so split it. That said I had my appendix out recently so I’m still healing and my energy levels are low, so expect everything to be slow for a few weeks more.
Kry: That said this did get a lot more sexual than intended.
Ardy: It’s all Nat’s fault and that is all I have to say on the topic. :P Though to any kinkers out there reading this story, I’ve a question for you. If you could have a district of a city devoted to sex, what would it look like? What would be in it? I have ideas of my own but I'm curious.
Kry: That's gonna be interesting, thank you too. RomanticDayDreamer98, Mysty_Sinclair, Silenaislife, ClockRose, MegaMaz, Smiling Fog and XxShadowWolf13xX for your comments. We've changed to moderating comments, apologizes for the inconvenience but with luck it will be more fun for everyone even if more patience is required.
Ozpin glared at the clothes in his dresser, they were all messed up from his rifling through them earlier. He was not wearing his suit out into Vale with Ruby and Qrow. The idea here was to get used to being relaxed around them, not on his guard and in his Headmaster persona. He let out a heavy huff and sat on the edge of his bed, running a hand through his hair. There was a quiet knock on the door and he looked up expecting to see Ruby.

Qrow slipped through the open door and closed it softly behind him. “Ruby’s looking through the book, I hope that was the only one of those books you’ve got out there.” Ozpin looked over to his bookshelf, neat and tidy filled with novels and photo albums. Only the space for the albums was too big for just one to be missing. “There may be another.” Oz looked back over to Qrow as the raven haired man progressed into the slightly messy room.

Weathered fingers traced over the dark green sheets as he silently walked over. “Did you mean it? When you said you’d give me my shields back?” Qrow wasn’t sure about how he felt about the offer, they had been a gift from Oz back when he first admitted to being into the fetish side of sex. They came with a condition, that if Qrow wore them that he was Oz’s and Oz’s alone. Qrow shivered anxiety twisting in his gut, he had stopped wearing them over a decade ago. His mind played over all the things he had done with them, gone was his false bravado. He could submit but the trust he needed to do it had just started to strain between them so he returned the shields.

Ozpin looked over as Qrow paused by the end of the bed, staying just out of reach. He reached over to his bedside table a hard oak wood and opened the drawer. Qrow didn’t miss that Oz didn’t even have to look as he pulled out a velvet black box. The garnet eyed man’s lips pulled into a smile, that Oz had kept them so close at hand. “Why didn’t you say something then?”

The ashen haired man sigh and slouched partly, his hands cupped around the box. “Because you were already pulling away, because I was afraid and because I didn’t want to push you away further by trying to keep you.” Oz looked over to Qrow as the smaller man took a step closer. “I protect what is mine, but only if it wants to be mine. I feared you no longer wanted it.”

Qrow stood before Oz, reached out and covered the longer fingers, graceful and elegant unlike his own. “I was starting to get overwhelmed with my work and part of me hated you for it. For being my boss, it got harder to submit, to trust you like I had when we were just friends. I started to fear Switching, to the point I wasn’t sure I could do it anymore. I was afraid to give up that control, that’s why I gave them back. Even if I was too much of a coward to say why then.”

“Do you want them?” Ozpin asked softly looked down at their hands. “We don’t need them, you don’t. They aren’t just for looks and if you are still afraid then perhaps it would be best to leave them behind.”

“I want them, I do love you and I’m sorry it took me so long to say it.” Qrow winced remember the past night, he squeezed Ozpin’s hands. “And that I said it like that.” Oz looked up at Qrow searching those red eyes to find sorrow for what had been lost and just that pull of those lips that hid a smile for the wish of what could be. Qrow leaned down and kissed Oz chastely for a long minute before pulling away. “Maybe after we get back then, I want to take you two down into the city. Get away from Beacon for a bit.”
Qrow drew away with a smirk saying, “That sounds like an excellent idea.” he turned to Ozpin’s dresser and tapped a finger on his chin. He rifled through the dresser and pulled out a blood red dress shirt with long sleeves, the shorter man smirked and purred out. “May I dress you Master?”

Ozpin coughed on his air mid breath and chuckled, sure just when I get the blood going back to my brain he goes and does that! Oz recovered quickly, setting the box aside and stood up relaxing his shoulders back. “If it pleases you.” He offered his hand and Qrow shook out the shirt and fixed it so Oz could easily get his hands through the sleeves and pulled it over his shoulders. Qrow got a bit distracted then as he stepped close to Oz leaning up on his toes so he could kiss Oz’s collar before his hands found the buttons and he started to do the shirt.

Slowly he did the buttons going down, one by one. Qrow relaxed a little bit, he missed this kind of thing, service outside of sex. The red shirt’s tails hung over Oz’s hips and he couldn’t help but brush the confined erection. Oz spoke in a tone that sent a shiver of lust down Qrow’s spine. “No.” Gods he missed that voice, missed it when it spoke with that authority.

Qrow stepped away and uttered a soft. “Yes Master.” Before returning to the dresser and fixing the clothes as best he could swiftly, he closed the drawer making sure it did not bang. Ozpin hated it when doors were slammed or cupboards carelessly closed. He opened the middle drawer and selected an undergarment, black was a good bet right now. The raven haired man set them aside and returned to Ozpin, he licked his lips and couldn’t help but slide his hands under the slacks while he hooked his thumbs over the waistband.

Oz inhaled but didn’t reprimand Qrow as the smaller man stroked his gluteus and thighs as he pushed the slanks down. He stepped out of them with a small step and watched as Qrow smoothly bent and retrieved them. Holding them up and folding them down the seam then again mid way. The garnet eyed man walked over to hamper while folding them once more and placed them within it.

Ozpin let the smile appear on his lips while rumbling out in that way he knew Qrow liked. “You haven’t forgotten anything have you?”

The shorter man bit his lip pulling at it, he could hear the approval in Ozpin’s voice and tried not to grin. “Nothing Master, we simply have not had a reason to use said knowledge recently.” It was a little weird to speak so formally, but with his habit of clipping his words Oz had forced him to learn how to speak in high societies without making a fool of himself. He picked up the underwear and knelt before Oz and couldn’t help but touch as much of the tall man as he could whilst pulling them up.

Ozpin straightened them trying to get the annoying problem out of the way, but he had a feeling it would be a persistent irritant till he had time to take care of it properly. Qrow picked out a pair of very well worn black jeans, Oz smirked especially if Qrow kept this up all day. He let Qrow put the jeans on him, he couldn’t up the little grunt when Qrow touched him. “Easy with the goods Qrow.” The ashen haired man groaned softly as Qrow zipped up the jeans, then tucked the tails of the shirt in and did the little button tracing his fingers along the top of the jeans to admire the muscles.

Qrow stepped away and admired his handy work, but there were a few things missing. He longed to stroke over Oz’s crotch but knew that the game would stop if he did. Later when Oz allowed it, he’d tease a bit more but for now he’d behave. Qrow turned on his heel and walked over to the wardrobe, he pulled it open and found his own pants were suddenly very confining as his eyes played over Oz’s toys. He yanked his gaze away from them and turned his attention to the belts hanging on the inside of the door.

There were many different kinds but then one he pulled out was woven with metal of gold and silver buckle, he could recall many long happy hours polishing it. It was a heavy black leather and four
centimeters in width and embroidered with vines, a pattern you had to touch to know it was even there. Qrow closed the wardrobe and hid all its goodies from sight. He walked back to Ozpin and slid the belt through the belt loops of the jeans pressing up tight to Oz.

“Missed that one?” Ozpin asked as Qrow stepped back slightly so he could pulled the leather through the buckle and do it up. Qrow found it interesting that only one of the holes was worn, the others were practically for show on a man who never changed. “It looks good on you.” The red eyed man stepped away and back to the dresser and opened a square black box that sat atop it. After scanning the contents he pulled out emerald silver cuff-links.

Oz raised a hand and let Qrow put the cuff-links in, enjoying the sure movements as Qrow straightened the edges of the cuffs. Qrow looked up when he was finished and reached up smoothing the collar of the shirt out, his fingers lingered over Oz’s neck teasing over his Adam’s apple. He watched it bob before yanking his eyes away from it and pushing Oz’s glasses up his nose a few millimeters. “There perfect.”

The taller man chuckled and grabbed Qrow by the small of the back and pulled him to him. “Come here you.” He rumbled full his voice full of mirth, he stole a kiss that Qrow relaxed happily into. The smaller man glowed, a kiss was always good after what he had done. He pulled away and smoothed down Oz’s shirt again. “You’re gonna make me rumple it.”

“It was already rumpled.” Ozpin said fondly and gestured to the door with a hand. “After you love.” Qrow blushed but lead the way out, Ozpin closing his door softly behind him.

They found Ruby bright red looking over one of the photo albums with a few used tissues on the coffee table. Ozpin grinned and walked over peering over her shoulder. The photo was of Qrow and himself performing, he was wearing black leather pants with tight boots and a mask over his eyes, his hair was dyed black. He prowled around Qrow as he held a black leash lightly between to fingers of one hand and a flogger in the other. Qrow was in a bodysuit that showed and framed his exposed groin. Lastly he had a heavy collar around his neck, he was suspended by a chain system standing on the trips of his toes. It would only take one little yank from Oz for Qrow to fall. Upon Qrow’s member was a light piece of red silk.

“He lasted remarkable well, that suit left his back almost entirely exposed. It was a work of art by the time I was through with him.” Ozpin commented with a warm tone as he remembered that night.

“EEP!” Ruby jumped and blushing anew. “Where is it?” She asked looking up at him, it was clear it took place at a club of some sort.

“Nightshade, it’s a BDSM club here.” Ozpin reached over and flipped a page, admiring Qrow’s back in it. He stood up and gestured at the door. “I’d like to take you both out, but we should get going. You can look through my books to your heart’s content whenever you like.”

Ruby looked Ozpin over only then noticing how he was dressed. She licked her lips and said as her eyes roamed downward. “Nice belt.”

“Qrow does have impeccable tastes. Shall we?” Ozpin gestured to the door and Ruby put the book down. “Sure!” She bounced out ahead of them and Qrow fell back. Ozpin grabbed a black leather long coat, a black wide brim hat and closed the door behind him.

Qrow found watching her before had been, interesting he was very careful to never show a sexual interest in her. Didn’t touch her, didn’t watch her, the closest thing to flirting he let himself do was composed music for her. He hadn’t done or said anything when Oz decided to play with her because it wasn’t frankly his place too. Ruby had control over that entire exchange, she had let Oz touch her.
Qrow had no right to take that away from her.

He couldn’t help but watch her now though, how her skirt moved with each step. The raven haired man hadn’t been able to see anything more imitate while she and Oz played. However her expressions had been burned into his mind. Qrow worried his bottom lip and tried to decide what to do about any of it. They had walked all the way to the airships, Ruby and Oz chatting away while Qrow thought silently. In the end he decided that Ruby was more than mature enough to decide what she was ready for and so long as she didn’t start pushing him, then they were good.

He’d rather keep her at a distance, before his Semblance hurt her. Sure seventeen was adulthood in Vale, but that didn’t mean a whole lot to him. Qrow tired to keep his Semblance underwraps but he still didn’t want to expose her to anymore risk then he had too. He understood the why’s of Ruby’s choice in him, they were very well thought out and argued reasons. Otherwise they wouldn’t be here at all, Qrow didn’t admit even fondness for anyone lightly. Let alone fall head over heels in love with a tiny slip of a woman who was practically an empath. Qrow shivered and looked over to Ruby again, she was touching Oz. Teasing her fingers over the back of his hand, petting and circling. He could see it relax Oz, the tall man liked being touched. Definitely an empath and starting to key into Oz’s frequency.

Qrow leaned back into the shadow of the aircraft’s wall as it took off. Ozpin moved to stand across from him reaching up to hold the overbar. Ruby took the place at Qrow’s side and snuggled up, he lifted up an arm and wrapped it around her. He leveled his gaze with Oz and the ashen haired man cocked his head in a barely noticeable gesture. Qrow looked down to Ruby for a moment then back to Oz and raised a brow.

Ozpin shrugged again barely noticeable then reached up and tucked his bangs behind an ear. Qrow’s lips twisted around into an almost smile and he let out a soft sigh relaxing. So he doesn’t know what ups up, he’s just trying to be open to her. Ruby looked between them and let out a little huff. “You know it’s the second time you two have done that.”

“Done what?” Ozpin asked shifting his attention from Qrow to the woman pressed to the raven haired man’s side. He wasn’t sure how he felt about the stare she was giving him. Oz very vividly remembered having her mucking about in his soul, he also remembered how it felt to be embraced in hers. The ashen haired man fought down a shiver of pleasure that ran down his spine. That had most definitely a sensation he had not experienced before, and given his lifespan. At least the collective lifespan of his soul, that was saying something.

“Had a whole conversation between the two of you without saying a word.” Ruby moved her hand to pet Qrow’s wrist as she felt him stiffen beside her. “It’s obvious you do it and I don’t mind, but it’s still kinda of cool to see. Though I do wonder what you two were talking about.”

Ozpin looked over to Qrow and raised a brow again, Qrow just shrugged which promoted a giggle from Ruby. Oz then spoke to Ruby again. “Qrow had just inquired as to why I was letting you pet my hand, I said that I didn’t mind and was trying to be more open.”

Ruby pressed a hand to her lips and giggled before pointing between the two of them. “And that was you asking for his permission to say what you two had talked about.” These two are tooo cute! The silver eyed warrior thought, had she not seen them falling out she wondered how they had ever fallen out in the first place.

“Pretty much.” Qrow said in his usual lazy rasp, he looked down at her and had the sudden urge to kiss her. Most people didn’t notice his silent conversations with Oz, much less have them figured out in under a minute. Utterly perfect, he mused reaching up brushed her bangs back. Ruby turned her head as he did and brushed her lips over his thumb. Qrow pulled his hand away the spot where her
Ozpin watched Qrow go rigid when Ruby kissed his thumb and couldn’t help but shake his head. Qrow was both the most outward person he had ever met and the most enclosed. Oz could see the affection in Qrow for Ruby from miles away, but Qrow being Qrow was doing his usual distancing. They really needed to tell Ruby about Qrow’s Semblance, otherwise she’s start to wonder why he was always pulling away.

The ship came down to the landing pad in the city and Ruby bounced out before it had completely settled. Oz had half a mind to reprimand her, but Qrow was already in motion and he rolled his eyes and followed. He stretched the leather of his coat creaking, then he pulled it closed and turned up the collar up so it hid the lower features of his face. He fixed his hat to hide most of his hair, it wasn’t that he was trying to hide per say. Life was just more fun with fewer stares and even a half assed disguise helped a great deal.

Qrow shoved his hands into his pockets as he came to a stop standing beside Ruby, the silver eyes pulled her hood further up over her head so avoid the gazes of people around them, she wasn’t one for large crowds of people and the hood helped conceal her. “So where are we going Oz?” He couldn’t recall the last time he’d seen Oz wear that coat and hat. He’d be lying if he said it wasn’t sexy...

“I was thinking the museum would be a good start, the weapon exhibits alone would entertain Ruby for a while.” Ozpin led the way down the flight of stairs, Qrow took up his place on Oz’s right side. He was within touching distance but one step behind and he buried his hands into the pockets of his trousers. He glanced out of the corner of his eye, Ruby had fallen in beside Oz on his left their hands almost touching. The garnet eyed men smiled slightly content in watching her. Her animated face and smile never failed to lighten the burden on him. Watching the love, her tiny slender hand would brush up against his lovers, just enough for Oz’s to twitch then fall away again. He watched as Ruby turned to Ozpin as she walked, giving him her attention talking to him. Something about weapons and the kind of exhibitions there, he wasn’t really paying much mind to the words, his gaze running up and down the streets for threats but he kept coming back and lingering on the two of them.

Qrow watched as Oz tilted his head to pay more attention to Ruby, but it was the twitch in Oz’s right hand one finger partly curling for a moment before relaxing. Qrow took the signal and moved up to flank Oz as they headed down into the street. Most of Vale was crowded this time of day with the festival still going on and it showed in the way its people enjoyed themselves. The noise was starting to crowd around them as they walked and Ruby started to pull her cloak tighter around her so avoid it getting caught up with passerbys. Another turn of Oz’s hand and Qrow knew to stay put in his position.

Ruby looked up surprised when Oz gently touch her and moved her across him, Qrow then stepped up tight to her right while Oz remained slightly before her. She looked over to Qrow who smiled, she returned it and let her arms drop feeling secure. With the two flanking her, shielding her the crowd it didn’t seem so frightening. The Residential district of Vale was one of the largest, for where Ozpin wanted to go they needed to go to the upper district through the commercial which was across river.

The Residential district had it’s pockets of life, but it was the most boring of the districts but even in it the buildings changed. Within it you could find buildings built in the style and reflection of every other Kingdom. Buildings that resembled Atlas were towering in sleek sharp edges and cool colours from whites, greys and blues respectively. They had an air of privilege to them, standing proud and especially clean. Structures that resemble Mistral’s architect had sloped roofs, warm colors and lots of wood and tiles. They came in all sizes but favored square patterns. Now Vacou buildings were few and very far between, mostly a mix of shops, market stalls and low grade houses. They were built for
practicality and couldn’t be compared to any other, all unique and shut up tight and in the centre of all three styles was Vale. With its balance of practical designs and individual tastes in style it helped lend a melding between the stark difference between the other kingdoms.

People wandered in mixed groups, large and small, though almost all had a destination in mind and kept to themselves the walk was crowded. Still the roads opened when they reached the bridge, the pavement was cool and damp from a drizzling rain that had been present from before they arrived. Ruby caught sight of the waterfall just to the side of the bright and couldn’t help but break away from her escort to zoom over towards the railing.

Ozpin reached out automatically as she moved, he had felt the intent in her but not quickly enough to stop her. Her cloak curled around his finger for a instant before it slipped away. The copper eyes flashed gold for a moment in a fluid swirl before returning to normal. Qrow brushed his hand looked up Oz missing the change of eye colour.

Qrow felt the sudden tensing in Oz and looked over to Ruby as she leaned on the railing to watch the waterfall. The wind had swept her hood down, her long hair blew back red tips just dancing in the breeze. Spray from the waterfall flew over the bridge in a gust of wind, lifting the black hat from Oz’s head. His hand snatched out grabbing the hat as he walked across the bridge.

Ruby felt Oz’s presence before she saw him, the warmth of him and the sudden block of wind. A hand brushed over her neck, just the tips of his fingers but they felt coarse and rough, much like working hands did or hands that tended weapons often. Then a thumb tucked under her jaw, she could feel the thickened skin from holding a pen, or she mused plucking the strings of a guitar. She looked up to him and found his expression both cold and soft. “Do you play?” She asked softly as his fingers played over her jaw.

“Over time? A little bit,” Ozpin shrugged, “or a lot of everything, currently guitar.” he wove a lock of her hair around his pointer finger. He liked it, it was more silken then Qrow’s and not quite as curly.

“Hmm,” Ruby closed her eyes partly, tilting her head to his hand, the lock of hair around his finger pulled slightly but it was a nice pull. “do you sing?” She blinked a few times letting out a soft breath as his thumb teased over her cheek. “Rather well.” Ozpin’s purred removing his hand from her hair, then teased the back of his fingers down her arm.

Ruby damped her lips with a little swipe of her tongue, the cool wind gusted over them. “Qrow and I do as well, I’ll have to hear you sometime.” She felt a tap on her arm and Qrow was suddenly flanking her. Then she was warm between the two men, she felt her crow brush her hip with a hand. Now she was shielded from both sides and as short and slender as she was made her hidden from everything and everyone else.

Qrow leaned against the cold railing, there was something nice about listening to all of Ozpin’s signals again. A deep satisfaction in recalling the forgotten motions and re-familiarizing them. It was even nicer that Oz seemed to be adapting them for Ruby, just a tiny bit but if she could see them and was able to respond like he did then maybe this could work out better than he thought. It showed him that she was observant, not that he hadn’t known that after watching her grow and pick up things so well but it was nice, really nice to see what it did for her and for them. His red eyes turned back to the river, for the first time noticing that there was a race going on beneath them. Tiny little boats controlled by children flew through the river as the water twisted and turned. Qrow listened as Ozpin rumbled out his reply and hummed, that voice never failed to send a shiver down his spine. The crow turned his eyes out upon the bridge listening to Oz but doing his job as well.

“Did Qrow ever tell you that I gave him another name?” Ozpin closed his eyes for a long moment, a
whisper of magic not his own letting him listen to the city. His fingers traced over Ruby’s hand upon
the cold steel rain, he dipped his head down so his mouth was inches from her ear and said softly. “I
named him Muninn, to fly the world for me.”

Qrow inhaled sharply at the name his eyes sliding closed, memories crystallized in perfection. Every
memory he had held in intimate detail, till he spoke them to his Master. “Ozpin,” Qrow said with a
strange echo that Ruby didn’t recognize in her crow. “don’t invoke it unless you want me to speak.”

Ruby looked up to Qrow his eyes opened slightly upon feeling her turn to him. His pupils had gone
pure black with only the faintest of silver reflected upon them. Magic, the Silver Eyed Warrior’s own
eyes widened. “Why?” She asked softly looking between the two.

“I needed eyes in the world.” Ozpin said, other memories of the man he had not forced as far away
as he thought he had rose up. “Once upon a time I used ravens.” he bent and whispered into her ear.
“I was also missing an eye.” He pulled away from Ruby and stepped around her to Qrow. “Whisper
a secret to me Muninn.”

Qrow moved before the last syllable was off Ozpin’s tongue, his lips to Ozpin ear moving in haste
and so softly not even Ruby could hear the words spoken. She could see how Qrow’s… no
Muninn’s hand gripped Oz’s shoulder, how the leather deformed under his fingers. Only now did
she see that his fingernails and turned black and shiny like the talons of a bird. She watched his lips
and knew the language he was speaking was not English. Then all at once Qrow drew away and
Muninn was gone, he let out a long breath and rubbed the corners of his eyes.

Qrow felt the magic fade, he hated it when Ozpin invoked that name. Well hated was maybe the
wrong word for it, the magic Oz had given him was self sustaining, meaning it would never fade so
long as he lived. With magic came intent, the name Muninn was the control for that magic. It was the
word he thought of when he wanted to turn into his corvid form but that was with him, his sister
Raven also had another name. Raven was Huginn and her task was thought to go with his memory,
Raven had always been all about thinking and questioning. Ozpin named her very well, still
‘Muninn’ from Oz’s lips was a different call, a feeling of magic all its own.

They moved from the rail and started walking a few gentle touches from Oz, while Qrow thought
about the magic in the name. He knew that he never had to tell personal secrets to Oz, they didn’t
even really have to be secrets. It was in how they were spoken rather than what was said, months
worth of information condensed into a collection of words in a very old tongue. Writing out what he
had said to Oz in a report to Ironwood would have taken weeks, rather then two minutes.

Qrow’s chest tightened slightly, the tension in his shoulders rippled and he automatically reached out
and held onto Ruby’s hand. Her warm skin accompanied by the welcoming touch soothed his ruffled
feathers. No he did not hate this magic, just being Muninn scared him a little at times. Ruby threaded
their fingers together as Ozpin walked on her free side. The garnet eyed man looked down at her and
let out a long breath. Maybe it would be better now, she could call him Muninn anytime. She had a
magic of her own after all, what would Muninn do if spoken from those pearl lips? Qrow smirked,
feeling more settled, he looked forward to finding out.

Ozpin watched the two joined hands and smiled, mission accomplished. He thought feeling very
satisfied, Ruby was very intelligent, he knew she’d probably have the rest of what he said figured out
by nightfall. Now she even knew that to turn into a crow was not Qrow’s Semblance, so she would
soon ask what it was. Lastly he had given her the name he had heard in Qrow’s soul. A name for
everyone and a name for the few. Maybe one day he would tell her his and he’d find hers. What a
day that would be.

Together they walked through Vale, through the marketplaces and up into the finer district. Places
steeped with history and learning kept away from the mainstream of people. The buildings grew older and more worn, but it was the kind of old that lasted forever, built to withstand time by the ages. Pavement broke off to cobblestone, the buildings of wood and plaster to marble and glass.

Ruby had never been to this side of the city and she had never been to Vale’s museum before. So when she saw the wide staircase leading up into their destination she couldn’t help but bounce up the white marble steps. They were flanked by giant Valkyries, women of strength and beauty. They stood armoured with swords raised high, carved from the finest marble. Qrow followed her up the steps while Oz broke off and wandered over to one kneeling down. The stone was smooth under his hands weathered but not worn, almost ageless. Grey eyes looked upon his statues and a frown pulled upon his lips. Garrett’s knowing fingers slid down the marble, found the runes almost worn away from time and frowned. He drew upon the marble with his hand, building new Glyphs, invisible to anyone other then him. They replaced and renewed the old ones, gleaming in a bright blue light.

“Are you coming Oz?” Qrow called out wondering what Ozpin was up too.

Grey eyes turned copper again and Ozpin stood fluidly, the flaring of his long coat hiding the Glyphs as the blue glow faded away. “Sorry, I just haven’t been this way in a long while.” He took the stairs three at a time and gestured for them to lead the way as he was content to follow the pair. He had after all been here many a time if many many years ago. He caught the lingering look Qrow had pointed towards him but when the ashen haired man just gave him a small smile Qrow turned away giving Ruby his attention again.

Ozpin looked over the fine grey stone, smoother than a babies bum. It led to the exhibit of the King of Vale, who stood victorious and with the leaders of the other Kingdoms at his feet. Using a power he hadn’t any need for in some time pulled Garrett from his resting place within Oz. Slowly the past man came forward, setting over Ozpin like a second skin. Thicker and heavier his eyes tracked over the room. He remembered this place, remembered sneaking around it when electricity was barely a thing, hardly more then simple plain light bulbs that flickered off more then they stayed on. Oz followed his lover and Ruby, his steps turning silent he stretched out a hand as they pass through a hall trailing his fingers over the wall. Garrett lifted his head to admire the murles, seeing them with warm yellow light was so contrasting to the world of pale white moonlight he had lived in. He wondered if his eye was in this place again, if the Heart and Crown are here again. If they’ve been here for all this time.

Ruby lowered her voice as they move into the exhibits, she and Qrow wandered over to a display of armour. Ozpin followed a few steps back, just watching them with silent movements, keeping his presence ghost like. Seeing how Qrow’s arms came up around her as he rested his chin on her head. Listened to the soft murmur of their voices.

Garrett’s eyes roam the room, he remembered where the guards used to be posted. That perpetual itch just waiting for Gamall to arrive driving him to distraction. Thankfully he had already been taking this job very carefully. Oz shook his head and walked over to Ruby and Qrow. “It’s pre Great War, the runes on the edges were said to help channel Aura.” Oz crossed his arms over his chest, the armour was primarily made of leather the runes woven in with old Dust thread.

“It’s very interesting.” Ruby said petting over Qrow’s hands on her waist. She looked up to Ozpin. “What is your favourite exhibit Oz?”

“There is a statue deeper in.” Garrett said before Oz thought about it. “I’ll show you, this way.” His voice was different, deeper, smoother the rumble had changed. It reverberated in a way that had both Qrow and Ruby looking over to him sharply but Garrett was already walking away. Reaching up and adjusting his hat down over his features and hunched his shoulders. His steps turned silent as he
moved, fluidly his fingers reaching out and touching things as he walked. Memory of stone imprinted on his mind, reminded by his fingers.

Paintings went past them ignored, gold and silver, Garrett’s cold grey eyes danced upon them but he could hear it. “So you’ve finally come again little man.” He turned up a flight of stairs and silently flew up the staircase, Ruby and Qrow forgotten though they remained hot of his heels.

Before them rose a statue of a king, raising his scepter up high ten meters tall the atrium for it huge and made of grey stone. Ruby and Qrow followed Ozpin up the stairs but hung back, the memory of losing Oz to one who came before fresh in their minds. Garrett came to the balcony before the scepter. Upon it was a stone eye, cradled in the woven vine grip. “I can feel you little man, but I can’t see you.” The voice was a harsh hissing whisper but it still echoed as though someone stood with their mouth against his ear.

“So you are here and here you will stay.” Garrett said through Oz, his mind at ease knowing where The Eye was. He reached out temptation winning over for a moment before Garrett had it within his hand. He saw that the fingers were longer then his own but that it was his hand. A pair of thinner and soft hands caged his free one as Ruby pulled the hand towards her. “Ozpin?” The Silver Eyed Warrior pulled him away from The Eye and looked up into his grey ones.

Ozpin saw those silver pools widened and he shook his head drawing away from her. Stupid Garrett not going where he belongs! When Qrow reached for him he lifted a hand for the other man to stop. “I’m alright, just needed to check on something.” Oz said shaking his head trying to clear the remnants of Garrett’s thoughts away. The ashen haired man pressed a hand to his head and took several deep breaths. “Sorry, I should have caught him earlier.”

Qrow took Oz’s hand and helped Ruby draw him away from The Eye, spotting a nearby bench he pushed Oz gently down onto it. “You said you were fine.” He sat down beside Oz and Ruby looked over to The Eye. It sat blind and silent to her anyway, she turned her attention back to Oz. “Did he come back?”

“After a fashion,” The tall man said he rubbed his temple with a hand again. “I think coming here was his idea. He wanted to check on that.” Ozpin nodded at the Eye and leaned back against the cold wall. “Sorry.”

Ruby sat down beside Oz and hugged his arm with both of hers, resting her cheek against it. “It’s okay, its pretty cool in here. But maybe it’s not the best place for someone with as much history as you.” Ozpin shook his head and moved a hand onto Ruby’s thigh. Her skin was warm and soft, he stroked it with his thumb, it was a wonderful contrast to the cold stone. He dipped his head to her and inhaled deeply of her scent. Roses and spring’s first rain, Viktoria had smelled of moss and clover, roses was different. Her scent was fresh too, clearer in a way.

Ozpin closed his eyes and Qrow moved away, he could understand needing new feelings to drive the old ones away. Ozpin pulled his arm away from Ruby’s grasp and wrapped it around her. Ruby let out a little ‘eep’ as Ozpin pulled her into his lap, she arranged herself to straddle him. “Oz?” She asked as Ozpin tucked his face to her neck after pulling his glasses off and giving them to Qrow.

“Trying to focus.” The immortal said softly, wrapping his arms around her. “I know Qrow inside and out, you’re all new and different. Better for fixating on the present.” Oz said to her neck brushing his lips over it, tense, soft, smooth, no flaws. He kissed the slender slope, brushing his tongue over it. Slight, tinted, hmm does everything about her reflect in roses? Ozpin mused then tucked his head to rest against her neck.

The hissing, rasping voice return speaking only to Oz. “I can feel them, why do you leave me little
man? There is work to do.” Ozpin shivered and pulled away, it was still there blind but still talking. “Lets go, leave at least this part.” He lifted Ruby off him and stood swiftly taking his glasses as he went and put them back on. “Thoughts Qrow?”

“Your stories.” Qrow said cryptically, with a smirk playing over his lips. He fixed the tall man’s hat and took his hand. Ozpin laughed and let Qrow try and move him, Ruby giggled alongside him. “No Qrow, I want her to figure it out on her own.” Ozpin said trying to stop his crow from pulling him as Ruby grabbed his other hand and helped Qrow pull Oz.

Qrow spun to face Oz walking backwards. “I doubt she’ll have time to read them all, I still haven’t and I never have to reread anything. My memory is perfect remember? I remember how long it took me to figure it out and I’d rather give Ruby more clues before hand. Just because you are as direct as… as a Vorlon when you want to be doesn’t mean I am leaving Ruby out to dry. Now come, I won’t make you tell the stories.”

Ruby wondered what the heck Qrow was talking about, but it sounded like a very wonderful puzzle. Ozpin had already given her a few clues on the bridge and she knew her mythology very well. “Come on Oz, give me another clue.”

Ozpin let out an exaggerated sigh and pulled them both into his embrace with a tumble. Ruby laughed and Qrow smirked, Oz slid his hands around both of their waists. “Alright, but I want something if you’re going to steal my fun watching her figure it out.”

“And want would you like?” Ruby asked leaned up and rested against him her head on his chest. She bit her lip when Oz’s let his fingers tap the top of her rear. “I want a kiss,” Ozpin purred, “from you.” and turned his attention to Qrow. “And from you hmm, well I can think of a few things. I’ll run them by you later and you can pick one.”

The garnet eyed man raised a brow and then sighed, he leaned up on his toes and kissed Ozpin’s cheek. “Alright, I guess that’s fair. Come on, let’s show her the fun stuff.”

Ozpin rolled his eyes and let Qrow pull him deeper into the museum. Past sections for Atlas, Vacou and Mistral to the section for Vale. All around them were weapons, armour, bits of old temples that had been found and restored, saving them from being forgotten. Qrow let Oz’s hand go and gestured to Ruby. “Have at it Ruby! Who is Ozpin?”

Ruby looked at Oz who only smiled and raised his hands like he was holding the whole room. “My puzzle for you, have fun.” He picked out a bench and sat back down, Qrow walked over to her and whispered. “See if you can figure it out without asking questions and yes before you ask. This is a test, Oz doesn’t trust easy and holds intellect in high regard.” Qrow kissed her cheek right in front of her ear. “I’ve already helped you more then he ever helped me figure it out so good luck.” He kissed her once more and hugged her for a long minute before letting her go and sitting beside Oz.

Ozpin looked over to Qrow and pursed his lips. Qrow scoffed and shook his head. “I told her want you told me. I gave her no hints, I know you like testing people before giving them anymore insight into you.”

“Thank you.” Ozpin said watching Ruby looked around the room for a minute then crossed his arms. “I still think this makes it to easy for her. She already knows one name of mine, I suppose it will be interesting to see if she will find another.”

Qrow scoffed and shook his head. “You named me Murinn, that should be all the hint she requires. She loves reading and her mythology... I bet it will only take her seven minutes.” Ruby started walking away from them, the biggest piece in the room was a mural taken from a temple.
“Fifteen and I’ll wager a hmm fellatio.” Ozpin said leaning back and crossing his heels. He then reached up, took off his hat and set it down on the bench. “Seven and I’ll match that with hmm, you will let me tie you up. One scene that I put together.” Qrow leaned on Ozpin’s shoulder, enjoying the relaxation of the moment. “Done.” Ozpin said and offered his hand and they shook on it, before settling to watch Ruby.

Ruby looked over the mural, it was of Yggdrasil and all the nine realms with the Brother Gods up in the branches. Remnant in the middle, with a great snake around the roots of the tree to shake all the worlds when it awoke. She looked down at the placard, this was dated at seven hundred years ago. Ozpin had said he was the King of Vale, but she had a feeling that was not the answer he was looking for. Flying in between the branches and a one eyed man sitting at the trunk of the tree were two ravens. Ruby hmmed loudly and recited loudly into the quiet room.

:Huginn and Muninn fly each day

over the spacious earth.

I fear for Huginn, that he come not back,
yet more anxious am I for Muninn.:

Qrow tapped Oz in the chest and whispered out, “We’re at one and a half minutes.” Ozpin only huffed and watched her. Ruby looked at Odin sitting at the foot of tree and cocked her head. Ozpin said on the bridge that he had been missing an eye once. That’s Muninn up in the tree, so Qrow does that mean that Ozpin is Odin? She spun on her heel and opened her mouth to give her answer, then paused and shut it. Wait, Ozpin said he was cursed by the Gods not that he was a God.

Ruby pulled her cloak down around her and started to walk through the room. The green rug carpet muffing her steps, she looked at the center of the room. It had an old round shield and sword, with a urn of ashes. The sword was as long as Harbinger, but it was broadsword of gleaming steel with Odin’s hanging tree engraved above the hilt. The shield was broken, missing a large chuck out of the top but she could read the runes on it. Shield of the Allfather. Ruby crossed her arms, Gods couldn’t die at least not by arms. So a God wouldn’t need a shield, would he?

Ruby looked up at Ozpin and cocked her head, he was watching her his eyes lightening to a gold again. I see you, it’s just a matter of Who you are? Or maybe Want you Are? She looked around the room, much of it was related to the gods or historical but it was hard to know which was which. She walked around the room again and Ozpin leaned over and whispered to Qrow. “Four minutes, I’m looking forward to being in your mouth.” Qrow flushed but smirked, he knew Ruby better then Oz.

Ruby’s mind was spinning, history mixed in with mythology she walked around and around the room. Turning what she knew over and over around in her head then she paused in a instant right before the two men and snapped her fingers and pointed at Ozpin. “You’re Odin, but you’re not Odin. You inspired Odin, you were the Odin that was real and after you he became a god. You are not the god, but you were him. Muninn Qrow, you have used that over and over. That’s why you told me that at all.”

There was no response from Ozpin for a moment then he uncrossed his ankles raised his hands and clapped long slow but the smile was warm and wholesome. “Well done. It seems I underestimated you, I was going to give you another eight minutes.” He lifted a hand and gestured for her to
come to him with a finger. Ruby walked to him and when he parted his legs stood between them. “I trust you will be keeping that information to yourself?”

Ruby made a face like the question had been idiotic. “Of course!” She then cocked her head to the side wolfishly and reached up covering his right eye carefully with her palm. “You’d look good with only one eye.” Oz pin grabbed her wrist and pulled her tight to him. “I gave you a whole room full of clues, where’s my kiss?” Ruby reached up pulled his hat off and set it on the bench. “Right here.” She purred her eyes partly closing.

Oz pin met her lips, releasing her wrist and cupping her head. Ruby only kissed his lips but gasped when Oz lightly nipped her lip, she moaned softly catching on to what he wanted and tilted her head deepening the kiss. Oz purred sliding his tongue over hers, feeling her quiver and shake, he brought his other arm around her, slowly leading her into a deeper and deeper kiss. As his fingers tightened in her hair the petite woman’s legs gave out but Oz pin held her upright slowly easing back from the kiss. Ruby’s lips were wet and lush as a little trail of saliva connected them for a second before breaking. Oz admired her dark eyes and pearl lips, watched her blink almost dazed at him. “Wow,” She breathed out the words softly. “Good kiss.”

Oz let a hand drift down and patted a butt cheek through her skirt. “If you liked that just imagine what I can do when I take my time with the rest of it.” Despite her best efforts Ruby whimpered at the thought and pressed her legs together. Her lack of panties was making itself known on her upper thighs and she had no tissues to clean herself with here.

Qrow was aroused just watching them, the darkness in both their eyes, the body language. He took pity on Ruby and said. “Be nice Oz, she’s still new to this.” Qrow’s eyes widened as Oz slipped his hand quickly back around and up Ruby’s skirt. “She’s the one that isn’t wearing knickers Qrow.” Qrow watched Ruby bit her bottom lip, how her little hands gripped Oz’s broad shoulders. The garnet eyed man could only imagine what Oz pin was doing under that skirt but it was very clear Ruby liked it. He quickly glanced around hearing a door open in the distance, thus my Semblance rears its head. “Someone’s coming.” He stood up blocking Ruby and Oz pin from view of the largest door, he had to adjust the crotch of his trousers as he went.

Oz pin’s hand flew from Ruby’s flushed sex and he grabbed his hat returning it to his head, a quick lick of his fingers cleaned them and he held onto Ruby’s hip as he rose. “Come on.” Sure enough as they started walking a security guard walked into the room. He was a portly man to leveled a long look at the three of them, the look gave Qrow the impression that they’d been caught on the security cameras. “Officer.” Qrow said cheekily knowing the man couldn’t do a thing unless he caught Oz with his hand up Ruby’s skirt.

The man just glared at them and followed them at a distance as they headed out of the museum. They paused out by the Valkyries and Oz gravitated to the one opposite to the Glyphs he had renewed before. Oz pin leaned against it and couldn’t help but draw new Glyphs on it just like its twin, his mass hidden them from view. Ruby settled leaning on his side with a little shiver as the wind blew through her clothes.

Qrow smirked wolfishly at her and moved to sat so he blocked the wind, he bent and kissed her cheek. “That is what you get for not wearing knickers.” Ruby slid a hand forth under his tailed shirt touching the lean muscle it hid. “Breeze aside I’m not seeing the problem. I’m sure you could warm me up if you wanted.” She purred still feeling flirtty and aroused.

The raven haired man grabbed her hand and pulled it off of him. “Please don’t tempt me.” The calm sincerity in his words made Ruby pause her smile fading. “Okay.” She said softly and pulled her wrist free of his grasp.
Ozpin finished drawing his Glyphs and said, “Shall we go watch the ocean for a bit?” It would be as good a time as any to talk about Qrow’s Semblance. “Sure!” Ruby bounced away from them glad to have a goal and a distraction from Qrow’s rejection. Ozpin moved off the statue to follow her, taking her hand and leading the way again. Qrow looked down at the hand he had used to stop Ruby and sighed before following as well.

Ozpin took them to a little park overlooking the cliff side, it was a finer establishment with finely kept gardens and a huge hedge maze. Both Qrow and Ozpin had dirty thoughts about that maze but kept it to themselves, but both knew where they were going for a walk the next time they couldn’t sleep at night.

Ruby loved the park, it was both open and full of trees and plants with lots of little private walkways. Ozpin however seemed to be taking them to one spot in particular so she didn’t wander off. Sure enough they came upon an enclosed sitting space that overlooked the ocean. Ruby walked past the two men and looked over the edge. “This is lovely.” She smiled an honest small little tilt of her lips. Ozpin sat aways from the edge and flopped back into the green grass, the willow tree behind them blew it’s long leaves in the wind lifting them to dance in weaving patterns. “It’s a good spot, I usually go to the Emerald Forest but this is nice too.” Qrow pulled off his cape and put it down beside Oz before sitting on it, both men watched Ruby peer over the edge. As she bent slightly to look at the water a breeze blew past their area, gently lifting the bottom of her black and red skirt. It only took a moment for both men’s attention to snap at her bare backside, still glistening with a sweet like nectar. The ashen haired man spoke up with a soft air of command. “Ruby come here.”

Ruby’s head turned at the order and she found herself obeying automatically. She walked over and Ozpin pulled her down into his lap, she giggled quietly as Oz’s hand settled on her hip. She moved to straddle him as he adjusted his hat to shield his eyes from the sun. The silver eyed woman traced over the heavy belt buckle, wiggling on Oz to settle on his crotch.

The tall man let out a soft groan and said. “You little knickerless vixen, don’t tease unless you intend to follow through.” Ruby rotated her hips and grinned as she felt a response.

“Ruby.” Qrow tried to scold her, a randy Ruby was giving him all sorts of ideas. He wondered if he could live vicariously through Ozpin on that front. “Don’t.”

“Why ever not Qrow?” Ozpin lifted his hat so he could look at Qrow. “Would you rather she tease you instead?” Oz watched the colour flush Qrow’s cheeks as the smaller man said, “No.” in a mute tone. “Why not?” Ozpin asked, this seemed to be a good opening for the conversation he wanted to have. He set his hat aside to stroke up Ruby’s thigh till his hand disappeared under her skirt again.

Qrow saw Ruby’s skin flush and bit his lip wondering what Oz was up too. Garnet eyes couldn’t help but roam over the young woman before Qrow remembered that Oz had asked him a question. “You know why.” Qrow turned his attention to Ozpin.

“But she does not, you should tell her.” Ozpin petted over the soft flesh of Ruby’s behind, he wondered halfheartedly if she would agree to become a subject for him when she turned seventeen. He hadn’t gotten to make any art is such a long while.

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Qrow pulled out his flask and took several long swallows, the whisky burning down his throat before he paused to take a breath. “You are not going to let this go are you?” He looked over to Oz, the older man was relaxed playing with Ruby idly. Ozpin spoke up and said while looking over to Qrow. “It is why I brought you here, you have to tell her one of these days.”

Ruby turned her attention to Qrow, moving off Oz’s lap and onto his. She tilted her head slowly to
one side as the raven haired man took another long drink. “What is it Qrow? Is it why you always try so hard to stay away?”

Qrow sighed and put the cap back on his flask and set it aside. “You know that crows are a sign of bad luck? Old superstition, but it’s how I got my name. See, some people can manipulate time and some people can burst into rose petals and some people are just born unlucky. My Semblance isn’t like most - it’s not exactly something I do. It’s always there, whether I like it or not. I bring misfortune.” He let out a bitter chuckle. “I guess you could call me a bad luck charm. Comes in real handy when I’m fighting an enemy, but it makes it a little hard on friends... and family.” He lifted a hand and traced a hand over Ruby’s cheek.

“Oh.” Ruby said in a whisper, her mind turning it over. Her poor Qrow, to have been carrying that around for his whole life, she leaned forward and pressed a soft kiss to his lips. “I don’t think I will ever call you a bad luck charm. That was cruel of your parents to name you such.”

Qrow scoffed and shook his head. “Well they weren’t very nice people and Raven was their favourite.” This is going well, he thought she looked sad at him. He cupped her head and Ruby turned her head to kiss his palm, then murmured against his skin. “Hmm, I think I’ll just call you Muninn then when we are alone. Then you’re not always being reminded of your Semblance that way.”

Muninn sucked in a breath at the call of his name, it echoed in his head differently then when Oz said it. No rush of memories to report, but an intense awareness of her. Qrow leaned forward and kissed her, Ruby let out a surprised meep and purred into the kiss when he deepened it. It was different then Oz’s kisses, shallower and quicker but when his hands dug into her hips, Ruby was not going to complain. Qrow broke the kiss quickly and leaned back on his hands grabbing the ground. “I don’t think that would be a good idea, just save it for when you really really need to get my attention.”

Ruby giggled and drew away, “I’ll keep that in mind.” she moved off his lap and pulled of her cloak putting it between the two men. She flopped down on it as Qrow settled beside her, her silver eyes tracked the clouds in the sky. “This is a nice day.”

Ozpin smiled looking up as well as Qrow turned onto his side, preferring to look at Ruby rather then the clouds. “Do you really not care about my Semblance? Just being around me is a danger to you.”

Ruby looked over to him with a raised brow. “I love you, it just one more part of you. There is no way I’d give you up because of it.” She tapped her chest with a hand and said. “Come on, you look tired and you know you want too.” An invitation like that Qrow was not going to turn down, he snuggled up beside her and put his head on her chest. With a deep slow breath he closed his eyes content to listen to her heart beating as it lulled him into a light sleep.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you too: Nathalorial, Mysty_Sinclair, ClockRose, Silenaislife, Jamie, Celestialfae for your comments.

So ends this really long section, blaaa it got much longer then I thought it would be. As you all have hopefully noticed we changed over to moderating comments rather then not allowing guest ones.
Tap tap one two, do you hear me?

Chapter Notes

Ardy: I did not mean for this to turn out how it did, so uhh oops? That said I did want to be a bit more heavy handed with a few things in this rewrite. So this fits that bill and helps with something I think there were problems with the first time around. Also tags are updated.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Eventually they returned to Oz’s flat which lead to Qrow lay back on the sofa as Ozpin as rubbed his nipples in anti bacterial cleaner. “You sure about this?” Oz asked as he thumbed a nipple checking the side, he could see the very faint scaring from the old piercings and would be mindful to aim for the same spot.

“Yes Oz, get on with it!” Qrow snapped he hated the waiting, he could deal with pain but it was waiting for the pain that sucked. Ozpin rolled his eyes at his tone and turned his attention to Ruby. “I’d recommend activating your Aura, he’s got the grip of a python sometimes.” He picked up his fourteen gauge needle and cleaned it again, you could ever be too sterile in this.

Ruby did as asked and shifted to sit beside the red eyed man and took his nearest hand in hers. “I’m good.” She was rather curious about this, not something she’d ever want done to her but it was still rather cool.

“Right then.” Ozpin activated his Semblance, mostly because this would be easier if Qrow didn’t have the opportunity to jerk. All within the seconds held in suspension by his Semblance, he pierced the nipple then put the barbell in. Quickly he moved to the other side and did the same thing again, once it was done he then let time resume.

“Bloody Hell Oz!” Qrow jerked and squeezed Ruby’s hand. Ozpin wiped out some medical adhesive bandages and put it over both tightly. “Press on those please.” Oz said to Ruby who did so with her free hand while Qrow held the other tightly.

“Now no playing with them for five months and salt water twice a day don’t let me catch you forgetting.” Ozpin cleaned his tools and packed them up. Qrow snatched his hand and pulled him back, Ozpin stumbled into the kiss but quickly deepened it. Qrow liked to counter pain with pleasure, he stroked over Qrow’s neck with a hand before drawing away.

“Yeah yeah I know.” Qrow let Ruby’s hand go and moved her hand so he could press on his nipples himself. He let out a long sigh and relaxed into the couch, this was the worse bit. There would be no touching them till they healed and then the switch to his shields. He sighed ah well it would be worth it with in the long run.

Ozpin looked to Qrow and got up grabbing his medical supplies to return them to the bathroom. Ruby looked Qrow over as he let his head fall back. “Are you okay?” She asked shifting to sit slightly away from him, she reached out and petted over the lean muscles of his torso.

The garnet eyed man shrugged and lifted an arm over the back of the couch behind her. “I will be, I’m thinking about speeding up the healing with my Aura but you don’t want piercings healing too
“Makes sense.” Ruby thought his chest was very pretty and he so rarely let her admire it. She drew down his abs licking her lips, silver eyes following her hand. Qrow had to smile at her, she’d seen him without a shirt plenty of times yet it never seemed to cease fascinating her. He snatched her hand and pulled it up. Ruby fell into his lap and she barely had time to figure out what was going on before Qrow had pulled her into his lap.

“Boo.” Qrow said and bopped her on the nose with a finger. Ruby giggled and snuggled into his lap straddling him and put her arms over his shoulders and bit her bottom lip. “What?” Qrow inquired feeling her shift and settle again, she had that look in her eye that meant she wanted something.

“Can I have a kiss? Up till the last couple days there have been no kisses and now suddenly kisses.” Ruby leaned against him drawing her arms down so her hands rested on his shoulders. She had been wondering about that, had it just been Oz that pushed Qrow into action? Or was he really okay with being more physically affectionate now?

“Ah, that.” Qrow glanced away and thought it over, that one kiss in the arena had just opened the floodgates. He just didn’t have the heart to tell her no anymore, he let out a long sigh. “I suppose so, I guess it’s alright now you are almost an adult.” He watched Ruby cock her head at him, those silver eyes he adored flicking rapidly over his features. “Do you want to kiss me?” She asked measuring Qrow’s response, there was none of Ozpin enthusiasm he seemed almost as laid back as he always was.

Qrow turned his gaze back to her, heard the inquiring tone almost innocent but not quite. He reached up and lightly traced over the side of her face ending at her chin, his finger moved under it and pulled her head up. Ruby’s eyes slid shut as she let Qrow guide her, his lips were dry and a little chapped. His beard rasped against her skin as their lips molded together.

Ozpin returned to the room poised to ask what they wanted to do but instead he smiled and pulled out his Scroll. The occupants of his sofa were too involved with each other to notice as he stepped to the side and lowered himself. When he was satisfied with the angle he took a quick picture. The flash alerted Qrow and he pulled slowly away from the kiss and looked over to Ozpin. “Oz.” He said in a scolding tone as Ozpin smirked and stashed his Scroll away. “I need to start a new photo album.”

Ruby blushed remembering the others and the thought that she would be in one. Her heart swelled and she felt honoured that Ozpin held her so highly that she deserved a place in his books. Ozpin turned his attention to Ruby, “Is that alright with you?” he raised an inquiring brow. “Yes.” Ruby said with an enthusiastic nod.

Qrow moved his hands to rest over Ruby’s love handles, his fingers tapping against her behind. “Well now your in for it.” He purred his own heart warming, the thought of Ruby in the books soothed him. Ozpin walked over and sat beside them, resting his arms over the back of the sofa. A hand found its way to Qrow neck and started to pet it with nimble fingers. “And before you worry Ruby, I keep all my pictures in hard copy only. There much harder to steal that way, that and I like them on paper.”

“I could tell.” Ruby took a few deep breaths trying to get her cheeks to stop being so red. “How many books do you have?”

“Three, I filled the last one shortly before Qrow started to leave before.” Ozpin’s eyes were suddenly very downcast, his hand moved to weave his fingers into Qrow’s hair but he did not pull. Qrow closed his eyes and leaned back into it, giving Ozpin that support he desired.
“Hmm.” Ruby pondered for a minute and then smiled, she settled against Qrow’s chest with her ear to it. She closed her eyes and just enjoyed the moment, she felt Oz move closer and his arm wrapped around the two of them. The petite woman heard Qrow’s heart rate pick up and a little moan from his throat and knew that Ozpin was kissing him. Eventually it calmed and she felt them both relax, Oz’s arm was heavy around her waist.

Ozpin was in Valhalla, his temple was rested against Qrow’s, they both had their eyes closed and were sharing breaths. He missed just being with Qrow, just existing in the same space in an intimate fashion. Ruby was a welcome addition under his arm, in his care. He had a great deal to thank her for and he was simply glad she wished to stay with them. Oz had a sneaking suspicion that she would add to his relationship with Qrow. From his observations she had all the hallmarks of a submissive, more so one that would stand up for herself. He hated subs that assumed that he wanted to walk all over them. Qrow could be a glorious creature when he wished to be and none of that came from blind submission.

Ruby stirred and yawned, she sat up and stretched as the two below her stirred. “Already had one nap today as tempting as it is with Qrow oozing sleepy-yawn particles. If I snuggle anymore like this I am going to fall asleep.”

Ozpin chuckled and drew away leaning back into the sofa. “Good point as tempting as it is. What would you liked to do?” He got up and stretched weaving his hands over his head and arching his back.

Ruby and Qrow stared admiring the strain of Oz’s muscles against his shirt. Ruby spoke before she thought about it. “Watch you work out?” Both men chuckled and smirked, Qrow spoke up. “I second that motion, you’re always nice to watch.”

Ozpin rolled his eyes in good humour. “Maybe another day you two. How about we work on your Aura Ruby? I’ll admit I’ve been avoiding the topic in your lessons for sometime now.” He was still wary of her Aura but he wasn’t so afraid of what she would find in him anymore.

“Sure.” Ruby got up off of Qrow and brushed her skirt down. “Hey, where are your knickers? I’ve been wondering.” The garnet eyed man asked and was rewarded with a grin. “Oh I’m sure they’ll turn up.”

“I’ll take that as a personal challenge to find them.” Ozpin walked around the back of the sofa drawing his fingers along the back. He walked over to his balcony and pulled the sliding door open, it slid inward in three parts then into the wall. Wind blew through the flat filling it with fresh air that Ruby basked in. Ozpin grabbed two pillows from the sofa and plopped them on the ground. “Sit with me?” He asked as he sat on one and crossed his legs in a lotus pose.

Ruby walked over her stockinged feet near silent, she sat down across from him in the same position. The familiar stretch of muscles through her legs and bottom was a welcome one, they sat perfectly straight. She closed her eyes and started to take deep slow breaths, in through her nose out through her mouth.

“Try relaxing your throat as you breathe, do not hold your breath at any point.” Ozpin said softly closing his own eyes, he did not need to watch her and he wished to approach this differently then before. The wind blew through their hair setting it dancing against their cheeks. “Picture your Aura within you, make a fire or an ocean. Let it rise with each inhale and recede with each exhale. Aura is like a muscle, let this be how you draw upon it.” He activated his own Aura with a crackle and willed it visual upon his skin.

Qrow moved stretching out over the sofa with his torso propped up by the armrest, his arms were
folded on it and his chin on them. He loved watching Ozpin’s Aura, the fire upon his lovers skin. He loved the reflected emerald green, how it danced and leaped. Part of him wished to reach out to it, he knew how it would curl around his fingers, lick and kiss them. The other knew that he shouldn’t interfere, as much as he wanted to show just what you could do if you really wanted too.

Ruby brought up her Aura it flared into view and then faded, then flared again when she inhaled. She lacked the control to maintain it the same way Ozpin was but Qrow liked watching it all the same. Her flames leaped higher twisted more freely, he knew it was a waste of energy but that was why she was learning.

“Circles are the universal conduit of eternity, they do not begin or end. Everything large and small can be broken down into a circle, be it our great planet or the atoms, the star dust that make up our beings.” Ozpin spoke smoothly almost with a tempo. “Everything living but the forces of Grimm has Aura, forests had have spirits so vast that if one knows how to listen they can get lost in the Aura of a forest. A flicker of Aura can calm even the wildest wolf, we are all part of a great chain, a greater circle.” He opened his eyes and after a moment Ruby did the same. He lifted a hand holding it palm up. “Aura is a manifestation of energy, energy cannot be created or destroyed. Only transformed.” The flames rose and condensed in his hand, till a ballerina was formed.

As the younger two watched Ozpin made his ballerina dance upon his palm, Ruby blushed seeing that it was her from the festival. “We can apply our will to the energy of our Aura, through creativity and training the possibilities are endless.” He let the manifestation fade away and the ballerina returned to the aether. “Picture a circle within yourself, of fire or water. Let this circle envelope your body, let it be your body. Close your eyes.”

Ruby closed her silver eyes and reminded herself to breathe. She tried picturing a circle but it was hard to both relax and focus. She heard Qrow move, the plop of a pillow, a shuffle of feet then she could feel his finger brush her knee as he settled to mediated in the same position. Qrow spoke slowly measuring out his own breathing and remembering. “I am Grey. I stand between the candle and the star. We are Grey. We stand between the darkness and the light.”

Ozpin couldn’t help but smile, trust Qrow to remember. “I’ll explain that another day Ruby, it’s a rather long concept. One that I am glad that Qrow still holds too.” He watched Ruby’s Aura continue to wax and wane. Ruby’s only acknowledgement of his words was a little smile, she was focusing inward. The wind blew and Qrow’s scent blew past her, of whisky, pine and rain. Her circle would be water, for water eroded the great mountains yet nothing was softer than water. The flames upon her skin twisted and turned then settled to flow over in a soft smolder.

“Good.” Ozpin said softly watching her Aura change. “As you know Aura is typically only used for defensive purposes. To activate your Aura over your skin evenly is the easiest thing to learn. I’m sure Qrow has shown you in the past that he can project his Aura in a form of attack. That his is intent and will, applied to his Aura to condense it into a shape to then lash out with. Were I to do something similar in a punch, I would form a gauntlet upon my hand and release the stored energy upon impact. We can achieve this by manipulating the density of our Auras. Try and pick one point on your body, visualize your Aura gathering there.”

Ruby tried she chose her palm, as her hands were in the meditative pose it seemed like a logical place. She tried picturing her water gathering in that place, flowing to it. “Breathe Ruby, our breath gives us life. Use it to calm yourself, let your Aura flow in time with your breath.” Ozpin watched her struggle with it trying to force all her Aura to one place on her body. “Ruby, you’re Aura is not a fixed point. Hold your circle in your mind, pick a place upon it for your palm and let your Aura flow through that point. Empty your mind, be your circle.”
Ruby tired, how Ozpin said made it sound so easy the wind picked up and brushed over her again and she shivered. Ozpin watched as her brow furrowed and she bit her lip. “Stop Ruby.” Ruby opened her eyes and looked to him confused but before she could speak he said. “Close your eyes.” She did and took another deep breath.

Ozpin looked over to Qrow, his old student was meditating perfectly he had been older then Ruby when Ozpin first starting teaching him this. Ozpin reached out and took her hands in his. “Breathe for me.” Ruby did large breaths in and slow breaths out. “Listen to me, relax, there is only Qrow, myself and the wind. There is no rush let your Aura flow let it rise and fall. You are safe, there is nothing here to harm you the wind only caresses you. Breathe.”

The Silver Eyed warrior tried to relax, his hands around hers were warm and shielding. The wind kissed her cheek but it did not chill her now. “That’s it, breath in and out, your Aura is not just on your skin. It is within you, it is your circle, feel its warmth, see the circle and feel it flow through it.”

Ruby breathed in and out, oh so slowly, filling her lungs completely up and letting it all go. Even as she tried to empty her mind, memories floated to the surface, memories of the days when her father and Yang were at school. The former working and the latter learning, days when it had just been her and Qrow. Qrow teaching her how to make cookies, cleaning up her scratches when she hurt herself. The days when she would borrow his cloak to play huntress with Yang. She felt Qrow reach out and touch her knee, Ozpin let her hand go and Qrow took it. Ruby left his rings against her skin, both warmed by his body and cool where they were exposed.

The petite woman found herself tipping slightly toward him, imagining him holding her. Qrow always made her feel so safe, her mind turned back to her circle and it came with ease now. Ozpin smiled as her Aura again settled he let her hand go and turned it over, he could feel the energy she was moving. See it in the tide of her Aura, he pressed against the small shield of Aura no bigger than a couple of centimeters.

Ruby’s lips turned down as Ozpin applied more and more pressure. “Easy, relax breathe, see how long you can hold me at bay.” She worked to relax again, a comforting squeeze of Qrow’s hand helped. She took a huge breath straightening herself again, her head tipped back slightly. Qrow opened his eyes to watch her as her body moved slowly like the twist of water in a stream. Her mouth fell open a little wider and her body turned to rose petals like the dryads of legend. Silver eyes opened a fraction and their light leaked out.

Ozpin was so entranced by her when her Aura broke with a snap he had to remember what was doing for a moment. Ruby fell back into her physical form and tipped backwards but Qrow was already moving catching her with ease. He pulled her gently to him and Ruby moved fluidly to rest against him.

Qrow looked down to her, then reached up and activated his own Aura. This was probably a bad idea, but he was curious. He kissed her gently he moved to kneel drawing her up with him, letting his Aura seep off of him and into her. Ruby let out a moan her Aura recharged by his own, her hands found his shoulder and she turned her head pressing into the kiss. Pleasure reflected through Aura and the next moan was mutual.

Ozpin had never seen anything so hot in his life, maybe it was because it was Qrow but he was moving before he even thought about it. His breath deepened as his eyes dilated he could see Qrow’s tongue dance with Ruby’s. Watched as Qrow’s hands raised up and held Ruby’s head gently his thumbs just under her ears along her jaw. Where is this coming from? Only a few hours ago he was barely kissing her and now this? Qrow moved a hand down to her waist and pulled her to him. Ozpin could hear the moaning gasp, Ruby’s hands twisted in the other man's shirt she pushed him
backward. As the raven haired man sat, Ruby slid onto his lap a hand moving up into his hair. The tall man observed them both get more and more into it, yet it kept to kisses though. Ozpin tilted his head to the side slowly, *something is not quite right here.*

Curiosity got the better of him, he reached out and brushed a finger along Ruby’s cheek. Ozpin’s sucked a breath in sharply, red Auras gathered around his finger, then the felt a foreign tug from somewhere within him. Ruby pulled from the kiss with Qrow and looked up to Ozpin, silver eyes glowed softly as she reached up and slowly wrapped her fingers around his wrist. Her fingers touched the sensitive inner wrist, she drew a circle on it slowly, eyes locked with his. While she did Qrow dipped his head and kissed her neck. Ozpin felt the ghost of sensation, Qrow’s lips on his neck he reached up and brushed his neck trying to connect the sensation.

Ruby wasn’t thinking, she was just feeling, she moved her free hand to burying itself in Qrow’s hair massaging the points he liked best. She let out a moan her own head suddenly better, she blinked a few times and slid her hand up Oz’s arm. It traced over his muscles, catching the fine hairs pushing them upward, as she touched Ozpin, he felt her hand in his hair, Qrow’s lips upon his neck. Pleasure seeped into him, like her hand was a conduit, it stopped at his elbow for she could reach no further. Ozpin felt that foreign tug again and found himself moving forward, lowering himself to sit beside them. As he moved Ruby’s hand continued it’s journey, over large muscles and drew Ozpin up with a finger under his chin. Another kiss long and slow, she purred as his Aura seeped into her as well. It didn’t come as naturally as Qrow but still felt good.

Ozpin closed his eyes and moaned into the kiss, the sensations that had just been light ghosting over him intensified. He could feel the weight of her in his lap, even though Qrow held her. He could feel the arousal that burned through them, how her core tightened just aching for someone to touch her. Could feel the sharp flare of sensation when Ruby rocked her hips against Qrow’s crotch. *What the fu...* thoughts escaped him as Ruby’s hand traveled down his chest to his crotch and cupped him through his trousers.

*“I want to feel you.”* Ozpin wasn’t sure if the words were in his head or spoken aloud. His body was several steps ahead of him, a hand found the buckle of her corset and pulled it undone. Qrow helped he felt Oz’s Aura through Ruby, though he wasn’t thinking clearly enough to recognize that. They just felt a aching need to touch her, to explore her. Their fingers found the laces and pulled them undone, slowly deliberately. Her corset was pulled away and tossed to the floor, Ruby broke her kiss with Ozpin as their hands unbuttoned her shirt and drew it off of her. Lips found ivory skin, upon her neck, her chest, little daring swipes of tongue.

Ruby’s world turned silver as hands roamed upon her skin. Touches light yet they penetrated her to her soul, Oz’s lips found hers again while Qrow kissed the skin of her other side. Each action was slow, Ozpin drew her off of Qrow’s lap to kneel so they could touch her better. Qrow moaned as he felt Oz’s hands on his hips, even as they were upon Ruby’s he moved down feathering kisses down Ruby’s skin. He teased the backs of his fingers over a breast, before replacing it with his lips. Her skin was so smooth, smoother then even his dreams could provide. He kissed down to her areola, caressing the side of her breast with a finger as he kissed it. He could hear her breath deepen, the discomfort from his piercings vanished and all he felt was her.

Ruby moaned her hand tightening in Qrow’s hair, she rubbed in large smooth circles over Ozpin’s groin. Oz groaned and let her go just long enough to undo his belt, rising up to kneel over her, he pushed his pants out of the way. Before reaching up and holding her head tilting into the kiss, deepening it again. He heard Qrow moan as Ruby dipped her hand down again and cupped around Oz’s scrotum gently rolling the balls in her hand, testing brushes of her fingers to the sensitive skin behind them.
Qrow’s hands went to his own belt and he released his member from the confining fabric. Then turned his attention to Oz, sucking gently on Ruby’s nipple one last time. He drew away and moved over to Ozpin rising up so he could kiss the taller man’s throat. His hands found their way to the wine red shirt and just as deftly as he dressed the man, he undressed him. Ozpin quickly shrugged the shirt off a hand reaching up to hold her cheek as he drew slowly out of the wet kiss, he lifted a hand to brush her hair away from her neck before dipping down to kiss it with those moist lips.

Qrow moaned at the wet taste of them that was suddenly upon his lips and he pulled away from Ruby. His hands roaming over Ozpin’s chest, arousal pouring through his veins. Qrow kissed his way downwards, still tasting Ruby upon his tongue. He loved the feel of Oz under his lips, he longed to touch more, take more, feel more. The red eyed man turned his head and brushed his cheek over the hard plains of Oz’s pectorals, his lips seeking a nipple. He licked it with a little flick over the nipple, he could feel Ruby jerk beside him a hand moved over his back. The touch was gentle, he could feel her fingers trace over each individual muscle strand. Find where they bunched up and where they created divots, he drew a long kiss over the nipple before catching it in his teeth and sucking softly.

Ruby’s head fell back as she felt Ozpin’s pleasure, the taller man’s hands were on her. One found a breast and was massaging it gently in little circles, his fingers playing upon her like an instrument. The other was tracing over the curve of her behind, as he kissed up her neck and brought her back to him for another long kiss. Thought for all of them had long since ceased, there was only pleasure. Echoed, reflected, enhanced and shared.

The smaller man kissed his way down Ozpin’s body and wrapped his lips around the thick head of Ozpin’s member. Moaned softly but long at the taste and feel as he ran his tongue over it in a long loving stroke. Ruby cried out arching her body singing as she pulled away from the kiss. Sensation rushed through her, her core ached with a fierce need. Ozpin’s arm came up around her holding her up right, as he moaned to her neck his other hand tore the clasp of her skirt and it fell down around her knees. Ruby reach out to Qrow to steady herself, her fingers pausing over the muscles of his back before into his hair playing over the pressure points. Her other hand reached back up into Ozpin’s hair again and pulled him back into a long wet kiss.

Ozpin stroked over her belly in long smooth pets then slipped two fingers over her sex. Ruby cried out into the kiss, her whole body undulating in time with his touch. Again he drew away and stroked back down, her own juices trailing on her stomach from his fingers. The sound of skin on skin filled their ears and Oz stroked again and again. Another long stroke down with more pressure and Ruby twisted in ecstasy, her fingers tightening his Qrow’s hair as he moaned diving down on Ozpin’s member. Swallowing around it as Ruby moved against Oz, begging for more the muscles of her body giving into his touch. Oz moved his hand into her hair as he slide the other back down and pushed two fingers deep into her welcoming dripping core. The sensation was alien to the two men but as Ozpin’s fingers found that most pleasurable place as his thumb drew little tight circles over her clit, the newness of it was quickly forgotten.

Ruby let out a high cry of ecstasy the pleasure roaring through her. Ozpin followed the very same instant with a drawn out guttural moan his mouth falling open. Qrow pulled away as their pleasure poured over him in the same moment it went on and on, he didn’t know when it would stop. He drew away to the side a hand going to cup his crotch as he throbbed harder then ever before in his life. Spilling into his hand as they fell back, onto their backs panting.

Qrow cupped his crotch and groaned his voice deep and rumbling. “I just had one of the best orgasms of my life.” He couldn’t help but rock his hips upward, chasing the feeling as he tried to catch his breath.
“Me too.” Ozpin moaned out, his brain was blissfully in lala land. He got an unsteady arm under him and pushed himself upright, Ruby was out cold beside them snoozing lightly. “Err oops.” Qrow pushed himself up his arm almost giving out, looked upon Ruby and yanked his gaze away. “What the fuck happened Oz?” He tried to turn his mind over, analysis what had happened. He had only meant to kiss her, to congratulate her for her successful lesson not . . . whatever had just happened. He licked his lips still tasting Ozpin and Ruby upon them, that had been intense, none of the rush he was used to with sex. It had been slow, maybe not deliberate but every action had been with care and intent. Qrow looked back to her, he couldn’t help it not when she was just right there all exposed and absolutely beautiful. When had that happened? Qrow wondered, he had always known she was growing into a lovely young woman but it was something else to see her without the usual layers of protection.

Ozpin reached over to his shirt and weakly tossed it over Ruby. “No fucking clue,” He gasped out and flopped back into the floor. “But I’m just a gonna stay here for a minute.” He stared up at the ceiling his mind traveling down a similar path to Qrow, wondering just what the heck had just happened.

Qrow gave him a half hearted thumbs up, still looking at Ruby. “Good plan.” Ruby stirred with a soft moan, her eyes no longer glowing her body on the other hand felt better then it ever had in her life. She licked her lips and ran her hands over her breasts, then down her body to her core. She was so hot and wet, lush and wanting, she touched herself tentatively she had never felt like this before.

Ozpin and Qrow looked over to her and Oz’s gaze was hungry upon her. He knew her body well already, not as well as he would like but they had time. He pushed himself upright so his deep copper eyes could watch her touch herself, he could hear the wet sounds of her sex as her finger explored her own flesh. Gods how he longed to do that again, to know each and every intimate detail of her body.

Qrow bit his lip so hard it almost bleed, just roll over, go over, take a long kiss part her legs and-. The raven haired man shook his head fiercely, this had all come out of nowhere. He coughed to clear his throat. He almost told her to stop, but he could see the flush of her skin to him, she glowed. He found himself moving, his legs weren’t really on board with the idea but he managed.

Ruby’s gaze snapped over to him and she let out a high. “Eeep!” Sitting up then grabbed Oz’s shirt and held it over her chest, pressing her legs together. Her gaze locked with garnet eyes, she had let Ozpin look upon her without much thought. Yet Qrow gaze upon her felt a whole different type of intimate, she loved him and longed for his approval. Their eyes held for a long moment before Ruby slowly let the shirt fall into her lap as she held it tightly. She broke the eye contract, lowering her head submissive to him.

Qrow moved closer to her again, he reached up and traced over a cheekbone. He closed his eyes and dipped his head to hers, resting their foreheads together. They shared a large breath, coming slowly down off of the endorphin high, they moved together, brushing their cheeks together as Ruby moved into his embrace. His arms coming up around her and hugging her gently as they curled around each other.

Ozpin had half a mind to leave them be, Ruby looked so small pressed against Qrow’s body. Part of him wanted to take a picture, the other said that this was to precious too put on paper. Instead he committed it to memory, every little detail, from the mussed messiness of Qrow’s hair. To the way Ruby’s toes curled against the carpet. That strange tug from before pulled at him again, clearer more focused, there weren’t any words but the meaning was clear to him. He grabbed his belt buckle slowly but firmly to keep it from clicking and pulled the belt out of his jeans then pulled the denim up. Oz moved silently over and put himself behind Qrow, offering up his chest for the smaller man to
lean against and putting his legs on either side of the pair. Lastly he wrapped his arms around them and pressed a kiss to Qrow’s hair.

While the two to relaxed together Ozpin’s looked out over his balcony and beyond. The wind picked up and blew softly through the apartment but Ruby did not shiver. Ozpin looked down over them but they remained still and quiet, he returned his attention outward again. For they were his to protect after all, so a guardian to them he would be.

Chapter End Notes

Ardy:
Kudos to anyone who sees the line I stole from Sense8. And thank you too:
Mysty_Sinclair, Jamie, Nova Belaqua and XxShadowWolf13xX for your comments.
XxShadowwolf13xX linked this song to us https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kUx1XSQTN1E it fits so much of this story right now I can’t help but share it too.
A Crow's Day Out

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The grass was cool as it tickled her body, Ruby snuggled down into the blades as she lay on her front in a field of beautiful long silky grass. Her bare skin shivered slightly when a large shadow hung over her still form blocking the sunlight that had been warming her. Now there was another kind of heat, the body above her radiated it but as much as she pined and whined for it to come closer it kept a certain distance between them so their skins would not touch. He hovered and Ruby looked over her shoulder at him her silver eyes meeting his garnet ones.

Qrow gently traced a hand over back and down the rump of the woman beneath him, smooth and soft under his hands. His other hand was holding his body up just inches from the red tipped locks of hair and his legs clad in thick black denim rode low and unbuttoned on his hips. This is what he wanted, his woman beneath him, her body calling his as she purred and rubbed her body over the soft grass she lay on. For just a moment he let his head swing low enough to nuzzle over the neck of his love. She purred louder and he inhaled the scent of roses and sweet pine through his nose. ‘Wait-Pine?’

His eyes immediately locked onto a hand that hadn’t been there before. One of Ruby’s own held in its tight grip. Qrow nearly snarled at the intruding limb and followed its slightly tanned skin up to the body it was attached to where he met a glare coated in copper and gold. Oz’s hair hung longer then before, it now cupped his face and curled slightly under his pointed chin. The sound of thunder grew as it rolled between them before Qrow realised the sound came from his own throat and he glared at the taller man.

The hand that had Ruby’s slowly pulled, stretching the young woman’s arm out before Qrow removed his hand from her rump and gripped at Oz’s wrist. “Mine!” He growled under his breath. He hardly noticed the wiggling beneath him until Ruby’s body bowed up and her bottom gently rubbed over his crotch sending a wave of heat through him. Distracted as he was by Ruby’s rubbing he noticed too late that Oz had left his position to kneel behind Qrow. His own body was now as naked as Ruby’s was and the older man slid one hand up into Qrow’s hair, yanking his head back while the other splayed out over the opening of his jeans. Slowly his hand dipped under his trousers, using the red eyed man’s moan of distraction to pull him back against his own throbbing desire.

Qrow nearly jumped when he felt a hand close over his cock and began stroking in very slow motions. Fingers gently touched his sac, cupping round his balls and massaging before letting go and tracing back up his length. It didn’t take long for Oz to work up Qrow and between breathless moans he began pushing the pants further down. Inch by inch until they dropped to his knees, leaving his open and bare to the man behind him. The minute the cool air hit his backside Oz took his hand away from Qrow’s member and circled the rim around the other mans asshole. He smirked as Qrow started whimpering under him and noticed the young woman watching them with big dark eyes.

Ruby spread her legs slightly looking up at the men above her, whining. Her core was hot and empty so she pushed her bottom up to meet Qrow’s length. Oz pressed a kiss over Qrow’s back and took hold of the middle man’s member again, slowly guiding it into Ruby’s wet channel. Both Qrow and Ruby let out a loud moan and Qrow took that as a sign to start filling the young woman himself. Oz watched as his male lover went painfully slow, his cock disappearing into Ruby in smooth thrusts.
Qrow felt Ruby's walls stretch around him as she moaned loudly, gripping him. Suddenly there was another heat as Oz started pressing his own cock into his waiting hole. The eldest slid in with ease, leaning down so he could whisper into his ear “MINE!” and this time it was Qrow’s turn to moan loudly, his body shaking as he filled and was filled. Oz was less patient then his partner and his thrusts lengthened, pulling almost all the way out before pushing back in again. Every time their hips met with a loud smack and Qrow was pushed further into Ruby. The young woman shook beneath him as she came, milking him shouting in pleasure. Oz’s thrusts found that perfect rhythm, his hands digging into Qrow’s hips. The garnet eyed man was close, so close his moan was guttural and-

Qrows eyes shot open with the sound of knocking at his door. “Shit!” He jerked up right and glanced around, his chest heaved as he looked. No Ruby, he was in his flat alone, nude and in desperate need of a wank. He ran a hand over his face uttering a low. “Fuck.” He tossed the sheets out of the way and stood calling out. “Who is it?”

“The mail man, who do you think?” Ozpin’s voice sounded through the door. “Can I come in?”

“One minute.” Qrow glanced around and realized he had forgotten his laundry at Ozpin’s flat. They had watched a few movies last night and did his washing at the same time. Which explained why Oz was here now, Qrow grabbed a large pillow to cover his crotch. He walked into the hall and opened the door to find Oz. With his backpack of laundry in hand and for some reason the tall man was blushing. “You okay Oz?”

Ozpin had to cough slightly into his hand to clear his throat. “Err yes, I just had the most umm, invigorating scene playing out in my head a minute ago. Here.” He offered Qrow the backpack, Qrow took it and stepped out of the way letting Ozpin into the narrow hall.

“Thanks, I need to shower but I’ll be right out.” Qrow made sure Oz was not looking before he tossed the pillow onto the bed and disappeared into the bathroom behind him. Now the real question of the day was cold shower or hot? Hot, Qrow decided it would be the quicker solution just to work it out rather than wait it out and turned the shower on.

Ozpin walked into the bedroom just as he heard the shower start and sat on the side of the bed. The bathroom door was ajar and if he had more time he might considered it an invitation but not yet. They had decided to take this slow and build their trust back up so as much as he thought they would both enjoy the activity he would refrain until they were ready. Though with what his dreams had been filled with he wasn’t too sure he could wait for too much longer. Had it not been for the fact that he did need to go in today he would have debated delegating his duties for the day to Glynda. He flopped back into the bed and breathed deeply of Qrow’s scent before calling out. “Would you like to come to breakfast with me today?”

Qrow bowed his head under the water as it washed away the climax of his frustrations. “I’m not sure Glynda would like a dunkard like me around, being a bad example to her students you know.” He started to quickly wash, as much as he loved to worship the gods of hot water. He also loved his breakfasts.

“Then come as a crow.” Ozpin put his hands behind his head. “I think we’d make a rather dashing image with you on my shoulder.” Only a handful of people would know it was Qrow if they saw them and Ozpin wasn’t concerned about those who did.

Qrow finished washing and stepped out of the shower grabbing a towel to start drying. A small pool of water gathered at his feet and he dropped the damp material to wipe up the extra water. Small things like that could and did cause accidents to happen if his Semblance reared its head. “You
always make a dashing picture, you don’t need my help with that.” He chuckled as another picture flew through his head. “Someday you are spending the Day of the Dead as either a vampire, in which I will be your familiar or a pirate.”

“Do you have your costume for the Day of the Dead already planned?” Ozpin frowned he hadn’t thought about it to much. He’d been too focused as of late on the multitude of his duties, Vytal, the festivals, his students, Salem and the newest addition his relationship with Qrow and Ruby. Though that didn’t count as a duty as he felt more relaxed in their presence and just wanted to spend more time with them.

“Yeah, Ruby and I are going as Seras Victoria and Alucard.” Qrow started to get dressed as he called out. “Tai already sent the clothes ahead, Ruby and I have been working on this one all year. Well between the occasional quick visits and calls.” He opened the door and found Ozpin looking up at the ceiling as he set his backpack aside he asked. “Let me guess, you have no idea what you are going to be.”

“I must confess it hadn’t crossed my mind.” Oz closed his eyes trying to think about what to do. Given that Qrow and Ruby had been working on their costumes for so long it must be a big deal for them. Qrow pulled his shoes on then walked over and straddled Ozpin, his knees coming to sidle up at the larger man’s hips. He pressed a kiss to Oz’s cheek and purred out. “Oh I’m sure you’ll think of something.” He dipped his head and caught an ear lob between his teeth and uttered in his smoothest rumble. “You’ve always been brilliant where dressing up is concerned.”

The implication sent a shiver down Ozpin’s spine but as he tilted to his head give Qrow a kiss the weight of the man was suddenly gone and there was a crow snuggling down into the middle of his chest. Oz sat up on his elbows and raised a brow at the bird. “You couldn’t have waited two minutes?” Qrow just ruffled his feathers and Ozpin was sure if a bird could have a cheeky smile it would be all over his bird.

Ruby hummed as she walked down the hall with an extra skip in her step. The mess hall around her was noisy as she bounced over to her team and sat beside Yang. “Good morning!” She opened her chocolate milk container with a smile and a happy purr.

“You’re in a good mood sis.” Yang looked over to Ruby, the text that her uncle had sent telling her that Ruby was with him for the weekend was the last thing she had heard about her sister, since he arrived.

“I had a good weekend and a very good dream this morning.” Ruby grinned with a rosy blush pinking her cheeks. She took a big bite out of a sausage and waved to Blake as she and Weiss sat down across from them.

“Where’d you go?” Weiss asked, Ruby didn’t usually just vanished for an entire weekend. Yang had said there was nothing to worry about and seeing their team leader return with color in her cheeks and her dorky smile did seem to set her mind at ease.

“Down into Vale and hung out with Qrow, we went to the museum and a park.” Ruby said quickly forking another helping of food into her mouth, she was hungry. Weiss made a face at Ruby’s table manners, or lack thereof and chose to turn her attention away.
Blake had a bowl of cereal in front of her but instead of eating she was casting a look down the hall and asked, “Uh guys, since when Ozpin have a pet bird?”

Ruby and Yang looked down the hall and sure enough Ozpin was speaking to Professor Port with… a crow on his shoulder. The sisters sniggered and Yang asked Ruby nudging her shoulder. “Hey Rubes, how long has Professor Ozpin had that crow?”

Ruby covered her mouth trying to hide her grin as she sniggered. “Oh Yang he’s always had that crow, I think it was just busy doing something before but now it’s determined to not let him go. You should see the picture books.” She added in a whisper, though from the way Blake’s ears twitched under her bow it was likely she had heard that last comment.

“Oooo.” Yang grinned her cheeks bright red, thankfully the cafe was relatively quiet, most of the students were probably still asleep or didn’t have any morning classes. Down the hall the crow quawed and took flight off it’s perch on Oz’s shoulder. It flew down the hall and landed on the table right in front of Ruby’s plate. He hopped over and stole a piece of her toast.

“Hey!” Ruby scolded the black bird, it’s cocked its head and stole another piece of bread. “That’s my bread, if your gonna steal my food at least have some egg.” She quickly cut a small piece off and offered it to the bird on the tip of a finger. “No empty carbohydrates for you.”

The crow snapped the egg off her finger and pushed his head into her palm. Ruby laughed and petted him with a thumb. “You’re horrible!” The crow bounced away from her and shook his tail feathers at her. Ruby recognised the significance and got up with a lurch. “Why you little-!”

Yang roared with laughter banging at on the table. Blake and Weiss were very confused the former said. “Uh Ruby it’s just a bird.” However it was much too late as Ruby lunged for the bird and ended up soaring clear over the table. The crow hopped straight into the air and flapped a few times before landing back on the table.

Ruby rolled over and glared at the bird as it did a booty shuffle towards her and spun to flick his tail feathers at her again. Seeing Ruby’s jaw drop caused Yang to fall of the bench as she held her sides laughing so hard. “You cheeky little brat.” Ruby picked herself up and put her hands on her hips and cocked them to one side. “What I’m I going to do with you?”

The crow flew back to her plate and stole a sausage turning its head to her with an expression of superiority. “That’s it!” Annoyed Ruby pounced again and the crow took flight his booty in his beak but he wasn’t prepared for Ruby as she used her Semblance to chase after him. It squawked and dived for the window, only to miss that it was closed. It hit with a thunk on the glass and Ruby couldn’t put the brakes on fast enough to stop from blasting straight through it. The bird recovered quickly and snatched it’s prize out of the air and took flight again flying low to the ground. Ruby tumbled head over heels and righted herself, she quickly caught sight of the bird. “Give me back my sausage!” She ran over the ground using her Aura to catch up the bird.

The crow flew up into a tree and pulled the sausage in half, it was slowing him down. Only just leaping up in time for the hands that materialized out of a storm of rose petals to miss him. Ruby blasted off the tree as the bird did cartwheels to avoid her. She distinctly noticed her team come into the courtyard, Yang still looked like she going to fall over with laughter.

The pair raced back toward the building as the crow tried to gain altitude with it’s stolen booty. As they zipped past the doors two strong hands snapped forth. “Ack!” Ruby was hauled clear off the ground by the back of her hood and held up like a naughty kitten while the crow was caught by its lower body.
Ozpin held the two as far away from each other he could his chest shaking as he tried to contain his laughter. “Oz!~.” Ruby whined and reached out as far as she could while flailing in the air. “Put me down! He stole my sausage! And mooned me. Twice! If he is gonna do that he might as well do it when he’s not using his Semblance.”

“Qrow, did you steal her sausage?” Ozpin’s tone was jesting as he looked over to his crow, who cawed around the sausage in his beak. The crow threw his head back and swallowed the sausage whole. “Hey! Eh~” Ruby reached out as far as she could, which sent Yang into peels of laughter as Ruby struggled again. Even Blake had a grin as she watched, though Weiss kept her face as she was annoyed with their leaders antics.

The crow flapped its wings a few times and Ozpin was forced to let it go as the crow turned into Qrow with a little snap of magic. “What? Food always tastes better when you work for it or steal it.” He was dressed as normal minus his sword, he turned on his heel with a flick of his hand. “See yeah around Rubes. Ack!” Ozpin grabbed him by the scruff of his cape just like Ruby and lifted him up clear off the ground. Though it didn’t have the same effect as holding Ruby up he was still tall enough to have Qrow’s feet dangling a foot over the ground. “Gods damn it Oz, put me down it was just a bit of fun!” Qrow also flailing just like Ruby trying to Oz to let him go.

“Well if you didn’t want to be caught so easily then next time remember, NO CAPES!” Ruby and Qrow sniggered at that while Ozpin addressed Professor Goodwitch. “Glynda would you please repair the window while I deal with these two delinquents.” Ozpin turned his attention to Glynda who had a hand pressed to her lips as she suppressed a smile. “Of course, just make sure your bird doesn’t get off scot free.”

“Glynda when have I ever shown any favouritism?” At Glynda’s smile Ozpin quickly amended that statement. “On second thought don’t answer that.” Ruby and Qrow crossed their arms in the exact same posture and pouted, both having given up on wiggling out of Ozpin’s grasp.

“Come on you two, lets go discuss your detentions.” Ozpin tossed both over his shoulders in fireman’s carries. “And no, I’m not letting either of you go. You’re both too gifted at running away.” Those who were still in the cafe watching from the windows and the rest of Team RWBY burst into giggles behind him. When as he turned around they could see Qrow and Ruby already playing rock-paper-scissors behind Ozpin’s back.

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Ozpin took them both to the staff room and deposited them on the plush sofa and smirked watching them bounce. As soon as Ruby settled she pounced on Qrow with a shout of. “You stole my breakfast!” They fell off the sofa with a THUD and Qrow flailed around as she set about tickling him in revenge for stealing her breakfast.

“It was one sausage!” Qrow struggled to get the words out as Ruby launched her vicious attack. He was no match for her knowing fingers after having years to search and find the more sensitive spots on his body. Hopelessly he tired to bat them away as his laughter made it hard to fight back.

Ozpin looked down at the two of them and just slowly shook his head a smile upon lips lips. He walked around them to the little kitchen and pulled out two croissants and cut them lengthwise listening to Qrow being completely unable to fight off the tickle attack. Ozpin buttered and covered both liberally in strawberry jam. Two plates in hand he returned to the two utter goof balls.
Qrow yelled out trying to get Ruby to stop tickling his sides. “Stop I’m gonna pee!” Ozpin admired Ruby’s smirk as she didn’t let up, clearing knowing him well enough to know a false plea. “Breakfast you two.” That got Ruby’s attention as her head shot up from the attack, she looked over to him and her face lit up. “Croissants!” She bounced off of Qrow and took the plate Ozpin offered to her then sat back on the sofa taking a big bite out of the flaky pastry.

The downed Huntsman panted and sat up raising his arms to Ozpin. “My Hero!” The drama queen sung out and Oz rolled his eyes and grabbed Qrow by a wrist lifting him up and tossing him onto the couch. “Eat before you decide to go after Bart’s whisky spiked coffee next.”

“Bart spikes his coffee?” Qrow asked his brows shooting up in surprise, then the furrowed as he thought about it. “Actually now that I think about it, with him being the pyrotechnic…” Qrow’s jaw dropped, “I can’t believe I didn’t see that before.” he took a big bite out of the pastry getting the red jam all over his lips as he thought about that.

Ozpin only smiled and departed to help himself to a yogurt from the fridge. “You two do know that just because we are together I can’t let you get away with damaging school property right?” He grabbed a spoon from a drawer and pulled the lid of the moderately sized yogurt container. Copper eyes gleamed with mirth as Qrow and Ruby stopped mid chew and swallowed thickly.

“He started it.” Ruby said with a grumble she finished her first croissant half and started on the second. “You could have just shared your breakfast.” Qrow grumbled continuing the steady consumption of his food.

“You two just feed and thrive on the energy of each other. So I’ll say it’s both your faults, next time just don’t go through a window. So,” He stirred his yogurt thinking his punishments over. “Ruby tomorrow you’ll help me with a project in the library. Qrow you hmm, you’ll spend the day as a crow with me.”

“The whole day?!” Qrow’s jaw dropped, that was going to be sooo boring! Oz chuckled and nodded. “The whole day.” The ashen haired man smiled as Qrow wilted and Ruby giggled. She leaned over and gave the stunned Qrow a kiss on the cheek and then walked over and gave one to Ozpin as well before departing.

The tall man ate his breakfast watching Qrow mutely finish his then get up and take Ruby’s plate with him as he put both by the sink and washed his hands. Ozpin finished his food and cleaned the container and tossed it into the recycling bin. He set the spoon atop the plates and patted his shoulder with a hand. Those big red eyes looked up at him pleading against a day of boredom but Oz only smiled and moved his hand. Qrow let out a sigh and turned into a crow flying up and sitting on Ozpin’s shoulder. This was going to be a long dull day.

Oh boy did Qrow did have no idea just how dull it was. First it was subbing in for a Professor who had a cold in the Law classes of the day, he almost fell off Ozpin’s shoulder as he fought to stay awake. In the end he moved up the shoulder till he found a comfy spot and snuggled up to Oz’s neck. He found listening to Ozpin’s voice reverberate through his skin comforting. There were only two advanced law classes that day and both had a number of giggling students when they figured out Ozpin’s pet crow was so bored it was sleeping.
Lunch found a storm rolling in, Qrow woke up as Ozpin started walking through the pelting rain. He let out an unhappy squawk as the wind almost blew him clear off Oz’s shoulder. He was just about to transform, punishment be damned when Ozpin picked Qrow off his shoulder, opened his coat and tucked the bird into it. It was nice and warm, the crow quickly decided this wasn’t so bad as he listened to Oz’s run through the rain. Unlike Ruby Ozpin shared his lunch with much more grace, even going as far as to put a pile of meats on the corner of his plate for Qrow.

After which they went for a walk and respective flight patrolling the grounds. Though Qrow had a feeling Ozpin did this just so he could stretch his wings. Then came the really boring part of the day, they headed up to Ozpin’s tower and Oz did the days paperwork. Thankfully he let Qrow fly around the tower, even watched him fly in and around the gears as Qrow practiced his aerobatics between the gears and pendulums. That came to an end when one clocked him in the side, thankfully Ozpin had been watching and caught him before he hit the ground. After that Qrow had been content to sit in Ozpin’s lap for a bit with his Aura up to heal. However by the time it was for the last class of the day Qrow flew down to Ozpin’s desk moving into the dead centre and flopped over onto his back. With as much drama as the crow could muster he stuck his tongue out letting it hang out the side of his beak and gave a foot a few post mortem twitches.

Ozpin raised a brow and turned off the screens, he leaned forward and rested a his head on a hand putting his elbow on the table. “You know Qrow, I am pretty sure it’s impossible to die of boredom.” Qrow didn’t move a feather and Ozpin reached out and tickled his fluffy tummy with a finger. Qrow jumped and hopped away from the tall man and glared. He picked a new spot at the edge of the table and flopped onto his side playing dead again.

Oz chuckled and stood up, he walked around the table and gathered Qrow up into his palm. The shapeshifter settled into Oz’s hand and pulled at his cuff-links with his beak. “Oh leave those alone, you are not a magpie.” He lifted his hand and Qrow obediently hopped onto Oz’s shoulder and started playing with the long silver hair. He divided a spot into three sections and decided to see if he could braid with his beak.

“Alright alright,” Ozpin reached up and pet down Qrow’s back with a finger. “you’re bored I understand. How about we go see how Ruby is doing? She’ll be in combat class with Glynda by now.” Qrow stopped braiding and nuzzled Ozpin’s jaw affectionately instead. “Ruby it is.” He said and they headed out to the combat arenas.

Ozpin picked to look down on the matches from the balcony, by the time they arrived Ruby and Nora were already locked in battle. Qrow flew down from Ozpin’s shoulder to sit on the railing to watch the two girls. Oz leaned his hip against the railing as he watched Ruby struggle to keep Nora from pounding her to paste. Nora’s Aura was over half depleted while Ruby’s was one blow away from loss by Aura depletion. As one heavy strike knocked Crescent Rose from Ruby’s hands, Ozpin’s hand bit into the rail crumbling it slightly under his grip.

The two men could only watch as Ruby raised her arms to block Nora’s next swing. All at once Ruby’s Aura broke and the next heartbeat later a explosion of emerald green and crimson red Aura burst from her. It slammed into Nora like a shockwave sending the woman flying up into the air and colliding into a wall with a massive crater. The pink Aura of the hammer wielding Huntress failed all at once as she hit the wall and she slumped onto the ground Auraless. Ren was thankfully already in motion and zoomed over just in time to catch her.

“Nora!” Ruby took a step toward her fallen friend, only to put a hand to her head and stumbled to the side. Ozpin and Qrow were already in motion as Ruby’s eyes rolled into back of her head as she collapsed in the middle of the area floor.
Thank you too Jamie for your comment.
Ruby panted as she stared Nora down, the hammer wielding maniac had gotten a few good hits in early. She swung out with a few quick strikes, only Nora knew her too well and side stepped swinging her hammer straight into the middle of Crescent Rose. The hammer caught the staff of the scythe and sent it clattering to the ground. Ruby raised her arms to project her head from the next swing, she felt a strange uneasiness in the back of her mind. A fear and worry, then Nora’s hammer hit Ruby’s arms and her Aura broke. Those emotions turned into panic and a energy ripped itself free of Ruby and slammed into Nora sending her flying. “Nora!” Ruby stumbled forward reaching out, only for her head to start throbbing. The Silver Eyed Warrior put a hand on her temple as her vision swam black and white.

Qrow transformed and jumped down from the balcony, Yang was already in motion racing to her little sister. She got their first and Qrow just remembered to stop, Yang put two fingers on Ruby’s neck and then another on her head. “She’s just passed out.”

Glynda raced over to Nora a quick use of her Semblance turned a few chairs into a stretcher. Ren put Nora on it as Ozpin appeared from a side door with stern shout of. “Class dismissed!” He walked over and Yang backed up letting the tall man pick Ruby up. “Go help Glynda.”

Yang and Qrow returned the blonde quickly sitting beside her sister silently. Ozpin flicked his head and Qrow followed him out as they left quickly finding an empty classroom. As soon as the door was shut Qrow hissed out. “What the heck just happened Oz?”

“I don’t know.” Ozpin ran a hand through his hair, he’d never even read about anything like that before. Why did Ruby have, what appeared to be a stockpile of their Aura? How did she have any of it at all? What was going on? He sat on a desk turning it over in his mind, whenever they had done Aura training or that downright weird sexual encounter earlier. Ruby’s Aura called him into her, often while extending out through him and exploring. Was that the cause? Could it be something to do with her being a Silver Eyed Warrior? Beyond a few stories so little was known about this, but then would Summer have posed the same ability? Ruby’s mother had never mentioned it to him. He glanced up at Qrow. “Has she ever, I don’t know called to you with her Aura?”

“Just the once, that other day when we were together. Half of what I was feeling came from her, then… I think it cycled from there. When you came in I could feel what you were feeling too. Do you think that was all Ruby?” Qrow pulled out his flask and had a swing.

Maybe, whatever is going on we can’t let it happen again. Even if that means putting some distance between ourselves and her.” Ozpin said with a sigh, what other option was there?

“That’s your answer? Shove her away?” Qrow scowled at Oz, run away cause that always worked so well. “Rather then try and figure it out? She’s not going to like this at all.”
“Qrow my memory is a great deal more vast than even yours. I don’t remember ever coming across something like this before. You saw how destructive that power was, we can’t let someone get caught it in again. I’m not saying to stop interacting with her, but no more Aura training. Less intimate physical affection till we know what is going on.” Ozpin’s tone was tired and as he finished speaking the door opened and James Ironwood strode in.

“I figured I’d find you two here, I heard what happened to Nora and came to offer my support.” James looked between the two gentlemen, taking note of Qrow’s hunched posture and Ozpin’s frown. “You’ve an idea of what happened don’t you?”

“Perhaps a vague idea.” Ozpin said in a clipped tone.

“Can it inform me? Miss Valkyrie's condition is serious. I need to know what happened.” The General tucked his hands behind his back assuming a military standing pose.

“No.”

James looked sharply between the two, Qrow looked away from him and hunched his shoulders up even more. He could see the shortest man differ to Ozpin and knew he wouldn’t get a word out of the man for this conversation. Ozpin’s tone was so cold and calm it sent shivers down his spine. “Why not? If you know something we have to take steps to make sure doesn’t happen again. I saw the footage I know you two have some connection to this incident. If Miss Rose has some hidden talent for Aura, I need to know.”

Amber came to mind instantly and Ozpin stood straight, glaring the General down. “Miss Rose is one of my students, I have been teaching her personally. Qrow occasionally assists me in this endeavor. While I do believe Miss Rose does have a talent, we will be taking precautions to prevent another incident.”

“What happened then?”

“Not your problem.” Qrow growled from his place standing tall again, the last thing he wanted was Ironwood snooping where he wasn’t wanted. “Excuse me I am going to check on my nieces.” He shoved past James and the larger man let him go, turning his attention back to Ozpin.

Oz pursed his lips and pulled his cane out of his pocket extending it to strike the floor with a resonating tap. “I will handle this James, it won’t happen again. I will ask you once, to stay out of it. If I hear you have been inquiring after Ruby I will be most displeased.”

“Is that a threat?” James asked surprised at the stance Ozpin was taking, it wasn’t like to him shoot down even talking about help. Oz smirked a little half smile. “That is up to you.”

Ruby stirred to find Yang sitting on her bed and Qrow returning to the room. She blinked a few times and glanced around quickly determining that she was in the infirmary. Her whole body hurt like whatever it had been, had existed in her very cells and had ripped it’s way out of each and every one of them. “Owww.” The Silver Eyed Warrior pushed herself up on the bed as Yang tackled her in a hug. “Ribs!” Ruby squeaked.

Yang let her go within in a rush. “Sorry.” She quickly backed off and looked Ruby up and down again, her sister wasn’t in shock which was good. “What happened? You passed out.”
Ruby drew her legs up and wrapped her arms around them. “I don’t know, I don’t even know how
to describe it.” She remembered feeling the emotions that weren’t her own and seeing the green and
red Aura; but she didn’t want to talk about it here. Yang knew she was involved with Qrow and
Ozpin, they weren’t exactly hiding it. However talking about it in a public place just seemed like all
manner of stupid idea. She looked over to her sister meeting those lilac eyes. “I’ll talk to you about it
later.”

Yang caught on that later actually meant, ‘alone’ and let the topic drop. “How are you feeling?” She
looked over to Qrow when her uncle came to the foot of the bed and stopped. Like he didn’t know
what to do with himself, she pitied her uncle in situations like this. Love came in many shapes and
sizes, he had the horrible position of hiding one while still needing to show another.

In the end Qrow walked up and sat on Ruby’s other side, he reached out with a hand and brushed her
bangs back. Ruby closed her eyes and leaned into the hand, they allowed themselves one little brush
of his thumb along her cheek before Qrow withdrew his hand and put it in his lap. The concern in
his eyes spoke for him.

“I’m okay, I hurt all over but I don’t feel like I broke anything.” Ruby leaned back and stretched her
arms over her head, she thought it felt a bit like when Oz ripped his Aura away from hers without
letting it withdraw properly. Yet more information she’d keep to herself till she could have a private
conversation . . . or three.

“That’s good.” Qrow said softly, he kept reminding himself over and over again that Ozpin
recommended a little bit of distance. Even as he wanted to smooth away her pain, give of his Aura
till she was happy again. Ruby had eyes only for him, she watched as he looked away from her the
fatigue in his eyes that hadn’t been there before. “Are you okay?” She asked ignoring the irony of the
statement.

“Fine.” The red eyed man said with a shrug.

“Liar.”

A smile pulled at Qrow’s lips, he got up and pressed a kiss to her temple. “We just need to talk later.”
The tap of Ozpin’s cane announce his arrival, Qrow moved away from Ruby fluidly if reluctantly
and returned to Ozpin’s side.

“How’s Nora?” Ruby asked and Yang beat the rest of them to reporting. “I heard one of the doctors
saying she has a few cracked ribs but no concussion. She’ll be fine with a little bit of bed rest and an
opportunity for her Aura to recharge and get it to healing her as well.”

Ruby winced and tears collected in her eyes, she sniffed and rubbed her nose. She saw Qrow start to
move but Ozpin put an arm out stopping him from moving forward. Ozpin took a deep breath and
kept his tone professional. “When you are able Miss Rose we will have to speak about this incident
at length. We will be in my office for the rest of the day.”

‘We’, Ruby nodded and Ozpin left with Qrow falling in on his right side. Qrow waved a goodbye,
but never fell out of step behind Ozpin. She wondered what that was about but then Qrow had been
taking up a position on Ozpin’s right whenever they went anywhere of late. It even seemed like
Ozpin made sure that Qrow was always there, even when they maneuvered around her.

“What was that about?” Yang asked, it wasn’t like Qrow to leave without a word but then her uncle
had been oddly quiet since Ruby fainted.

“It’s complicated.” Ruby pushed the blankets off and moved over. “You sure you’re okay?” Yang
asked getting out of the way then grabbing Ruby’s hands and pulling her up when her sister offered them.

“Yeah, I’m actually pretty used to this particular feeling. It will be gone by tomorrow.” Ruby said with another stretch.

Yang opened her mouth to ask another question then snapped it shut and saluted. Ruby spun around to see General Ironwood walking towards them. She grabbed Yang’s hand and pulled her sister with her all but running out of the infirmary. “Wow sis what’s up?”

“I just don’t feel like talking to him, think you can run interference for me?” Pins and needles stabbed at Ruby’s limbs but she forced herself on.

“Sure.” Yang said with a shrug she glanced behind her and when she looked back Ruby was already gone.

The silver eyed warrior stopped short when she entered Ozpin’s office. Qrow was leaning against a column and Oz was in his chair, his fingers steeped together looking to be very deep in thought. Qrow looked particularly grumpy to her, hesitantly she asked. “What killed your cats?”

Ozpin sighed deeply and let his hands fall into his lap. “Do you know what happened Ruby?”

“I think so, when the Aura ripped out of me it felt like how it does when you pull away to fast. I don’t know what triggered it I remember being panicked through.” Ruby walked over at perched on the edge of Ozpin’s desk, standing made her feel like she was facing an inquisition.

“Somehow I believe you have been storing the Aura from our interactions. Somehow it was triggered and lashed out.” Ozpin bit his lip and got up, walking around to stand before Ruby. “Ruby this can not happen again.”

“I know, but we’ll figure it out.” The petite woman looked between them taking in Qrow’s sore expression again. “Wait…” He hadn’t come to her when she came in, where was her ‘you’re okay’ hug? Her gaze snapped back to Ozpin. “You don’t want us touching anymore! I am not going to get anymore lessons am I?!” Ruby jumped off the table and glared up at Ozpin.

“Ruby-.” Oz tried to calm her.

“NO! What the heck!? How is this fair? I get that Nora got hurt but now we know that there is a problem we can avoid it. I am not remotely okay with ending our lessons, or whatever it is we have between the three of us!” Ruby fumed.

“I said nothing about parting ways, I am only saying till we have a better understanding of what is going on limiting your exposure to ourselves might be the wisest course of action.” Ozpin reached up to touch her, to try and sooth her but then let them fall again. “Please understand Ruby, now is the worst possible time to be unique in Aura. Atlas studies it extensively and standing out could have long lasting consequences.” His tone changed away from the formality to what she had grown used to hearing from him. “I just want you safe, we will look into this and try to figure it out on our own. Till we have an idea of what controls this gift of yours, it’s best to play it safe.”

“So no touching?” Ruby glowered at him.
“As you know, both Qrow and I are not aging. We do this by manipulating our Aura. We always have our Aura active on a low level, till we know how that bleeds off onto you and how you store the excess energy.” Ozpin sighed deeply, how did you soothe a young woman who had grown bold enough to enjoy touch?

Ruby crossed her arms and sighed. “Fine, I’ll see you guys tomorrow.” She turned on her heel and stormed out.

After the doors shut behind her Qrow spoke up from behind Ozpin. “Well, that could have gone better.”

“I didn’t see you helping.” Ozpin turned and leaned against his desk. Qrow walked over and reached up straightening the cross pinned to Oz’s cowl. “Cause I know her, she’ll stew for a bit and come to the conclusion that you were right. Give it time, show off that marvelous brain of yours and she’ll stop feeling so sore about a block on physical contact.” He took a step and pushed against Oz with his body. “Speaking of physical contact, I’m not in the mood to waste anymore time.”

“Hmm, well I think our attic is in a woeful state of neglect.” Ozpin said as Qrow started undoing buttons. “Are you sure? I messed up rather spectacularly.”

“I’ve some business in Vale and I don’t think I could be idle here with you forever. Till then however, I want a reminder of what it’s like to play on your desk. Seeing as Ruby won’t want to talk to me for a while now is the perfect time.” Qrow leaned up onto his toes and started pressing kisses to Oz’s jaw. The taller man tilted his head giving Qrow more access to his neck. “Well when you put it like that…”

Sure enough Ruby was quite annoyed with them the next day. That and her detention was helping Ozpin research old curses, on top of that he didn’t actually give her something to look for particular. He did however take Qrow’s suggestion and flirt with her verbally, quote either pretty poetry to her or when no one was around. More much lewd poetry, it only took him an hour to cheer her up in this fashion. By the end of the detention they finally came up with a name of a specialist on curses. ‘Premethine Shakeslock.’ Which Ozpin said he would investigate on his own, despite Ruby’s protests.

Qrow however had even less luck in his hunt for Roman Torchwick. Which wasn’t terribly surprising as when he begrudgingly asked James what had happened to the criminal after the Breach. James calmly stated that Roman was in custody. Qrow had wisely left it at that, if he was in custody then there was very little chance to get at him without getting into trouble himself. Instead he turned his attention to Ozpin, it took over a week of flirting to get Qrow’s wish.

“Qrow.” Ozpin warned with a growl as Qrow tested the rope around Oz’s wrists. “I know I said I’d bottom but-.” Qrow put a finger on Oz’s lips smirking above him. “Trust me?”

“Yes but,” He pulled on the ropes, his cock was already getting excited, it was probably the look Qrow was giving him. He had pillows propped up under his shoulders and the hemp rope was
perfectly tied, several layers wrapped around his wrists and lower arms. “I don’t like not being able
to touch.”

“I know, but I like having you at my mercy for a bit.” Qrow leaned over and pressed a long kiss to
Oz’s lips. Oz leaned up trying to capture them as Qrow stepped away. He looked up the nude Oz
and purred, this was going to be fun. The raven haired man started small, unclipping his cross and
setting it down on the table. Followed by his rings, he pulled each off with his teeth showing of the
dexterous skill of his tongue as he went. He glowed under Oz’s gaze, he felt some pride that he
could get Oz standing to attention with just taking his rings off.

Qrow locked eyes with the copper man for a moment before undoing the buttons of his shirt one
by one. Ozpin’s eyes glued on the revealed skin, till the shirt was tossed to the floor. He heaved his
eyes upward when Qrow’s hands settled over his belt not making another move. Qrow heard the
rope creak watching Oz’s eyes track over him. The garnet eyed man knew how Oz liked to bite, he
teed a finger over his neck. Smirking he drew his hand down and slowly pulled his belt open.
Then popped the button of his jeans, the zipper slowly slid down under Oz’s hungry gaze only for
Qrow to stop.

“Qrow~.” Ozpin almost whined, he hated having such a lovely thing denied. Qrow only smirked
and opened the bedside drawer and pulled out a black blindfold. “Oh come on!” Oz pouted but
didn’t tell Qrow no, the nibble Qrow did to his lips was reward enough. “Alright.” Oz closed his
eyes, he could feel Qrow climb onto the bed, then the soft satin was wrapped around his head and
tied off at the back.

Qrow backed away trying to commit the sight to memory, he hadn’t restrained Oz's legs mostly
because if he gave Oz a little leverage it promised fun for all when he wanted it. Now where to start,
he just had so many ideas! “Wait here.” Qrow said and listened to Ozpin’s chuckle as the man
flicked his fingers casually. “Not like I’m going anywhere.”

The garnet eyed walked backwards not waiting to miss a second of Oz’s tied up state till he got to
the door. Then he zipped to the kitchen and pulled open the freezer and pulled out a tray of ice
cubes. He grabbed a small bowl and filled it with cold water then put several cubes in water before
turning the rest to the fridge and zipping back to Oz. He was exactly how Qrow had left him,
including enthusiastic erection.

Qrow set the bowl on the bedside table then opened the drawer again and pulled a massage wax
candle and a bottle of warming gel. After lighting the candle, as quietly as he could he pulled off his
trousers and set them aside. He sat on the edge of the bed and reached up slowly petting up and
down Oz’s torso. Oz purred at the feeling, it seemed Qrow remembered how to do this as well.
While Qrow stroked with the one hand and he picked up the hot wax candle and brought it carefully
over to Ozpin’s chest. Qrow moved slowly with it, straddling the bigger man he lowered the candle
so Oz could feel the heat.

Oh so slowly Qrow dribbled the wax over Oz’s chest, treasuring the sharp inhale from the man.
He drew a long line from one nipple to the other, then set the candle aside and started to massage.
Ozpin purred happily, well he’d never turn down a little pampering. Though he was distantly
worried about what Qrow had planned for those ice cubes, with his sight taken his other senses
stretched out and he could hear the ice cubes clink together as they floated in the water. The wax
smoothed the calluses of Qrow’s hands making them feel more feminine, a sensation that Oz
enjoyed.

Qrow smiled feeling the tension drip away from Oz’s body, he traced over the other man’s nipples
in little circles. He could feel them start to stand to attention as well as the more obvious symbol of
Oz’s enjoyment poking him in the behind. Oz’s voice rumbled up from below him. “Qrow what are you planning? I can feel you smirking.”

Qrow bit his lip grinning, then leaned forward to nip Oz’s ear while reached out and snagging a ice cube while purring out. “If I told you, where would the fun in that be?” As quick as he could while Oz’s skin was still warm from the wax pressed the cold cube to Oz’s nipple.

“SHIT!” Oz jerked under him bucking up lifting Qrow with ease. Qrow quickly removed the icecube and licked a hot wet line over the skin. Oz shivered under him with a quiet moan. Qrow looked up at him, watching Oz’s jaw slanken as he started to relax again. The garnet eyed man started pressing kisses along Oz’s chest biting down to leave little red marks every so often. The taller man tensed under him with each bite, as much as Oz liked to mark he didn’t like being marked.

Qrow trailed the ice cube along the stinging marks, while nipping the nipple pulling on it gently with his teeth. Oz clenched his fists and lifted his hips to rub his cock against Qrow’s behind. “Come on Qrow.” He hissed as Qrow kissed downwards trailing the icecube after his lips.

“Na, you look to good like this.” Qrow pulled the ice cube off of Oz’s skin as it was just about gone and put it in the bowl. He moved to lie over Oz, kissing over the tall man’s neck, nuzzling on occasion. The raven haired man could hear the bed posts creaking as Ozpin’s breathing deepened. “Will you at least take the blindfold off?” Ozpin asked as Qrow cuddled up, he could feel the other man’s beard against his jaw.

“Hmm.” Qrow pulled back and kissed Oz, the other man was quick to react. Parting his lips and deepening the kiss, dipping his tongue into Qrow’s mouth. The smaller man moaned softly and pulled the blindfold undone and tossed it on the bedside table. He then broke the wet kiss backing off to hover above Oz. Oz blinked a few times getting used to the light and smirked at the sight above him. “Thank you. You look gorgeous.”

Qrow blushed slightly and shifted downwards straddling Oz’s hips. “You look pretty good yourself.” He leaned over and blew out the candle, then opened the drawer and pulled out a condom and grabbed the warming gel bottle. Qrow put them aside then leaned up and pulled the knots around Oz’s wrists free. Oz wasted no time pulling his hands free and grabbing Qrow’s waist.

Qrow let out a little laugh and let himself be flipped. “Don’t get to excited I only let you out because I want you to prep for me.” Ozpin chuckled and nipped at Qrow’s neck. “Well you don’t have to tell me twice.” He wrapped a hand around Qrow’s cock and started to slowly stroke while kissing down his chest to kiss carefully over the covered piercings. He moaned softly letting the sensations Oz’s provided wash over him.

The coppered eyed man treasured how quickly Qrow gave into his touch. He liked feeling Qrow writhed as he carefully teased the piercings. He tightened his grip around the smaller mans member, wiping his thumb over the top. Garnet eyes closed partly as he sucked in a breath and bucked up into Oz’s touch.

Ozpin smirked as he teased and touched Qrow, he moved up to nip and bite at that slender neck. Stealing another long kiss that had the raven haired man climaxing with a long moan. Qrow purred as Oz feathered kisses down his neck and rolled over with a happy humm. Ozpin straddled him and started to massage, his strong hands playing over the muscles of Qrow’s back working his way downward. Qrow let out a long sigh and let Ozpin work without even a hint of backtalk. This was really lovely, he sucked in a breath as Ozpin’s worked down to his buttcheeks and started to add little teasing brushes as he massaged the firm butt.

“You okay?” Oz asked as he started to lightly tease along the crack of the spread cheeks with a
“Yeah.” Qrow moved his hands under his chin.

“Qrow.” Ozpin said in a scolding tone.

“I’m fine Master, that feels good. May I please have the warming gel?” Qrow had to work not to be cheeky, but he would get there. Ozpin’s kisses to his neck were reward enough for the effort. “Very good my little crow.”

Qrow all but preened under the praise, as Ozpin grabbed the bottle and poured it generously between the smaller man’s butt cheeks. Oz rubbed gently spreading it over the whole region smiling as Qrow tried so hard not to writhe. He stroked down and rubbed in little circles over Qrow’s perineum, listening as the smaller man’s moans start become more breathy. He applied more lube to his fingers before moving up and continuing the gentle circles but moving to Qrow’s anus.

Qrow turned his head so he could watch Oz. The gel made him feel warm and tingly, he purred as Oz dipped a finger inside. He was a little glad they had fallen out, now it made it so much easier to relax and trust again. That alone made everything feel better, slowly from there Oz worked into him.

Ozpin couldn’t help but grin as he eased a third finger slowly inward after several minutes. His knowing fingers sought out that spot and he rubbed in a little circles, till Qrow did cry out. “Gods Oz, fuck get on with it!” Qrow punched a pillow as Oz withdrew his fingers and dipped his head to nip Qrow’s ear. “Now that is not how you address me.”

Qrow whimpered at that and took several deep breaths. Simply stopping was punishment enough here, as Oz kissed down his neck and to his back he forced on refocusing. Oz’s lips on his skin were a constant reminder till he spoke again, still aching and desperate but his tone had changed. Smoother, softer as was possible with his rasp. “I am sorry Master.”

“Apology accepted.” Ozpin drew away and grabbed the condom tearing the wrapper open and sliding the latex over his erection. “Do you want the warming gel within as well?”

“Yes please, how do you want me?” Qrow asked looked over his shoulder, gazing up at Ozpin like this always made him feel small. It was nice in a way, to not worry and let a Oz have that control over him.

Ozpin considered that as he lubed himself up, to be able to kiss would be nice but then it was also nice to be behind Qrow and he could technically do both. “Kneel.” He said in that tone that made Qrow shiver and move all to eagerly to comply. Oz moved behind Qrow lining up then wrapping an arm around the smaller man’s torso. “This alright?” Qrow nodded and drew in a long slow breath as Oz pushed slowly inward. “Talk to me.” Ozpin ordered though more softly then before.

The garnet eyed man’s eyes closed and he leaned back resting his head against Oz’s chest. “That’s good,” he slurred as the warming sensation spread through him. “Keep it slow, I’m feeling tender.”

“As you wish.” Oz moved his free hand to hold Qrow’s hip as he moved the other up to rest over the smaller man’s heart. He measured the beat of it to help him focus on staying slow till he bottomed out and couldn’t contain the moan of pleasure. “Gods I missed you.”

Qrow couldn’t help but laugh softly and turn his head to kiss Oz’s jaw. “Of course you say that buried balls deep in me.” He rested a hand over Oz’s upon his chest and wove the other into Oz’s hair.

“Doesn’t make it any less true.” Ozpin purred and nuzzled Qrow’s neck. “Say when, I’m pretty
damn happy right now.” He flexed his pelvic floor enjoying the tight feeling of muscles around him.

The raven haired man ground back against Oz and enjoyed the sudden contraction of the copper eyed mans arms around him. How his fingers bit into his skin. “We’ve barely started and I’ve got you swearing and not in shock to boot.”

Ozpin forced his hands to relax and massaged the skin in apology. “It’s been a while.”

“Too long, so if you’d be so kind as to get to it, I’d appreciate it.” Qrow smiled at Oz’s chuckle which was transformed into long moans as Oz picked a long slow stroke. It had Qrow moaning out a muted chorus, it let him feel the complete length and girth of Oz without going to fast to blur the sensation.

Ruby walked into Ozpin’s flat closing the door behind her. She wanted to ask Qrow for some help on her homework, she had a essay on Lancers that she thought would benefit from some hands on experience. She put her bag down as she peered around the room, no Qrow or Ozpin. How odd. She mused it was the middle of the day but still late enough that Ozpin would be free of his office. The silver eyed warrior put her bag down on the coffee table and walked deeper into the flat.

The door to the Headmaster’s room was ajar, it didn’t make more than a few steps before the sound of skin impacting on skin filled her ears and moans she was sure belonged to Qrow. Though her brain was having a hard time connecting the throaty keens to her bird. She turned on her heel intent to wait this out in the living room when shouts reached her ears. “Fuck! Oz! Oh oh oh there! Fuck harder!”

Qrow’s pleading cries instantly had her knickers soaked she reached out to the hall and leaned against it. The cries got louder and deeper, the impact of skin on skin more pronounced. They wouldn’t mind… honestly I think Oz would enjoy that. Ruby turned back and crept her way down the hall. Just with the tips of her finger she pushed the door open and stepped through.

Ozpin had an arm locked around Qrow’s torso holding him still while the other hand stroked the Switch’s cock in quick firm strokes. They had clearly been at it for a while, Oz’s arms and shoulders were scored with long red marks from Qrow’s nails as he clawed in desperation at his partner. Sweat was dripping down Oz’s back and Ruby found her eyes glued to extremely toned ass. She must have made a gasp or something because Ozpin’s gaze snapped over to her. His smile had Ruby’s knickers all but dripping as he purred out. “Oh hello Ruby, enjoying the show?”

“What?!” Qrow struggled but Ozpin held him in place and brought their hips together sharply, the action made Qrow moan and forget his panic.

“Uhhh.” Ruby’s brain had popped out of the back of her head and took a flying leap for the gutter. “Sorry, I’ll just… go, yeah. I was gonna ask for some help… but you two just, uh, have fun. I’ll go now.” She turned away then stopped again as Oz made Qrow moan again. “Uh, Ozpin do you have a vibrator I could borrow?”

Qrow laughed then sucked in a breath when Ozpin tightened his hand around his member. “Now Qrow don’t be rude it was a very good question.” Ozpin purred out, he was enjoying this far to much. “They’re in the top shelf of the wardrobe over there, whatever suits you, there is condoms and lube as well.”
“Oh I won’t need the lube.” Ruby walked over and pulled the drawer open. Her eyes near popped out of her skull as she browsed Ozpin’s collection. In the end she picked out a fake cock of moderate size and a condom of the corrisoding size. “Sorry about interrupting, I’ll just be in the living room.” She walked out waving at them with her dildo in hand.

As Ruby closed the door behind her, though not all the way. Qrow started to laugh again, “Oh gods, did she just do what I think she did?”

“I believe she did, that one can be mounted on a wall. I wonder if she’s into that, I most certainly wouldn’t mind watching.” Ozpin started to move again letting Qrow’s torso go and grabbing his hips with both hands, manipulating Qrow in time with his strokes.

“Ooohh,” Without Oz holding him upright he fell forward and rocked back on Ozpin strokes as much as the larger man allowed him. “You’d rather do the mounting yourself.”

Ozpin moved looming over him and guiding him down to the bed. He threw his weight behind his strokes and Qrow almost shrieked as he came all over the bedding. Oz bit down on his shoulder leaving a red crescent bruise before uttering. “Well yes, as I am sure you’ll agree it is rather my thing~.” He bit down on Qrow’s neck, moving more quickly then before and stifling his moan as he followed Qrow over. “Remind me to invite her to come watch again, watching her cream her knickers was something else altogether.” He withdrew slowly from Qrow letting the younger man flop into the bedding.

“Yuck wet spot.” Qrow rolled over as Ozpin pulled off the condom and tied it off. With far to much skill he tossed it into the wastebin before smirking and flopping down beside Qrow pulling the younger man as he went atop of him and stealing a long kiss. Qrow drew away and flopped into Oz, utterly satisfied. The copper eyed man stroked up and down his back. “I’ve a thought.”

“Hmm?” Qrow purred sleepily.

“For Ruby’s birthday, I have been thinking about making an Aura object. We’d have to talk to her about the weight of accepting such a gift but I think we should make it together. With our jobs I think it would bring her some measure of peace to know that we are okay even if we can’t contact her through some other means.” Ozpin kissed Qrow’s temple.

“It’s a good idea, but yeah we’ll have to talk to her about that.” Qrow yawned and pushed himself upright. “Come’on I need a shower before I fall asleep.”

Ozpin played a little tune upon Qrow’s butt cheeks, tapping one then the other. “As you wish, best give her some more time to work out her problem too.” Qrow rolled his eyes and rolled off of Oz and the bed. “I don’t care what Glynda says, you are an utter goof when given the chance.”

Ozpin followed suit. “Well yes and you knew that.” He reached out and trailed a hand over Qrow’s torso. “Come on, we both need a shower something fierce.” He strode out ahead and Qrow made a show out of ogling his behind. “Yes Master~.”

A couple days later Ruby and Qrow had come up with a evil master plan to get even for their detentions from Ozpin. It of course came with slightly less evil master plan B, just in case they needed it.
“It's safe?” Ruby asked as Qrow opened the door into Ozpin’s tower. They had hidden outside on a ledge on the off chance that Oz locked his elevator that day. They needed to work fast as soon as the drugs kicked in.

“It should be if I did my math right.” He replied, together they crept into the tower.

“You did it sober right?” Qrow rolled his eyes. “Yes Ruby.” Sure enough as they peered over the banister then found Ozpin snoring away face planted into his desk. A cup of hot chocolate partly spilled over it.

“Quick! We'll only have a few minutes.” They jumped over the rail and zipped over to Ozpin. Qrow gently pushed the tall man uptight and started undoing the buttons of his vest. Together they worked and had Oz nude as the day he was born.

“Right now all we need to do is hide these… and lock his flat and barricade the entrances.” Qrow whispered this was going to be so much fun.

Qrow was telling stories during the lunch break with the whole hall’s attention, he either sat or stood on the table as he acted out his stories. “There I was surrounded by Grimm-”

“BRANWEN!!!” The shout reverberated through the hall, no one had ever heard Professor Ozpin shout before. Needless to say they had never seen him in his current state of attire before either. Many women let out long loving sighs for he was buck ass nude, only holding a pillow that was a little bit too small over his crotch.

Yang giggled as Qrow jumped off the table and started backing up towards the door. “Now Oz, I promise it wasn't me.” He held his hands up in a placating gesture but kept backing away. Yang said in a spooky voice. “Beware the moon.” Ruby, Nora and Ren all put a elbow on the table and their hands under their chins and in unison said with a long happy sigh as Ozpin walked by. “Admire the moon.”

Blake and Weiss turned bright red, the former had her cat ears flicked forward and Weiss looked torn between looking and not looking. Jaune and Pyrrha were also blushing but couldn’t pull their eyes away either.

“i don't believe you.” Ozpin growled causing more lustful sighs, it was so hard to find a man who could growl properly.

“Why ever not?” Qrow glanced over at Ruby who stealthily got out of her seat and dropped to the floor to sneak along.

“You're the only person know who's how much I weight to drug me in perfect time to wake up for the lunch hour. You're also the only person who has access to my flat and knows how to block it off so I can't get in without damaging things.” Ozpin continued to approach with a menacing growl. “The only thing that doesn't add up, is that you couldn't have done it alone.” He turned on the spot and sent a few students scrabbling to get out of the way as he cleaved the table in two with a downward kick.

“Eeek!” Ruby leapt straight up her attempt to sneak out foiled. Qrow moved a hand to partly cover his lips and uttered, though everyone heard him. “Err Ruby, I vote we execute Plan B.”
“Good idea.” Ruby started moving slowly towards the door. “And what would Plan B be?” Ozpin tapped a foot on the ground and cocked his hip to the side, more happy sighs from the student body. “Maybe give me back my clothes and clear the doors to my flat?”

“ERR, no.” Qrow and Ruby took a few more steps away then turned in their heels with a shout of. “RUN!!!”

“It's a good thing he's got to hold that pillow eh?” Qrow asked Ruby as they ran full speed through the forest. Thankfully there weren’t any Grimm around and they could just bolt as fast as their legs could carry them. Neither wanted to admit it was a futile run, Ozpin’s legs were longer and with his Semblance they were only delaying the inevitable.

“Oh yeah, he's only got one arm to catch us with.” Not a second after the words were out of her mouth a pillow shaped bullet hit Qrow square in the back of head and he went down! His body vibrating comically with the impact. “Qrow!” Ruby put her brakes on and rushed to his side. Qrow groaned weakly reaching out to her. “Leave me, run, save yourself!”

It was much too late, Ruby barely saw the blur before she was flat on her back with Ozpin’s powerful hand around her neck, the other was around Qrows. They looked up at Oz who was panting and it didn't have anything to do with the run. Qrow and Ruby shared a look as best they could and lifted their legs in unison, giving Oz something to rub his engorged and heavy cock against. “Fuck~,” Oz moaned his eyes closing partly. “I don't know who I want to fuck first.”

Ruby giggled and Qrow said snugly. “I told you he'd like it.” Ruby wiggled and said. “Well it will have to be Qrow, I do have class.”

Ozpin let go of her neck and shoved his hand up her skirt, he wasn't the only one insanely aroused by this little game of chase. “I can be quick.” He offered with a smirk.

“Noooo~.” Ruby's word turned into a moan as he set those long fingers to work.

“Oh all right, only because you have class and we still have to figure out what is going on with your Aura.” Oz turned his attention to Qrow and took a deep kiss from the man he growled out in a deep rumble. “You better get going, I don't intend to let this one go till I'm satisfied.”

The whimper Qrow made combined with Oz's tone sent heat straight between Ruby's legs. As she sat up she could see Qrow’s member straining against his pants and she knew Ozpin would take excellent care of him. “Have fun!” She raced off to tell Yang that the evil master plan to get Qrow laid more had been an arousing success.

Much later Ozpin returned to Campus with a walk that only could be described as cocky with Qrow’s cape tied around his waist. Qrow on the other hand following just a step behind Oz on the bigger man’s right, only had his shirt hiding his family jewels from sight. What had happened to his pants would become one of the great mysteries of Beacon.
Thank you too: Mysty_Sinclair, XxShadowWolf13xX, Sportsfangirl815, Celestialfae
Over the course of the next week, the three of them settled into a pattern. Ruby came to accept the need for distance, however she did often get little open invitations. Needless to say this had caused a few amusing instances and many pairs of wet knickers. She was grateful however that they had found a way to include her, if second hand. What Ruby enjoyed most of it however being able to watch Qrow and Ozpin thrive. The way they reforge what was broken into something better than it had been before helped her understand the difference in their relationship compared to their own with her.

Now at long last her birthday had arrived, which also meant that Halloween was upon them. This year she wore a blood red Hellsing uniform with a matching mini skirt, long red stockings, ankle fold brown boots, and brown gloves. Ruby was a little sore that her father hadn’t allowed her to have a BFG, but it was a costume and she would just have to take do.

Qrow’s outfit was comprised of a charcoal suit; leather riding boots, an intricately knotted red cravat, covered by a full-length, and red frock overcoat with a cape. He also wore a red fedora with a wide, floppy brim and a pair of circular, heavily tinted, wire-framed orange sunglasses with goggle sidings. He also had a pair of white gloves which each have a five-pointed seal adorning their backs.

Ruby ogled her ready made Alucard, they were in his flat putting the last touches on their costumes for the night. First they’d stop by the Masquerade Beacon Ball for a while then go down into the city. Qrow checked over his suit one last time and suddenly found Ruby pressed up against him squishing her breasts against his chest. “Uhh Ruby?” Qrow would be lying if he said he wasn’t reacting to that full rack.

Ruby reached up and booped his nose. “You look really good.”

“Oh huh.” Qrow heaved his eyes up from her breasts. “We should get going, your sister will kill me if she doesn’t see us tonight.”

“Let’s go then!” Ruby bounced out the door, leaving Qrow to chase after her while putting on his orange round glasses.

“Oohh sis! Damn look’en good.” Yang praised her sister was Ruby did a little spin, her skirt was a bit
Ruby struck a dynamic pose like she was holding an anti-tank rifle in each hand. “Just imagine how it would look with guns!”

Yang laughed at her sister and caught a few guys behind her giving her lewd looks. She scowled only for Qrow to materialize out of the shadows and swat Ruby’s behind playfully. “Hey!” Ruby rounded on Qrow standing up defiant on her toes.

“Should have made that skirt longer Ruby.” Then true to his character Qrow swapped out chiding for a smirk and whispered into her ear. “Makes you look too damn fuckable.”

Ruby blushed and fiddled with her done up hair. She looked over to her sister who had picked a video game character, she was pretty sure it was Tomb Raider’s main character.

Ruby blushed and stepped back coyly. “Well Master if you’re up for it.”

Yang burst into laughter at Qrow’s expression. “Damn sis, you have been learning of late. Blake leaving her books out too much.”

Ruby bounced over to Yang and whispered into her ear. Qrow collected his jaw up off the floor and watched Yang’s eyes go wider and wider. “Ruby~.” He questioned warily.

Yang looked sharply over to her sister as Ruby finished then over to Qrow, then back to Ruby. “Wow. Damn… You lucky duck. I mean yuck he’s my uncle but you are so lucky if I had two people like that I’d be in heaven.”

“I know right?! I am so lucky, that I just get to watch.” Ruby giggled and brushed down her shirt.

“Ruby just what did you tell her?” Qrow asked paling as Yang looked him up and down.

As Yang walked over to her uncle Ruby said. “Just the good bits.” Qrow let out a yelp as Yang brushed a finger over one of his nipples still covered in medical tape. “You have to explain that to me sometime, I am seriously interested in getting that done.”

“Tai would kill me.” Qrow batted her curious fingers away, they were still tender and would be for a few months more.

Yang pouted and said. “He doesn’t have to know.”

Ruby giggled and left the two to talk picking her way through the crowd. The Ball was already in full swing, Blake and Sun were dancing. Weiss was dancing with some very tall gentlemen in a black suit and red cape wearing a mask that covered everything but his lips. He even had a long black mane of a wig further hiding the man underneath. Weiss had dyed her hair red and was wearing a lioness mask, her dress was of golden hues. Needless to say they were a wonderful source of contrast on the dancefloor.

The little draculina picked her way over to the punch and helped herself to a glass of a ruby red substance. She had just turned back to return to Qrow when someone stumbled into her sending her drink into the shirt… Only it didn’t make it. A hand wearing a white glove caught the glass and somehow managed to catch all the liquid back within it. The owner bowed with a hand tucked behind his back and said in a honey’d voice. “Now what kind of Butler would I be if I let a lovely lady like yourself ruin your blouse?”

A little wobble found its way into Ruby’s knees. The man before her had black hair styled to frame
his face, his eyes a dark red. He wore black trousers, a six-button double-breasted tailcoat and a grey vest. Ruby swallowed as the tall man the spitting image of a certain demon straightened up with a smile that fitted the character perfectly. “May I escort you this evening my dear? You’ll find that I am simply one Hell of a Butler.”

That did it, Ruby made a little meep in the back of her throat and swooned, her poor knickers meeting their wet fate in an instant. Her knees going out but she barely fell before a large strong arm was wrapped around her waist. “My my, my lady is all nerves tonight.” His lips brushed her ear as he purred into her. “I wonder why that is, perhaps I shall have to find out.”

Ozpin smiled at her little whimper and pressed a kiss to her neck. He’d decided to relax their new rule for her birthday on this wonderful night of magic. He could hear her quick nervous breaths and ached to find out just how well he had gotten to her. If the dilation of her eyes was any indicator he had played his part perfectly. “I have gifts for you.” He purred as a voice sounded from behind them.

“Don’t forget you are sharing tonight Sebastian.”

Ozpin drew Ruby up and she leaned happy against him grabbing the breast of his tailcoat. He looked over to Qrow… he meant Alucard and smiled. “I’m sure as my fellow demon we will be able to work something out.”

Ruby looked between the two and suddenly felt very… small, innocent and fucked. This was shaping up to be her most interesting birthday ever. Ozpin’s hand tightened on her waist and he said lowly so only Qrow would hear him. “I am going to give the young lady one of her birthday presents. I get the distinct impression that she needs them.”

“I think you’re right, I can’t have my little pet uncomfortable tonight we have such plans for her.” Alucard purred, walking over his coat billowing around him.

That prompted another little meep from Ruby and she let Oz guide her from the room. She ganced around see that Yang had joined Blake and Sun in their dance and they were passing the cat faunus around gracefully. Weiss had been guided into a dip by her mysterious stranger and had leaned up and was kissing him. She smiled her friends were happy and wouldn’t even notice her departure, besides they knew she had plans with Qrow.

They ended up in a empty lounge room and Ozpin brought Ruby to a leather couch which she sat perched upon. “Now,” He began pulling a small box from his pocket. “I have three presents for you, two of which you can have now. The last we shall have to talk about first.”

He handed her the little green box. Ruby pulled the simple ribbon off of it and blushed as she opened it. “I take it you found them then?” Ozpin’s choice of replacements weren’t things she had even known existed.

“Oh the same day you hid them. I thought it would be more amusing to let you wonder when I had. Made getting you sized for those much easier, plus I have a good memory.” Ozpin knelt before and slid a hand up the outside of her thigh.

“Huh?” Ruby wondered what memory had to do with it.

Qrow leaned against the table with a smirk on his lips. “He memorized your measurements, dirty old perve. I’ve seen him mentally updating his data a few times.”

“Ohhh.” Ruby blushed all the brighter, a bit flattered that Oz did that. Her thoughts were quickly derailed as Ozpin pushed her skirt up and out of his way. She squeaked but let him push her legs
apart with a hand and pulled her to the edge of the sofa by the back of her knees.

Ozpin pressed a kiss to her inner thigh long and teasing it. “Now the question is which knickers you would like for this evening. I bought you two types, one I’d like to see you in and one more comfortable to replace the ones you gave me.”

Ruby forced her attention back to the box as he kissed up her legs, the smooth silky black hair teasing her skin. She pulled the first one out, it was red and cotton with an intricate wave of black lace in a rose pattern. Comfy and they would be warm on this brisk night. Now the other pair… Ruby’s brain slowed to a crawl, they had no crotch, or it was very minimal and just present enough to keep them in place. It would allow either of them to play with her unimpeded, a flora design would roam up her hips hugging them in a V. The back was thicker with a band of roses drawn into bows that would have to be tied carefully. It would make her behind cradled into a lovely heart shape, lastly they were of a darker crimson red and dark verdant green.

Qrow watched Ruby stare at them and chuckled. “I think you broke her Oz.”

Ozpin glanced up at her, his lips lingering on her skin. “Oh my friend, I haven’t even started with her.” He pulled out a self satisfied smile he had seen the demon he portrayed use so many times. “Well my dear? Pick one, set the tone for the night.”

Ruby looked down at him as he nipped her thigh moving closer and closer to her sex. She looked between the pair, weighing the pros and cons. The crotchless number seemed to promise more fun for her, on the other hand was she brave enough to follow through? She worried her bottom lip as Oz leaned up and nipped the side of her current panties. Part of her wondered just how sharp his teeth were that she could already feel the thin fabric slicing. With a stuttering gasp she put the plain ones back in the box and tightened her grip on the lingerie.

“Perfect.” Ozpin purred and ripped the wet panties from her and tucked them into a pocket faster then Ruby could track.

Qrow smirked when Ruby cried out as Ozpin all but attacked her sex, the flush of her cheeks was lovely. He strode over and took ahold of her jaw and kissed her, deepening it swiftly. Ruby was utterly swept away by the sensations, Qrow slid a hand under her shirt and fondled a breast. With a moan she arched up wrapping her legs around Ozpin’s shoulders as he sucked on her clit. She came quickly and the two eased off, Ozpin cleaning her with his tongue and helping her into the new panties.

Ozpin helped her stand as she squirmed on the spot, trying to adjust to the feel of the lingerie. Qrow chuckled at her expression. “Shall we return to the Ball, I’ve a birthday present for you too. Already arranged it with the band.”

“Oo!” Ruby lit up, she hadn’t got to hear Qrow sing in ages. Much less in person.

They started back towards the Ball, Ozpin saying. “Now this I will have to see.”

When they returned the band had taken a break and was tuning their instruments. Weiss and her Mysterious Stranger were talking over drinks. Yang, Sun and Blake were all locked in conversation.

The smirk Qrow sent Ruby had her heart fluttering as they stepped away from Oz. With an empty dance floor they stood two meters away from each other. Qrow pulled off the tinted sunglasses and tossed them at Oz who tucked them away into a pocket. The band upon seeing them picked up their instruments. Yang saw instantly and beamed. “Guys uncle Qrow is gonna sing! You’re wanna hear this.” Her glee got the attention of her friends.
“Isn’t he kinda raspy?” Blake asked.

“Not when he *tries.*” Yang bounced in her seat.

The music began metal strings of a guitar and drums. Qrow purred taking a step towards Ruby and reaching out with a white gloved hand.

: *The day is the wife whom I elude.  
The one to whom I should be right.  
Though forewarned by peers and kin  
I always give in to the night.  
Mother always warned me such,  
being a nocturnal soul  
Besides just being simply strange  
Spawns from some illness of the mind.:*

Ruby was barely ready when she reached and he seized her hand, pulling her to him so fast she almost stumbled. His wicked grin had a smile blooming over hers. He lashed her way from him twisting her spun under his arm then letting go. Flowing like liquid around her, with little teasing brushes to her shoulder and chin.

: *But the Night,  
She calls me  
She calls me  
She calls me  
She calls me  
She sways in her velvet dress  
And pulls me towards her in the dark.*

While the others rest  
While the others rest  
While the others rest:

Qrow grabbed her hand again and pulled her tight to his body, his other hand going to her waist and holding tight. He swept her through steps leaning on his Aura, making himself so fast and fluid as to appear inhuman. Ruby’s stunned expression was fun, it was only the long hours of practice they had dancing and reading each other that kept her on her toes.

: *Heed the call the time has come  
for you children of the Night  
Gather ’round like suckling dogs  
Mother’s come she is the Night.  
Come with me to the other side.  
Make that girl in black your bride!:

He spun her away from him letting her stumbled before swooping up to her all blood red coat and
flirting smile. He teased her jaw with a finger and let her recover. Ruby righted herself with a smile on her face, then she turned it into a grin. Narrowing her eyes, a challenge, the perfect birthday present. She stepped back pointing her toe and raised an arm elegantly over her head. Qrow advanced as she backed away swinging her hips and beckoning him to come to her.

:But the Night,  
She calls me  
She calls me  
She calls me  
She calls me  
She sways in her velvet dress  
And pulls me towards her in the dark  
While the others rest  
While the others rest  
While the others rest.

I see the light  
coming through the blinds.  
I close my eyes.  
I don't care if you think it's wrong.  
I'm gonna sleep the whole day long.  
The sun goes down, This is my wake up call.:  

The two danced Ruby leaning on her Aura to match him in a blur of elegant steps matching her love. Her smirk was downright evil as she played the game. Qrow moved to her, snatching her hand and swing her around him, then pulling her closer.

:It still seems very strange to me,  
that her quiet, lonely streets  
draped in all their mystery  
could be so sweet and comforting.:  

He put a finger under her chin and drew it up. Ruby bit her lip as he stepped away holding her tight to him forcing her to tango, bodies pressed tight.

:But the Night,  
She calls me  
She calls me  
She calls me  
She calls me  
She sways in her velvet dress  
And pulls me toward her in the dark  
While the others rest  
While the others rest  
While the others rest.:
Ruby leaned up tight to him and Qrow met her half way stealing her lips in a long kiss. “Happy Birthday.” He uttered back in his usual rasp, it was real effort to smooth it over for her.

“Thank you.” Ruby said and glanced around, a blush stealing over her cheeks as she saw all the people staring. She pulled him off the dancefloor their audience burning her ears with their whispers. Most were along the lines of people not knowing she had a boyfriend and wondering who the sexy hunk was. ‘My sexy hunk, that’s who. She thought and grinned, it just went to show just how making himself immortal worked so well that people thought Qrow was a student.

Ozpin chuckled when they got back to him. “Hmm sex on the dancefloor. Remind me to take to you The Crimson if we ever go to Mistral.”

Ruby turned scarlet and giggled. “It wasn’t that bad.”

“No it was that good.” Ozpin replied. “Here I was having all sorts of kinky thoughts. Wondering just what I could talk you into.”

Qrow laughed and said before Oz could make Ruby turn any brighter. “Come lets go. There is a city to have fun in tonight.”

Ruby waved bye to Yang as they strode out of the hall and out into the cold night air. A breeze picked up and the Silver Eyed Warrior pushed her thighs together. A chuckled warned her as a finger traced over her butt cheek. “Come now, half the fun is the exposure.”

She spun and stuck her tongue out. “Who said you could touch?” She purred as Ozpin’s smile grew. “Come on, let’s go down into the city.” She hopped away letting them admire her behind as she bounced.

“Soo cool!” Ruby buzzed between the stalls, the streets were decorated to the nines and everyone was in some costume of some sort. Qrow and Ozpin were having fun watching Ruby explore… and scaring the crap out of any boy that looked a little too closely at her. Oz pulled his eyes away from her and looked over the busy street, Garrett was annoying present in his thoughts. Pockets to pick for example, Ozpin clenched his fists in an effort to squish the urge. Garrett’s magic not part of the collective soul but it was on the active side. It was probably because it was the Day of the Dead, or at least that was what Ozpin chalked it up too. Out of curiosity he pulled off his left glove when Qrow was distracted.

The soft blue glow of the key glyph greeted him. Oz’s brow rocketed skyward and he yanked the glove back on. When he looked up he found Garrett or the projection the entity in his head had chosen to show leaning against a stall beside Ruby looking her over. “Nice ass. I didn’t get it at first but the more I see the more I like.” The grey eyed man was missing his right eye this time as he looked over at Oz. “You didn’t honestly think you could just shove me away and shut me up? It is our night after all. There is work to do, and I’ve had a long time to think about reforging your ‘curse.’”

Ozpin walked over to Ruby as Qrow browsed the stall with her. “Reforging? O’Dimm would flip out.”

“Tonight is the MY night.” Garrett tilted his head to the side, the eye in his left sock rolled into the right and glowed blue-white. “We can even use the girl. Come let’s make this a birthday for her to to
remember and give that Demon a taste of it’s own medicine. First things first we need a quiet place, hidden and secret.”

Ozpin shook his head. “You know I do have other things to do, this is Ruby’s night.”

“No it’s the night immortals are made mortal. Let me drive.” Garrett vanished from sight.

Oz sighed and whispered to his partners. “Come on let’s find someplace more private Garrett’s being too loud.”

“Something wrong Oz?” Qrow asked as the taller man pulled them away from the street.

“I’m going to let Garrett drive.” Ozpin said and as soon as the words were out of his mouth he felt the presence in his mind slide over. “Come on Huntsmen, it’s one of the largest nights of magic. I’ve gonna fuck this blasted curse and you are going to help.”

“Cool!” Ruby almost squealed, this was shaping up to be a cool birthday. “Where are we going?”

“Out of Vale, we need a secluded space. I’ve a place already in mind.” Garrett pulled them into a back street and into steadily shadier streets. Places that people like Roman Torchwick would have too much pride to enter. People got few and farther between till he brought them to the site of a derelict orphanage. It had been burned out and left as a carcass. It seemed uninhabited, even by the less fortunate citizens of Vale. No one dared squat in this building after the many rumors of people who went into it never coming out again.

“Stick close to me and step softly.” Garrett ordered, he hated working with people but here it would be required. He pushed the heavy steel door open and lowered his body into a couch, his steps turned as soft as a mouse.

“Where are we?” Qrow asked, fixing his hat so he could see more clearly. There was no light here and while his vision was better than most, thanks to his other form he was still amazed Garrett could see where he was going at all.

Ozpin’s voice twisted over to the raspier deeper tones of the thief. “Shalebridge Cradle. It used to be an insane asylum, and before that an orphanage. One night a fire started, no one knows how and after that they left the place abandoned. If there was a way to cram more misery and pain into one building’s history, I can’t think of it.”

“You want to do whatever it is you are going to do here?” Ruby asked stepping closer to Garrett and hugging herself, the grey stone walls felt like they wanted to eat her.

“No. This place is even more cursed then I am. Have enough bad things happen in one place and that place starts to change. This place…it remembers. Stay too long and it will remember you and keep you forever. However thanks to that it has artifacts from centuries ago still intact, still holding their power. We have need of one of those.” Garrett remembered the place well, it had been terrifying the last time he was here…He really hoped the ‘Puppets’ hadn’t pulled themselves back together.

“Just what are we doing?” Qrow asked as they moved deeper into the ballows of the Cradle. Moans reached his ears, mixed with scratchy gittering.

“We are going to use one of these artifacts to step into the past. O’Dimm is always busy on this night. If I make a change in the past, it will bleed over into the present. I look forward to seeing the look on that demon’s face.” Garrett smirked his lip pulling in one corner.
Ruby stopped. “Won’t that change Ozpin?”

“He’ll lose a few lives, just really everyone between me and him. For what I have in mind, it shouldn’t change too much, at least of his personality and recent history. Later history, well we’ll see. Shh, seems they put themselves back together.” Ozpin pulled his left glove off with his teeth, the blue glow had turned into a key shaped old scar.

He gestured for Ruby and Qrow to hide further lower himself to the ground, he was getting used to this bigger body. He slipped into a shadow and waited.

Ruby covered her mouth to muffle herself, she wanted to scream. The source of the gittering came into view. It was shaped like a human, clad in white straitjackets with wire cages covering their heads and hands, the sounds it made hissed and ground like teeth. Above them the dead lights flickered to life, it walked in a twisted uneven fashion though it was silent. Silver Eyes widen as it’s faceless head turned towards her.

Garrett appeared out of the shadows behind it like a shade straight out of hell. He grabbed it by it’s chest and lifted it clear off the ground before it could charge her. He slammed his left hand onto it, the dormant key glyph blazed into glory. The puppet screamed a sounded like grinding metal. At the Keeper’s mercy, the straightcoat, molded and rotted, the metal rusted and turned to dust. When Garrett dropped it remains smashed upon the ground nothing left but dust.

Qrow stood up from behind the desk he and Ruby had been hiding behind. “What was that?”

“A former inmate. I told you this place remembers, you never get out. Though given that the glyphs are responsible for this type of magic, I think what I did will at least slow it down. Though I should not do that again, I don’t want to get trapped here again.” Garrett spoke softly and started moving inward again, he remember where one of the toys he hadn’t needed before was.

“You just said it’s impossible to get out once this place remembers you? So how’d you escape?” Qrow asked, he and Ruby moving quickly to keep on Garrett's heals.

“Jumped out of the Staff Tower, made it think I had died in the past version of this place. It let me out and back forward in time again.” Garrett shuddered. “Never doing that again.”

He pushed upon a heavy metal set of doors and they walked down a hall of single cells, each with a heavy metal door with a tiny slot at the bottom. He pulled the two into one of the rooms and closed the door behind him, pressing a finger to his lips. Not a minute later the long dead lights started to flick and they could hear the grinding of teeth as a Puppet walked by. When the lights died again Garrett turned and walked the single step to the corner of the ceil. A single blanket lay there. “Hold onto me.” He ordered.

Ruby and Qrow grabbed his shoulders without a word, this place of magic was more then enough to make them silent. Silver eyes roamed over the blanket and it took her a moment to see it was a baby blanket, probably the only thing in the room that time hadn’t touched. Garrett reached out and grabbed it.

There was a horrible sensation from behind her navel and she shut her eyes for a long minute willing the sickness to abate. An arm held her tight. “Easy, we can’t linger here.”

Ruby opened her eyes to see Garrett stuff the blanket into a pocket while Qrow leaned on him looking as sick as Ruby felt. Garrett spoke softly. “We musn’t be caught, they’ll take the blanket and we’ll be shunted back into the present.”
Garrett steadied them both as he stood, it wouldn’t be his city but it would be close enough. He left them to recover, looking carefully down the hall before opening the door. “Come, we need to get going.”

Ruby and Qrow looked at each other for along moment, then swallowed the bile and followed Garrett. They left the same way they had come, only now Garrett pulled them into the shadows whenever a shade of a person walked by. In the past the place was even more terrifying, with screams echoed through it. Eventually they came to the main door and stepped out into Vale of centuries past.

It was still the Day of the Dead, only here no one celebrated. All the buildings were wood with higher stone manours raise up into the dark. A monstrous clock tower stood high over the city, it’s thunderous bells marked the time at eleven at night. The street they were on was cobble-stoned and empty of people. A rat scuttled by and it was only Garrett’s hand clamping over Ruby's mouth that stifled her scream.

“Wait here. You can’t go around wearing that.” Before either said a word Garret slipped away into the fog and shadow it curling around him.

“This was a bad idea.” Qrow said, pulling his hat off and hiding it behind a rotting bench. He pulled the red coat tight around him, buttoning it up. This Vale of old was colder then the modern one, in more ways than one.

Ruby hugged herself looking around at the courtyard, the fire was so much fresher. She could almost smell the ash in the air. Garrett appeared out of the shadows, a tarnished leather cloak over his shoulders and a peasant plain dress in the other. He tossed it callously at Ruby. “Put that on.”

“Did you just steal a dress for me?” Ruby caught the dress, it was by no means shoddy but it wasn’t nice either. It was however clean, she figured out after giving it a sniff. He must have taken it off a clothes line.

“Yes.” At Ruby’s looked he continued. “I’ll put it back when we head back if it makes you feel better.”

Ruby scrunched up her nose but pulled the garment on, it was too big for her but it would hide her costume. “Where are we going?”

“An old temple in the Emerald Forest, only it’s not so old right now.” Garrett grimaced and started off into the street. “Come, the guards will not be pleasant if they find us here.”

Old Vale on this night was terrifying. Random hisses from gas street lights popped in and out of use. The streets were filthy the muck accumulated into the middle. Qrow was quiet as he looked the place over, many of the buildings were rotting away. Even as their inhabitants stubbornly occupied them. Chanting reached their ears, and Ozpin rushed them into a side street.

:And The Builder said...'Smite thine enemies without mercy, for mercy is but weakness in disguise....:

Five men all dressed in heavy mail carrying huge sledge hammers. Over their mail they wore red tunics with grey crossed hammers upon the front.

:Vigilance is our shield, that protects us from our squalid past. Knowledge is our weapon, with which we carve a path to an enlightened future.: 

As they past Garrett pushed Ruby and Qrow further into the darkness. The two watched as the
thief’s eyes followed the guards till they had turned the corner before whispering. “After the Cataclysm the Hammers tried to retake the Old Quarter. They only managed parts, dead still roam the streets. We need to avoid both.”

He guided them back out into the street, the dense buildings holding new meaning as now they knew what life in them was not true life. They moved north and came upon huge towering stone walls, at the base a few shambling corpse beat against the heavy wooden doors. They were girdled in steel, as they moved through the shadows archers upon the walls shot arrows tipped in fire dust at the zombies causing them to exploded and rain gore down onto the pavement.

“Can you jump that?” Garret asked Qrow.

Qrow looked up at the wall, it wasn’t that bad only a few hundred feet high. “Yeah.” He whispered.

“Right then. Climb on.” Garrett lowered himself and Ruby climbed onto his back holding tight around his shoulders and waist.

With a single leap the Huntsmen jumped up into the wall and Ruby got her first sight of Vale. “Wow.” She breathed, lights flickered in windows, the streets were a twisted maze it just spanned on and on. Fog curled through the streets and she could hear more chanting from Hammerite patrols. Lastly a gibbous moon hung in the sky illuminating everything. “Cool birthday present.”

That pulled a chuckle from Garrett. “Maybe I will find something for you to take forward with you.”

“No stealing anything.”

Garrett huffed and with another bound took them down into the Aludale, landing upon a wood tiled roof with far too much skill. Qrow landed beside him the tiles crunched under his feet. The look on his face clearly stated that his Semblance had come out to play and Garrett almost winced at the sound of creaking under Qrow’s feet. “Fly with us.” He ordered and Qrow nodded turning into his avian form and flying up into the air.

Ruby’s head was on a swivel as Garrett started to run the along the rooftops. Eventually getting used to Ozpin’s longer limbs. Below them Ruby caught a glimpse of the night life, most guards and nobles out to party. This district was carved mostly from stone and the lights were electric, it had an air of richness that it had retained to the present day. In no time at all they came upon another wall that Garrett leaped with ease taking them into the forest skirting a well worn path. He maintained his run as the path took them farther and farther from the city. It lead to a cathedral but he continued on past that up into the mountains.

A new path was found, this one overgrown, with grass pushing up between the stones. The forest drew dense and oppressive, but Garrett continued on till he found a cave. Only it wasn’t a cave, lining the walls were carved stone, top to bottom with glyphs. Garrett knelt and let Ruby down, Qrow returned to human form beside him. “Where are we?”

“An old temple to the Trisker God, but even his followers abandoned it. Lots of blood was let there, it will be perfect for my needs.” Garrett raised his left hand, pulling off the glove and the glyph upon it began to glow. With it outstretched he led the way into the temple.

“So what do you intend to do?” Ruby asked, moss grew over almost everything but it carried a copper scent.
“We are forced to always reincarnate into a ‘like minded individual’ as a form of immortality. We are a thief to the lives of others. I can not break the aspect of immortality but as The Keeper, well Death is my sphere of influence. I feed off of it and it off of me. So I will use that to change how we are reborn. In this place, were so many of died. I will have power and with all the forest around there is fuel for this level of magic.”

They came to an large chamber it was shaped like an ampatha theater, only in the centre was a deep carved whole. The sides were stained red, even after all of this time. “What do you mean fuel?” Qrow asked, he was liking this Garrett less and less.

“No magic is without cost. The Glyphs use the life energy of those around the user or the user itself. You and Ruby will not be harmed.” The stones crunched softly under their feet as they came to pit in the centre of the theatre. “I will need some of your blood Silver Eyed Warrior.”

“I’m not sure this is what Ozpin would want. Can we talk to him please?” Ruby stepped away from Garrett, this was just getting creepier and creepier.

“I second that notion.” Qrow said crossing his arms.

Garrett sighed but gave control back, he wasn’t in the mood to argue. Ozpin pressed a hand to his head. “You have no idea how weird it is to be in the back seat.”

“Oz, is this on the level? Cause this is getting to whole new levels of creepy.” Qrow said.

“It is magic Qrow, this is a more… natural magic then what I’ve used before. It is messier and yes creepier, but from what I understand it will be worth it in the long run. Garrett has been explaining his plan to me as we ran, yes this will be unpleasant but please do as he says. No matter how … unpleasant it appears to be. We can manipulate this curse and I want to.” Ozpin pulled off the leather cloak and tossed it to the ground followed by the rest of his upper layers. He reached down to his boots and pulled a knife from one. “I am going to give him back control now. Ruby as another magical entity your blood is required. Qrow, you will need to extend your Aura over Ruby and shield her. Make her immortal like yourself, everything else here is going to die.” He closed his eyes and let Garrett assume control, when he opened them again they were grey. “Your wrist Silver Eyes, bleed into the pit.”

Ruby hesitantly extend an arm, it shook but Garrett grabbed it harshly and cut right along the vein. Her legs buckled in sheer shook, but Qrow already had his arms around her. Ruby watched the blood drip into the black pit.

Garrett cut the palm of his left hand the key Glyph upon the back glowed brighter the only light in the cavern. He began to draw in his blood around the pit, glyph after glyph twisted symbols of unlife or renewed life and new life. He fed his Aura into the marks, his very soul carried in blood. Then he thrust his hand into the pit, his blood melding with Ruby’s.

The glyphs he drew around the pit flared into blue life. Blood started to well up in the pit, a groan of pain drew silver and garnet eyes to Garrett. He had started to age, silver hair turned white, bags collected around his eyes, he lost muscle and age spots started to form over visible skin. “Now Qrow. Shield her.”

Qrow did, extending his Aura over her but not healing her cut, even as he replenished her blood. As he did more glyphs all blood drawn over the centuries by pagans gone past, flared up into life. Then they twisted and warped changing all on their own. The moss around them wilted and turned to dust, roots of trees that had broken through the ceiling died.
With the pit the blood welled up, it’s creation fueled by magic rather than the hundred of lives it would have otherwise taken. The glyphs spread out from the blood stained ground, the carved walls revealed to be carved of more glyphs. Garrett aged to an old man, then reverted to a young one by the use of his Aura over and over. By the time the pool was full, his Aura was waning. Before either of the other two could react he flipped the knife around his hand and used it to cut his right eye neatly out.

Ruby let out a scream in the instant the action took. Garrett dropped the eye into the pool of blood, with a great thump of power like a beating heart all the power the glyphs had been gather snapped into focus upon the pool of blood and it turned into a viscous golden fluid. With a snap of his fingers Ruby’s wrist healed, then Garrett promptly fell back onto his behind exhausted.

“What the hell!” Qrow shouted and eased the stunned Ruby to the floor.

Garrett waved a hand dismissively. “Nothing comes without sacrifice and trust me for the boon, this was a small price to pay. You can have your Ozpin back for a minute, though you will still need me to take you home.” He closed his eye and surrendered control.

Ozpin instantly reached up to the bloody socket, Garrett had told him what he intended to do but the empty hole was still a shock. He cupped his hand over it as Qrow raced to his side.

“Gods Oz, tell me you can fix that.” Qrow reached out and pulled Ozpin’s hand away the other man was too tired to resist.

“Only if we do it quickly and honestly I’m tapped out.” Ozpin looked up to Qrow, his Aura was gone, spent. “Help me please.” Fear made his voice quiver.

“You don’t have to ask.” Qrow cupped Ozpin’s cheek, trying to ignore the blood that dribbled over his thumb.

His Aura was also tired, but with Ozpin’s guidance it would be enough. He pushed it through his hand and he felt Oz shape it. Watching the eye regrow into Oz’s skull was something that no amount of liquor would ever help him forget.

“Let’s go.” Ruby said hugging herself as Qrow finished healing Oz. This was was giving her the creeps, she looked at her wrist and could see the thin white scar. Something told her no amount of Aura would ever make it go away.

“Agreed.” With Qrow’s help Ozpin got to his feet and redressed again. It was strange to feel old. He appeared maybe a decade older than he usually allowed himself to be. He’d have to fix that when his Aura recovered. Ruby came up on Oz’s other side lending her help as best she could. Together they slowly existed the cave, the sight that greeted them shocked even Ozpin.

Where there had once been forest, there was now ash and dust. Not even rot remained, not skeletons of the wildlife that had been in the wrong place at the wrong time. It was all gone. Ozpin crumple in spite of their support, Garrett had not mentioned this. He lost his dinner over the dead dusty stone, he had done this.

Ruby tried to comfort him petting his hair as Qrow looked out at the dead wasteland. He could see maybe a league into the distance were the trees still grew. The remains of the cathedral they had passed, stuck out from the barren landscape like a maggot on it’s dead perfection.

Garrett assumed control, Ozpin to compromised to fight him on the matter. He wiped his lips and forced himself stand. “Help me hide the entrance Qrow.”
With the sudden turn in his voice and manner they knew Garrett was back. Without a word he helped the Keeper move boulders to cover the entrance to the cave. “How far does this go?” Qrow asked his voice tight.

“At least a league around us in a circle. Power in circles, power in sacrifice.” Garrett explained.

“So that’s all this is to you? A sacrifice for what?” Qrow asked anger rising in his voice.

“To never steal another man’s life.” Garrett said drawing himself up to his full height. Then he pointed at his temple. “And now there’s more room for me up there. He has not lost any knowledge he will miss and others will get to live their lives without him taking them over. Be horrified if you wish it but in the long run this was nothing compared to what he has taken in the past. What he would have continued to take if Salem is not defeated. I’ve been around more then long enough to know. Now lets go, before anyone sees us and connects this face to what happened here.” Garrett forced himself to walk down the path they had come.

Ruby looked up at Qrow who only shook his head. They walked for about ten minutes before Garrett pushed himself into a run breaking off the path and running for the forest. By the time they got back to the forest Ruby could hear the clock tower chiming in the distance. One bell.

They came around to the south side of the city before entering. This district was more commercial, filled with shops and housing. “It’s a shame we have no coin.” Garrett said drawing his cloak tighter around him. “I’ll be right back.”

“No-.” Ruby started but he had already vanished. “How does he do that?”

“Sheer skill.” Qrow said and reached out to her, pulling her to his side. They mosied over to a wooden bench and sat awaiting Garrett’s return. “You okay?”

The crimsonette shook her head. “I like a good scare but that was too real to be fun. I mean we are changing the past. What’s gonna happen to our Ozpin?”

“I don’t know but for all his lack of communication. This Garrett does seem to know what he is doing and frankly he’s throwing more magic around then I’ve ever seen or heard of Oz doing.” Qrow kissed her head as she leaned on him.

“I am not so sure, he seems rather selfish to me. Like this helping Oz will only serve him in the end.” Ruby fiddled with the cuff of Qrow’s coat.

“Well Oz’s got us, we helped once we can do it again.” They settled into silence as a patrol of guards passed by. A minute later Garrett reappeared coin pouch in hand. “Dinner for the birthday girl? Or maybe something more private?”

Ruby considered that for a moment, she wasn’t sure how she felt about eating anything from this time period. “What is your favourite thing to do?”

Garrett paused his smile fading as he considered the question. “Not doable for another four hours. There is an Inn I like though, were we can wait and Ozpin is… unhappy. His memories are changing and he wants to talk to you both about it.”

“Then I guess private safe place it is.” Qrow got up drawing Ruby with him. “Where to?”

Garrett smirked. “You’ll like it.”
Garrett was right, Qrow did like it. The inn was busy and full of people but as they ascended the stairs it grew finer and quieter. The room was nice as they came in that time period but the tall man led them out onto the rooftop. Then gave control back to Ozpin. They sat on the wooden tiles, Qrow on one side Ruby on the other both leaning on him.

“Are your memories already changing then?” Ruby asked.

“Yeah, it’s like there being traded out for different lifetimes. I feel less changed by them.” He looked down at his hands and clenched them. “I didn’t realize what I was losing. I used to have memories of childhoods, now those are gone. There is just waking up in that cave and crawling out of that pool. I almost suffocated twice on the fluid.” Then a smile pulled at his lips. “But I think it’s worth it. So many people get to have their lives now. Heh maybe there is even someone wearing a face like mine in the present day. Maybe he has friends, family… children.” Ozpin’s smile widened as he thought about it, maybe he would wake up alone, confused and cold forever. But other lives would be better, untouched by him. He still had the knowledge of those time periods, he only experienced it differently. “I think… I think this is for the better.”

It was the part about waking up cold and alone that stuck with Qrow. “Not anymore you have us.” He leaned up and kissed Oz on the cheek, Oz turned and stole Qrow’s lips in a kiss before he could retreat. “I almost wish that both of you could share in this immortality,” Ozpin shook his head. “But that is truly selfish of me.”

“What about being the King? How much of history has changed?” Ruby asked.

“Very little, part of why I gave up my eye. It acted as a template, even when I died in the past. I was reborn into this body. With all its memories, I would be a fool to change history, only ensure it plays out the same as possible from before.” Ozpin said and shrank in on himself, the new memories were not meshing well. It felt like centuries of loneliness all sprung on him at once, waiting for them. He looked over to Ruby viewing her in a new light, all the time he spent waiting for her. His actions towards her hadn’t changed, he knew better to change the past that included recent months. Nothing could have been changed without disastrous consequences. Only rather than just feeling guilty about his behaviour, he felt a deep set pain.

“You okay?” Ruby asked looking up at him.

“Nothing that time won’t heal.” Ozpin reached up and traced her cheek, then cupped her head and pulled her into his lap. He took a kiss long and slow that had Ruby melting against him. As he pulled away an idea occurred to him, in all the excitement with Garrett he had almost forgotten. “Ruby… have you ever heard of Aura Objects?”

“No.”

“It’s a piece of a soul, spit away but still tethered to the source. The source can always find the fragment, even sometime communicate through it. Qrow and I have been discussing making you one. It would let you know our states of health and so long as you have it on your person. We’d always be able to find you. I was a bit worried about this breach of your privacy but you are a Silver Eyed Warrior, a target and you had to admit it would be handy to have. I’m only hesitant now because of how your Aura acts around us. Though to be fair there haven’t been any other problems and I… would like to share that with you. With Salem and the mess with the Maidens, having some way to keep in contact with you would ease my mind a great deal.” Ozpin stroked her cheek with a thumb.
Ruby struggled to grasp most of what he said, mostly those last three points but she sensed that was
not what he wanted to talk about. “Well it’s really touching that you trust me enough to do that. And
I see what you mean by breach of privacy but I don’t see the big deal there. If I ever don’t want to be
found I’ll just leave it somewhere safe.”

Oz smiled at her easy understanding. “Well that was easy.” He kissed her forehead and turned to
Qrow. “Shall we?”

“Have you recovered the Aura for that?” Qrow questioned concerned for his lovers health.

Oz only grinned. “Enough for that.”

Qrow smirked and nodded, Ruby moved off of Ozpin’s lap and the two wove their fingers together
sitting side by side. Qrow closed his eyes while Ozpin called up their Aura’s, he was still tired but
even just this passive rest was doing him wonders. He had already decided it would be a rose, small
enough it would be woven into her hair. Their Aura’s flared into life, fire gathering in the palms of
their hands. It licked and flowed forming the petals of a the rose in emerald green and blood red. As
it solidified the patterns of fire remained, giving the illusion of the rose being on fire.

“There.” Ozpin said as Qrow opened his eyes and leaned on Oz looking out to the horizon. “Happy
Birthday. A little of Qrow and a little of myself for you to keep.”

Ruby hesitantly took the rose, it was skin temperature and soft like it as well. She kissed one of the
delicate petals, watching as the two men jump and smirked. “Thank you.” She tilted her head and
wove it into her hair. She leaned back on his hands and looked out at the city. The sun was just
starting to break the horizon. “Coolest birthday ever. I even got an adventure out of it.”

Qrow chuckled. “Yeah, not what we had planned but not bad at all. Thanks Garrett.”

Ozpin rolled his eyes. “Yeah, I’m sure he appreciates the gesture Qrow.” The sunlight started to
draw across the sky and he closed his eyes. His heart twisted painfully as new memories flashed
behind his eyes, the death Garrett’s intervention had caused. He could already see the fallout, a petite
hand on his arm startled him out of his melconly.

“Oz?” Ruby asked looking up at him, he looked tried. Something new pulled at his eyes, something
she did not like. “Can we make use of the room we rented or do we have to head back?”

“No rush, so long as we don’t lose the blanket we can get back to our time… without having to go
the long way around.” He shivered, he had new knowledge of going the long way around.

Ruby yawned and leaned on Oz more snuggling into his side. “As much as I’d love to explore I’m
tired, so can we go to bed or home?”

“We did pay for the room.” Qrow said and yawned himself. “Though who knows if it’s actually a
safe place to sleep.”

Ozpin got up pulling the two up. “Come on you two city slickers, I’ll check it over just to make you
happy.” They jumped back down into the room and Ozpin strode over to the bed pulling off the
borrowed cloak. The bed was king sized and of a decent quality, not high end by any means and the
sheets weren’t the best. Oz lifted up the corner of the bed looked it over and gave a sniff. “No bugs
at least.” He fixed the bed and had to smile at the other two. Qrow was still eyeing the bed with
distrust. “Been bit a few times too many Qrow?”

“Yeah, tends to happen when going to bed drunk.” Qrow started to undress, picking out a chair to
put his clothes on. Ruby followed suit dusting down the borrowed dress and then stripping out of her
Ozpin and Qrow stalled when she strutted through the room and pounced straight into the middle of the bed. Qrow looked over to Oz who was staring at Ruby, who was pulling back the covers and quickly slipping under them. Oz cocked his head at Qrow who lifted a brow and shrugged. At that little message Ozpin finished pulling of his clothes leaving his underwear and strode over to the bed.

A smile pulled at the copper eyed man’s lips. “Already all nested? In the dead centre?”

Ruby rolled over into her back the blanket pulling at her breasts. “It’s the best spot obviously.”

“Uh huh.” Ozpin pulled back the sheet and slide in beside her, the bed was short for him but he’d make do. “I can think of all sorts of things to do with you in that position.”

“Oz.” Qrow almost scolded the other man as he also got onto the bed on Ruby’s other side.

“She’s an adult now, I can make all the innuendos I want.” The tall man rolled into his side and admired the flush of Ruby’s skin.

Qrow reached over and pulled Ruby to him as she settled with a happy humm against his chest. “Go to sleep, I don’t want to know when we are going to get kicked out of this room.”

Ozpin contemplated for a moment then slid over, curling up partly tucking his face against Ruby’s neck and wrapping an arm and leg around both of them.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you too: Mysty_Sinclair, Dulce_Azurine, Jamie, Sportsfangirl815, QueenofSpades19, Nova_Belaqua for all your comments!
Ruby woke up to purring at her back, not loud but a low sleepy hum of soft breath. She peeked out from under her lashes to find her in much the same position as last night. Snuggled up to Qrow’s front; who was still out cold and Ozpin who still had his face tucked against her neck, an arm tight around them, the other had somehow turned into Ruby’s pillow. Then there was the purring, on every exhale he’d purr. It was one of the most adorable sounds Ruby had ever heard.

Tentatively she reached up and started petting through his hair, the purr became constant and he wiggled closer, snuggling even tighter to her back and in doing so pressed something hard against her lower back. Colour flooded Ruby’s cheeks. *Well hello there morning wood, how are you today?* She was sure if morning wood had a voice it would have said *Neglected, it’s all nice and warm here but I can think of warmer places to be.* Ruby bit her lip to keep from giggling at her train of thought. *Well I will just have to fix that.*

Starting very small, Ruby began grinding back against Oz, the clothed erection finding a home between her butt cheeks. She heard Oz grumble and stilled, his lips brushed her neck and after a minute the purring resumed. Then so did Ruby, this was already proving to be a fun game, she was curious as to how much she could wind him up before he woke. Ozpin stirred behind her his arm moving to slip between them and hold her tight, his leg also moved pinning her more securely in place.

Qrow woke at the movement and bit his lip to keep from laughing when he saw what Ruby was doing. He caught her gaze then looked over to Oz, still sleeping all cute like. He inched back giving Ruby a little more room and to be able to watch better, then when Oz settle again nodded to her. He watched as Ruby rotate her hips, even pinned as she was she could still do that. Ruby looked over at Qrow who held up his hand to stop, she did and listened, it took a full minute for Oz’s breath to deepen again.

Qrow reached over and started to pet Oz’s wrist, slowly so his arm loosened and Ruby turned very carefully to face him. Oz grumbled and rolled onto his back pulling her a top of him as he went. Qrow moved with them, stroking up and down Ozpin’s arm while Ruby pulled her legs free of his and straddled him. Oz made another grumble and tightened his arm around Ruby. The garnet eyed man gave up and moved carefully pulling Oz’s boxers down. He reached over to the head of the stone hard erection as Ruby reached up and started to pet over Oz’s chest. Thinking yesterday or was it a few hours ago? Well it had really worn him out if he still wasn’t waking up.

Ruby shifted up as best she could and started to feather kisses along Ozpin’s chest. At the same minute Qrow lathed his tongue over the dark red head of the eager erection. That promoted a groan and Oz finally let go of Ruby, who quickly moved grabbing a pillow and putting it in her place as she sneaked down to join Qrow. The avien man watched Oz like a hawk, till he settled again though the purring stopped.

“So, bj’s one-oh-one.” Qrow whispered. “Tongue is your best friend, no teeth at all ever. There are nerves here,” He pointed just below the head, then teased the spot for a second. “The head is the most sensitive and that spot but it’s best to use your hands for the rest. Given how small you are. You want a tight sensation but can twist slightly and change your grip if you like. Playing with his balls is good too, but if we can get his legs to part I’ll focus my attention on those. Play away, I want to see when he wakes up.”
“Then what?” Ruby asked, her sex was already leaking coating the lips of her sex.

“We see what he does.” Qrow said with a smirk and dipped down to start kissing around the base of Oz’s member.

Ruby contemplated for a moment then shifted running her tongue over the wide head, then carefully eased her way down stroking all the while. Ozpin’s eyes opened with a snap and he groaned grabbing his hair with both hands and looking down. Ruby started to suck softly as she maintained the actions of her tongue.

The silver eyed woman quickly decided this was fun, she liked the taste and though he was more then wide enough she was sure she wouldn’t be able to take him very deeply into her mouth Qrow was tending to the rest. She wiggled her hips as her core clenched, part of her really wished that Qrow would just move behind her and have at it. However she knew that was unlikely to happen.

Oz on the other hand was using all of his willpower not to grab her head and force her to take more. He parted his legs and Qrow moved between them, moving down and stroking over his balls before tilting his head and sucking lightly on one while Ruby took him in hand and started to stroke tightly in time with her bobbing. That did it, Oz groaned and lifted his hips pressing up to them while a hand went into Ruby’s hair, weaving it tight around his fingers. “Oh Gods~!”

Ruby purred at the praise and focused her attention pressing and rapidly stroking that spot just behind the head on the bottom. Oz let out what could only be described as a yelp and bucked, thankfully Qrow pinned his hips down with a hand. He shifted his attention to Oz’s other ball while stroke the one he had just been sucking on with his hand. Ruby dived down a little further stroking him rapidly with her hand, bringing it too her lips as she worked with her tongue. Her jaw was quickly starting to ache.

Ozpin shoved himself up right with an arm and groaned pressing gently on Ruby’s head as his chest heaved for breath. Ruby obeyed the suggestion and eased down a little more, sucking softly and teasing the groan Oz let out. The tall man bit his lip and tried to stave off the end but just watching them made it hard. Much less everything else they were doing. “Rub-.” His voice cut out when she sped her tongue and started to bob easing a little more down each time. Oz came with a groan only just remembering to move his hand so Ruby could retreat if she wished.

A salty taste hit her tongue as she dove back down and she swallowed in surprise. It took a second for Ruby to catch on to what was happening then she purred and took him as deep as she could, continuing to suck and swallow as he flooded her mouth.

“Fuck!” Oz grabbed her hair as she sucked on him, her eyes were lidded and the flush of her cheeks. Gods Oz couldn’t remember the last time he saw a woman like that. Qrow eased up drawing away to watch as he continued to fondle Oz’s balls with a hand. Ruby looked like she was in heaven, wiggling her hips and he saw drips of her juices fall onto the sheets.

Oz collapsed back into the bed with a flop as Ruby let up as he eventually stopped shooting. She sat on her calves and wiggled on the spot, rubbing her jaw even as the foremost thoughts in her mind was that she wanted to do that again and really wanted someone to touch her.

Qrow chuckled move to sit beside Oz while saying, “That was quick, you usually last a whole lot longer.”

Ozpin didn’t even have the gumption to scowl at the red eyed man as he tried to get air back into his lungs. Eventually he looked over and said. “We’ll do the same to you someday and see how long you last.”
“Umm, guys.” Ruby squirmed in place, she could feel her juices getting all over her thighs. “Could someone… you know… I mean that was really hot and I need.” Her cheeks turned bright red.

Ozpin licked his lips watching her then looked over to Qrow. The look of indecisiveness promoted Oz to ask. “May I?” He gestured to Ruby.

Qrow nodded moving away, he bit his lip and tried to not feel too guilty about this. Ozpin moved sitting up and reaching over to Ruby. She leaned up and met him half way in a kiss. It was long and deep, she mewed softly as Oz took ahold of her by her waist and led her onto her back in the middle of the bed. Oz started slow stroking up and down her thighs, kissing down her chest. Till she was writhing under him, when he got to her lingerie clad behind Oz couldn’t help but groan. “Gods I’m glad you picked these ones.”

Qrow agreed, the raven haired man had to agree as he watched Oz tease around her eager sex. Giving into temptation he pulled himself from his boxers and started to stroke as Ruby moaned and keened as Oz eased his way into it. She was just so gorgeous all flushed and aroused, he could see Oz tease her clitoris with his tongue and tightened his grip around the base of his member. The sounds she made, they rang in his ears and he stroked a little faster.

Part of him wondered why he was okay with this, sure he had kissed and touched her but always with Oz around. Maybe that was it, unlike Qrow the older man wasn’t afraid to act on his desires. Qrow was all for playing around with other women, older women. Maybe that was a reason he was still so wary around Ruby, she was still a bit young for his tastes. Still made him feel like the dirty old cradle robber. Clearly given how Oz extended his many lives he didn’t have the same reservations.

Ruby got louder, wrapping her legs around Oz’s shoulders and pressing up against him. Oz added a couple fingers to his attentions and she came with a beautiful arching of her body and a high cry. Despite the turmoil in his mind, Qrow finished into his hand and whipped his hand off on the sheets tucking himself back away before either of his partners could get any ideas.

Pounding on the door alerted them to their time in the room was up. Ozpin sighed deeply and said. “Homeward then.”

They returned to the Cradle, just as they had left it, even Qrow’s hat hadn’t moved. It seemed like the daylight had chased the spectors away as rather then returning to the cell Garrett had found the blanket. Ozpin took them deeper and up into the hospital wing. Most of the beds were nothing but steel frame and in one corner was a old wooden cradle. Ruby hugged closer to Oz as the sound of a baby crying echoed softly in her ears.

Ozpin smiled softly, Garrett’s knowledge was fresh overlapping his own. He walked over to the cradle, Ruby and Qrow grabbing his clothes without promoting as he pulled the blanket from his
pocket. The Silver Eyed woman peered into the cradle only to find it empty. She was sure the crying came from it though. Oz shook out the blanket then tucked it into the cradle as if there was a child, a finger lingering over the small pillow.

This time it was not jarring, only where there had once been daylight it was now night again. Ruby opened her mouth to speak but Oz put a finger on her lips. He bent picking her up and holding her tight to his chest. With a nod to Qrow he activated his Aura and the two raced out of the Cradle before a Puppet could stumble upon them.

It went unspoken that they would return to Beacon, it was night again and the parties were still in full swing. Only a new monster was found in the streets, it was an effigy of a tall man in grey robes. The songs called it the Ash Man, who had devoured the Emerald Forest on the Day of the Dead five centuries ago. Ruby noticed that Ozpin got very pale as they passed, not a word was spoken till they reached the teachers flats on campus.

Ozpin lingered outside of the elevator and said. “I’ll see you two tomorrow. I… need some time to myself.”

Ruby and Qrow shared a look then nodded, they had a talk they needed to have as well. Qrow stepped up to Oz and kissed him on the cheek. “I’ll have to leave tomorrow, I got a message from one of my contacts in Mistral yesterday.”

Ozpin reached up and cradled his head, taking a long deep kiss. “Don’t run off without saying goodbye this time.”

“Never again. Come on Ruby.” Qrow stepped away but rather then following Ruby launched herself at Oz wrapping her arms around his neck and giving him a kiss on the cheek. “Goodnight, see you tomorrow.”

“Goodnight.” Qrow stepped away but rather then following Ruby launched herself at Oz wrapping her arms around his neck and giving him a kiss on the cheek. “Goodnight, see you tomorrow.”

He entered his flat and dropped the keys into the dish by the door. At the sound of the jiggle his world spun and he staggered into the wall.

He worked in a light tight tunic and a blacksmiths apron. Bang, Bang, Bang, Ting, when the hammer as he worked upon the horseshoe. The rattled of coins into a bowl had him jerking up to look upon his visitor. The man wore all black, with black wavy hair, he walked over to the counter pulling a bundle from his back. He unfolded the aged cloth to reveal pieces of a sword. “Can you mend it Smith?”

Ozpin staggered into the room, trying to shove the new memory away. He wasn’t sure how but he found his way to the liquor cabinet. It had helped in the past to put the memories away. He wasn’t even sure what he grabbed, only that it burned his throat and did not help.

The tavern was loud, men, women of all types crammed into the space.

“Here you are Strider. Whole once again.”

“Thank you Smith. Have a drink with me?”

Ozpin looked upon the raven haired man, admiring those grey eyes. “Sure.”

The scene whipped around so fast that Ozpin barely understood what was going on.
“Strider! STRIDER!” Oz yelled into the blizzard, snow attacking his exposed skin. He could hear grunts and growls, Grimm. He raced forward coming upon his friend fighting a losing battle with the Grimm. Red already soaked the snow and Oz ran all the faster but he was already too late. A Beowolf drove its claws into Strider’s guts.

“How!” Ozpin screamed drawing it’s attention, leaning on his Aura he shot forward like a bullet and punched the Beowolf’s jaw so hard it was snapped clear off. The Grimm quickly became dust. “Strider!” Oz spun sliding through the snow to his friend.

Strider coughed up blood and wove his fingers tight around his sword. “Take care of her for me?”

Oz wrapped his hand around the dying man. “Always.”

Ozpin moved towards his couch taking another drink only for a new memory to sweep up upon him.

“We’ll miss you, Smith finding another blacksmith will be hard work and no one will ever be able to compare with you.”

Ozpin wrapped Strider’s sword in a grey cloth before tying it to his backpack. “I’ve already stayed to long Jason. Try Vale, you’ll probably find some Hammerite that wants a different line of work.”

“Thanks, I’ll look into it. Say why are you dressed so differently and what have you done to your hair?”

Oz had dressed in all black, even changed his hair to be black as well. “A friend asked me to do a job and I tend to do just that. Goodbye Jason.”

The bottle fell from his hands as Oz grabbed at his hair, he hit the ground with a thud.

“Who might you be?” An elderly man in grey asked.

Ozpin pulled Strider’s sword from the chest of a Beowolf. He looked over to the tall man, taller than even him leaning upon an oaken staff. “I am Strider.”

“Go away.” Ozpin whimpered curling up. The memories came in a great mish mash and his brain simply just shut down unable to compute the load.

Qrow and Ruby lay in bed together, snuggled with Ruby’s head upon his chest. Qrow idly stroked up and down her back, eventually she asked. “So what did you want to talk about?”

Qrow sighed. “You and Oz. You like playing around with him right?”

“Yeah.” Ruby said.

The tall man squirmed biting his lip. “I know I was angry with him before but with how much things of changed… if you don’t want to wait. I mean I can see it working out well… what I mean is if you want to have sex with him. I don’t mind.”

Ruby sat up bracing herself with a hand on his chest. “You sure? I mean it’s always been you and I
am okay with waiting till you’re more comfortable with it.”

Qrow reached up and stroked her cheek. “I know, but now you’re not just with me. You’re with us and Oz has different needs and wants then I do. I’m okay with it, I may even watch. I’m not saying that you have too, I’m just saying that if you want too. You have my support.”

“But… I haven’t done that before and I hoped to do it with you.” Ruby blushed softly.

“First times aren’t special Ruby, even if you really love the person. It’s more blubbery trying to figure out what each other likes. Ozpin was not mine, but he’s the person I’ve chosen. He’ll treat you well, I’m not worried. He’s not some hormonal teenager that would hurt you just because he’s over eager. You’re ours. That’s the important thing.”

Ruby laid back down and thought it over for a few minutes. “Thank you. I’m not just gonna jump into his bed but if it comes up and feels right. I’ll give him the okay.”

“Sounds good. Now sleep you, tomorrow’s gonna suck.”

An ashen haired man shivered violently as his eyes snapped open. Ozpin glanced around the booze toppled over in a small puddle not far away, the dawn light just starting to creep over the horizon. He shivered again and his mind twisted.

It was warm at first, he wasn’t sure where he was. But it was warm and soft, cradling him in a loving embrace. Then slowly at first there as a pressing on his chest, it got worse and worse till his eyes snapped open. They saw only darkness and he could feel a thick mucus covering them and he grooped out through the viscous fluid. His fingers skinned a smooth wall and he kicked out for it twisting. The pressure on his chest was getting more intense… his fingers found the edge of the pool.

The stone was cold but his grabbed it with both hands and kicked frantically out heaving himself from the pool with a wet flop. He could hear a wet splat sound around him and tried to open his eyes again but the mucus held them closed. He opened his mouth to breath but his throat was full of the fluid. His arms screamed against the movement and gave out, he slid back into the pool.

Oz felt his back hit the stone wall, but the thick fluid slowed him so much it did not hurt. He kicked off against the wall, reaching out for the side of the pit. Joy rushed through him as his fingers found the groves that clawing for purchase for so many ages had created. He kicked with all his might and pulled himself up.

This time he pulled himself half free of the pool, the smooth stone was cold and wet as against his stomach. He clawed at his face trying to clear the mucus away, his lungs burned and he started to retch. Thick wet fluid splattered onto the carved floor, his hands were useless covered in the mucus. He shoved two fingers down his throat clawing the fluid out of him.

Air! It felt good as strange as it was to move these new lungs. He gasped a few times then sneezed over and over till his nose was clear as well. Blindly he grooped out the rough carved stone scraping his soft skin. He pulled himself forward, his legs ached what energy they had now used. They were led behind him, the slick stone helped him till they were free from the pool.
Ozpin shivered, rubbing at his eyes he could feel the embryonic fluid clinging to his skin as if he was a newborn calf. He blinked but saw only darkness, the cold started to skin into him. That endless, deep, cold.

Ozpin staggered into the bathroom, his clothes ripping under his touch as he striped his hands groping the for the shower nob. He turned it start to hot and yelped when cold hit him first before it steady warmed. Oz shivered under the hot water and hugged himself, he took a step back then another. He gasped and spun as his back hit the cold tile wall, another memory pushed upon him and he sank to the floor curling up as the hot water struck his skin.

His steps were wet, his legs wobbled the muscles new and unknowing. A stone was turned and he fell, pain washing over him as he felt his skin split open. He reached out his hands finding the cobbled floor, he pushed himself up even as his palms bled, his legs shook but he got his knees under him and started to crawl. A violent shiver washed over him, it was so cold and dark. He remembered the way but it seemed so far…

The thinking part of him was sure he was starting to get hypothermia, he needed to find the sun. Find someplace warm. His fingers brushed ivy, he threw his weight forward, bursting through it and falling again.

Pain stabbed at his eyes and he squeezed them shut, why did everything have to hurt? He covered his eyes with a hand and grabbed at the stone with his other hand. The ground was rougher here, it hurt his newborn skin as he pulled himself out of the cave and curled up in the sun. Maybe he could just rest here a while.

Hands were on his shoulders, someone was shaking him lightly. He blinked a few times and looked up, Qrow was holding him half dressed and looking worried. The water was cold again, Oz shivered and reached for Qrow grabbing his shoulders and using the other man to help him stand. Qrow shut off the water and grabbed a towel, he started to frantically dry Ozpin. He was talking but the words weren’t reaching his brain.

The fluid crackled when he moved next, flakes fell from his skin. He was warm though the air was cooling, he ventured the tiniest opening of his eyes. The sun didn’t hurt so much anymore and he wasn’t so tired, he sat up and pain pulled at his palms. Oz looked upon them and saw the dirty scabbed cuts, his knees hurt too and he turned to look at them seeing more blood. His legs looked strange to him, he was too perfect. Not too much muscle, but not too little, it was as if someone had tried to craft the perfect human. This body had known no hardship till it demanded air. He was as hairless as a newborn, he could feel a little sticking to his head but that was all.

He turned to sit on his behind, and rotated his feet. The muscles moved flawlessly and he wiggled his toes. Very carefully Oz drew his legs up and got his feet planted on the ground. While his brain knew what to do, his body did NOT. He stood with a stagger, wobbled and promptly fell against the stone hiding the entrance to the temple. He grabbed at the ivy using it to help hold himself up, he tried fixing his feet again. Shifting his weight and grabbing the ground with his toes. Why was this so exhausting?
Ozpin wasn’t sure how long he leaned against the ivy, eventually he looked around and found the path. He took a step, a flat plating of his foot, and then another holding into the mountainside. His feet quickly started to hurt as there was nothing to protect his tender skin. He remembered there being a waterfall close by, or was it a stream… river? It had changed every time he needed it so the memories were all mashed together. He eventually came to a curve in the path and stepped away from the wall.

His legs buckled and he fell to his side, he couldn’t hold in the cry. The dirt hurt his cuts, everything was starting to hurt. Oz couldn’t help it, tears started to flow down his face till he was sniffing and coughing with them. Why was he alone? He couldn’t do this, he needed help.

Help never came.

Ozpin blinked as a little light was shone into one eye and then the other. There was talking, it was a murmur in his ears. He blinked and pulled away from the hand that was holding his chin, he looked out of his flat and found the sun was high in the sky. Where had the time gone?

“Oz, Oz!” Qrow grabbed Oz’s chin again and tapped him twice on the cheek. “You back with us lover?”

“Us?” Ozpin croaked, his throat was sore though he wasn’t sure way. He reached up and felt wet tracks under his eyes, oh that was why his throat was sore.

“Ruby go get some water.” Qrow said as she zipped back from the room.

Ozpin blinked a few more times focusing on Qrow. “What time is it? How long have you been here?”

“Almost eight and over an hour. You’ve been vacant that entire time and you were frozen through. How long were you in that shower?” Qrow checked over the blankets he had wrapped tight around Oz.

Ozpin frowned and then hesitantly said. “I… I don’t know.”

Ruby returned and pressed a glass of water into his hand, helping him hold it. Her fingers were warm, he took a careful sip.

Qrow back away and watched for a moment, he needed to get going his contact wasn’t going to wait forever. “Damn it, I’m going to call Glynda you can’t work like this Oz.”

Oz cough on the water said. “No, don’t. I can work, I just need a minute.”

“You’re spacing out Oz. What if it happens when James is around. You can’t just go vacant.” Qrow said reaching for his scroll.

Ozpin lurched into movement. “No don’t, I don’t want her to know. If she knows it will get back to James and from him to the council. I’ll be fine once I get my day going.”

Qrow zipped forward as Oz staggered to the side catching him. “Oz call it a sick day, you can’t work like this and I can’t stay and cover for you.”

“You’re leaving?” Ozpin reached up and cupped Qrow’s jaw by his ear. No, no, Qrow couldn’t go, he’d be alone if Qrow went. He’d have to sleep alone, he shivered at the thought. Cold, why was
he always cold.

“I’ve been gone from the field to long as it is. I’ve got to head back to Mistral.” Qrow said and shifted his hold on Oz as the taller man leaned down and kissed him. Qrow could feel Oz leaning on him, carefully he walked him back guiding Oz to sit back down on the end of his bed. “Easy, it will be okay.” The garnet eyed man felt Oz gather up his shirt into his fists. “Ruby is here, she’ll keep you company.”

“I’m so cold.” Oz nuzzled Qrow’s neck.

Ruby felt it, a cold feeling was creeping outward from her heart. She reached out to him raising a leg so she was half perched on the the bed. She wrapped her arms around his shoulders and pulled him away from Qrow, offering her chest for him to rest his head upon. He came willingly, nuzzled her chest with a hum before settling. Qrow pet through his hair.

The raven haired man looked over to Ruby who was stroking over Oz’s neck and shoulders, touching him everywhere she could. “I’ve got to go.” He said softly and leaned over to kiss Ruby.

Ruby closed her eyes and leaned up into it, his lips warm and soft, the kiss slow and chaste. “I’ll take care of him.” Qrow kissed her again and pulled away stroking over Oz’s head. The ashen haired man appeared to be almost sleeping as he leaned on her. Worry twisted in his guts, this was not at all like Oz. “Oz, I’m leaving. I’ll message you tonight okay?”

“You’re leaving?”

Oz stuffed his clothes into the bag. “I’ve got too.”

“Can I come with you Alex?”

Oz paused and looked down at the little boy, hazel eyes, freckles, black hair, about twelve years of age. “Not this time.” He walked over and knelt as the child started to tear up. “Hey, it’s okay. I’ll visit I promise.”

The child threw himself into his arms and Oz hugged him tight. “You’ve got a good life here, but this was never where I belonged. One day it will be your turn and you’ll understand.” Oz pulled away and grabbed the duffel bag. “Bye kiddo.”

Ozpin lurched back into awareness as Qrow kissed him once more. “Bye.” He said softly.

Qrow had to pull himself away from Oz, that tone just sounded so wrong. He grabbed his bag and almost ran from the room before his heart got the better of him. Ozpin watched him go with a slow blink. Ruby petted over his back. “Come on, let’s get you dressed.”

Chapter End Notes

Ardy: Thank you too: Jamie, Nova_Belaqua, Dulce_Azurine, XxShadowWolf13xX, QueenoffSpades19 (I must edit my comment to you. My plan was to get what you desired up in it's consummated form. However as I was writing it was just getting to long. So I decided to split it up, but I promise soon!) and Lilith.
It's always fun reading your comments and I am glad my little for-lay into history was so well received. As mentioned I planned this to be one huge whopping chapter, but this
only just starts on the content I have planned for this mini arch and it was getting long. So for Kry's sanity and my editing, I decided to split it up.
Falling

Chapter Notes

Ardy: This one is not for the squeamish you are warned.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

During the days that followed Qrow’s departure things started to change. The Vytal festival and it’s tournament grew ever closer and students began training more outside before the colder half of Autumn was to hit. Ruby spent as much time with Oz as possible, the older man seemed to be growing somewhat distant. She blamed it on the added stress of General Ironwood bringing his army to Vale and Qrow having to leave so suddenly. Most days after classes were over Ruby made her way to Ozpin’s flat and together they would have dinner and either watch a movie or read. She especially loved it when he read to her but the last few days he was doing even that less and less.

Ruby had finally come clean to Yang about the extent to her feelings and intentions towards Oz and surprisingly her sister was pretty okay with it. Yang had even promised to help Ruby by making sure they had excuses to why their leader wasn’t around for Weiss and Blake, which freed up some time for Ruby so she could spend the night with Oz. Ruby made sure to call Qrow every day when he was available during his travels back to Mistral.

After his chat with her the night before he left Ruby had expected Oz to want to be closer to her, maybe even take things to the next level but that didn’t seem to be the case. Most nights when she did stay with him they just lay together cuddling in bed or at most worked each other up with heavy petting and kisses. Oz never went any further then that and Ruby wasn’t sure if it was out of respect for Qrow’s absence or if he didn’t think it was right just yet. Either way when by the time a week had gone by and Ruby was still no closer to having sex with Ozpin she could safely say the frustration was getting to her and him.

Oz himself seemed different. While the strain of Ironwood and Vytal growing closer was easy to spot Ruby began to notice Oz seeming to struggle with something else. Sometimes he would be reading out loud to her and just stop mid sentence. His eyes and mind seemed to go blank like he was somewhere else, far away. The first time it happened had been when he was cooking, the fried fish he was making them burnt in the pan, his whole body almost freezing up for several minutes until Ruby had come in and turned the stove off. Oz’s hand had been a mess of burns that day from the pan and they had ordered in instead.

Then it happened again while he was reading, she almost hadn’t noticed until the lack of pages being flipped caught her attention. Oz had just stared ahead his head bent at an angle. Then the crying had started, Oz screaming in pain and almost trying to rip at his skin. For some reason Ruby had felt like something was crawling up her arm and launched herself at Oz, tackling him and holding him. Eventually it subsided and Ruby continued to hold him, petting his silvery hair long into the night.

As with the previous episode when he came out of it Oz refused to speak of what was going on inside the memories and nothing Ruby said or did changed his mind.

Something was wrong with Ozpin and without Qrow to ask and explain things to her, she was left feeling unless. It had to have something to do with the memories Garrett said had been changed. He was fine until they changed whatever happened in the past. Now Oz seemed to be struggling with
something out of his control and it was draining them both. She didn’t want to leave him to what was obviously some sort of suffering but Weiss and Blake were starting to ask questions, more the former then the latter. That and her school work was beginning to suffer for it. She just wished there was something she could do to keep Ozpin safe but unless he let her in she was forced to sit on the sidelines and wait until he completely ruined himself.

Ruby’s eyes snapped open and she sat up in her bed. Her chest ached, she rubbed at it and it didn’t seem like an physical ache. It was a feeling she was starting to get used too, which was a rather sad thing all things considered. She looked over to the rose Ozpin and Qrow had made for it, the green of it was burning softly. Ruby bit her lip but left it and sneaked out of her bed and got dressed.

Thankfully she managed to sneak out without alerting her team. The way to Ozpin’s flat was ingrained into her memory now, though she was still careful to not be seen by anyone. Rather than going through the main doors she turned herself into petals and slowly floated up on a self made breeze.

Ozpin was pounding into the pavement of his balcony. Both hands in a frantic uneven rhythm, she was horrified by the state he was in and materialized behind him looking over at the blood splatter on the windows and floor. She walked over and started to pet over his shoulders. “Oz, stop please. I know you’re hurting but this won’t help.”

“I can’t get them to go away.” Ozpin clenched his fists and leaned on them the pain spiking up his arms helped to ground him in the present.

“I know.” Ruby knelt beside him and stroked over his arms. “But this won’t help either, hurting yourself won’t help. Come on let’s get you cleaned up.”

Oz let out a long suffering sigh. “Alright.” He let Ruby hold his wrist and lead him to the bathroom. She turned the water on in the sink so Oz put his hands under it. Memories pushed forward of drunken brawls, of cleaning up alone afterwards. He was startled out of them when Ruby started to carefully wash his knuckles, making sure no dirt was stuck in the wounds.

“Are you going to heal those with Aura?” Ruby asked.

Ozpin healed them in response and looked her over, slacks and hoodie. Her go-to, ‘I’m not bothering to get dressed’ clothes. “How did you know to come?”

“Call it a hunch.” Ruby said looking him over, he was layered up to the nines. “Aren’t you hot?”

“Never hot anymore. Even when I should be nothing is ever hot enough.” Ozpin drew away and walked into his bedroom. “You should go, before someone misses you.”

Ruby frowned and followed him grabbing his hand and making him stop and look at her. “No. You’ve been struggling with the memories haven’t you? I don’t want to leave you alone with them, they’re hurting you and everyone is starting to notice.”

“You can’t help either, I don’t think anything can help. I’ve tried to distract myself but nothing works, nothing isn’t tainted by something I’ve done in the past.” Ozpin sat on the bed with a slump. “I’ve tried everything I can think of Ruby. This isn’t like Qrow, Muninn I tied his memories to a word. Once he tells me them he can shut them away again, forget them. But this…” Ozpin stared at
his hands. “This I can’t shut off, five centuries of memories all clambering to be heard.”

Ruby stepped up to him and put her hands in his. “I know it hurts, but you can’t let yourself fall apart either. Qrow helped didn’t he?”

“Qrow was something to focus and he left, his problems are ones I understand. Now I’m the problem and I don’t know what to do.” Ozpin closed his hands around hers, he loved how soft her skin was, how small she was. He swallowed thickly, his mind turning to basic needs things that not even the memories could interfere with.

The Silver Eyed Warrior bit her lip, then leaned forward and kissed his with the tiniest tentative brush. Ozpin closed his eyes as their lips hovered mere millimeters from each other. “Don’t start this Ruby please. You’ve no idea how much I want it, I’ve been waiting for Qrow to say something. It’s not my place to have you, not like that. Not when he has been so good to you and you to him.”

“Qrow told me it was okay before he left. That he was happy with letting me decide what to do, that you aren’t the same as him and you need different things.” Ruby kissed him again, feeling Oz relax into it.

“This shouldn’t be about what I need though. I don’t want this because I’m losing my grip on my sanity and need some grounding.” Ozpin kissed her this time, enjoying how her small lips felt against his own.

“Then let it be about us, what we want. I… I love you. You know that right? We had a rocky start but I’m a little glad it happened. I’m happy that we all found our footing with each other.” Ruby said softly.

Ozpin kissed her again, more forcefully this time, his hands coming up to cradle her head. Then something occurred to him and he pulled away. “Are you on any birth control?”

Ruby gave him her very best unimpressed look. “I’m seventeen, every Huntress gets it at sixteen.”

Ozpin chuckled. “Hey don’t shoot the messenger I was just asking.”

The petite woman reached for his shirt and pulled it up. “That’s cool, just less asking more sexing now please. I’ve been waiting for ages!”

“A week is hardly ‘ages’.” Ozpin discarded his shirt and reached for her, pulling hers off before stealing her lips in a kiss. His hands roamed down her sides in a long slow pet before he reached her slanks and pushed them to the floor. Ruby moaned into the kiss as he stroked over her smooth core. “ Someone likes to be trimmed.” Ozpin said voice full of mirth.

Ruby arched moaning as he rubbed her core in little circles with the flat of his fingers. “Saw Qrow’s porn collection once on his Scroll, he had a clear preference.”

“Someone who enjoys oral as much as he does would.” Ozpin said admiring how the moonlight illuminated her skin. The lushness to her curves that her hunting gear hid, he licked his lips and kissed along her neck. Mine now, I waited and waited for you. You don’t know it though, you don’t know just how long I’ve waited. To be reborn with memories of you for centuries before you were even born. Oh the agony. “On the bed, I want to explore you.” He withdrew standing and pulling his own pajamas off.

Ruby shivered at the sudden lack of his body heat and crawled onto the bed. The order in his voice made her core clench, how he watched her in the light of the full moon. Oh even more so. “Here?” She asked setting into the middle of the bed.
“Lower.” Ozpin said moving onto the bed. “I don’t want to worry about you hitting your head later.”

The petite woman moved herself down the huge bed, Oz prowled to her. There was no other word for it, the fear and pain that had been ruining his grace was gone. Now he was all power, fluid gorgeous masculine muscle. She was surprised when he dipped down and kissed the inside of her knee. “Should I…” He stole the words from her parting her legs with a casual gesture of his hand. “Ohhh.” Ruby purred softly as he kissed up her thigh.

Each kiss was slight but lingering, she could feel the teasing hint of wet from his tongue. His other hand moved up her other thigh in that same agonizingly slow pace. Ozpin enjoyed coaxing those little moans from her, as he reached the apex of her thighs he thought about teasing her more, kissing up her other thigh. However the little writhing moan made him take mercy on her. Gently he parted her thighs and kissed her red sex, enjoying how it spread for him eager and flushed.

Ruby mewed as he kissed her core, teasing little swipes of tongue. She could feel herself leaking already and looked down at him. Their eyes met for a moment before Ruby saw the slight curl of lip, then she cried out, arching her back and grabbing at the sheets. Her mind blanking as his nimble tongue worked her, she mewed out as he added a long finger then two stroking that sweet spot within in long firm actions. All the playing they had done up to this point over the past few weeks made her maiden head a non-issue, long since gone.

“Oz.” The silver eyed woman gasped and he kissed his way up her stomach. Ruby shivered pleasure coiling within her as he kissed between her hips. The look he had in his eyes as she did made her squirm, part of her instantly imaged him doing what with her heavy with his child. All to soon it was over and he moved kissing over the curve of her hip then over her torso to her breasts.

“Do you want to try anything in particular?” Oz asked leaning up to kiss her neck, deeper kisses then the ones he had been peppering along her body. Wet lingering, sometimes with the barest whisper of teeth. He tilted his head and nipped her earlobe catching it between her teeth.

Ruby bit her bottom lip at the feeling and said. “Can I explore you?”

Ozpin withdrew momentarily surprised but then nodded. “As you wish.”

They moved the bedding crinkling under them. Ozpin assumed her spot though he was higher and put a pillow under his head. The brisk autumn air made him shiver, Ruby saw it and pulled the heavy duvet partly over them, pressed up against his side. “Better?”

“Yes.” Ozpin wanted to draw it over them but he was going to let her explore first.

Ruby hummed trying to decide where to start. “Sometimes I forget just how big you are.”

Oz smirked. “I’m going to let that one go.” he then laughed when Ruby turned scarlet and shouted. “That is not what I meant!”

He reached down and casually started stroking his member. “Am I wrong?”

Ruby pressed her thighs together watching him grow completely erect at the lazy strokes. “Noo…” She nibbled her bottom lip again watching him touch himself. She pulled her gaze away from what awaited her and back to his eyes.

The copper eyed man watched her shift around conflicted and gestured for her come with a finger. “My neck, would be a good place to start. While I am not a vocal person, at least not to the extent Qrow is most things feel much the same they do as upon the female form.”
Ruby moved sliding partly onto him, he stopped stroking and rested his hand over her hip while resting the other on the small of her back. Ozpin felt her lick her lips before she pressed a kiss to the curve of his neck. It was leisurely, explore the texture of skin and the play of muscles underneath. Another kiss had a little more tongue along the most prominent collection of muscle strains tracing it down to his clavicle. Oz purred for her and felt her smile.

Ruby moved straddling but hovering above him, she reached out and traced along the same muscles with both hands. It stood out the most and Oz relaxed again purring to let her know of his approval. Her little hands moved down his torso, hairless till his groin. She massaged over his pectorals, moving over to his nipples. Like she had seen Qrow do, she teased them slightly with just her thumbs. She treasured the deep breath he took his hands move to her butt-cheeks massaging pulling them apart. A cool breeze ghost over her sex and Ruby moaned.

“As enjoyable as letting you play is, I am getting chilled. Soo if you are alright with it…” He maneuvered her to hover above him and took himself in hand holding his erection steady for her as he knew she would be taking this slow.

“Okay.” Ruby said as a mix of anticipation and fear coiled in her belly. With his help she pressed the head of his wide member to her core and promptly stopped. He had already prepped her but Oz couldn’t help but smile as her eyes widened.

Ozpin moved his hand and stroked up and down her spine. “Take it at your own pace, we have all night.” He grabbed the duvet and wrapped it around her lower back covering both of them from the fall air. “If it gets to be too much just lean forward a bit.”

Ruby nodded and adjusted her hands grabbing his chest again and pushed herself down on him letting out a little moan. It hurt but it was a dull sensation that just helped her remember to go slow. She waited a long moment before lifting herself and easing herself taking a little more. Ruby bit her lip again, taking deep breaths.

Oz watched her like a hawk, he moved his hands and grabbed her hips again. Guiding her down a little more, even in the reduced light he could see his member pushing into her. He couldn’t help the twitch that made him do and Ruby yelped. “Sorry. You just look so good.” He meant it, the soft moonlight upon her skin, the red flush and tint to it. How perky her nipples looked, but it was her eyes. Those dark silver pools lidded and low as she took him into her. He pushed a little more and she twisted her torso grabbing at her hair, those pearl lips parted as she did that little mewing moan.

Ruby saw Oz’s breathing deepen and pushed herself down, it got easier the deeper she took him. “Ohh!” She cried out stopping as he moved upon that first centre of pleasure. Her thigh trembled as she clenched tight. Oz groaned and sat up on a arm, “Easy we’ve barely started, just relax and let me in.” he whispered into her ear.

Instead she started to rock upon him, Oz growled into her ear and tightened his grip upon her hip. Ruby felt his fingers bite into her hip and mewed again arching her back and holding his shoulders. Ozpin pushed her down again rocking up into her, Ruby wailed but he knew it was not a cry of pain. “Work with me.” He uttered lowly, gods she was tight.

“I-I!” Ruby’s mind was blanking, how was there more? She already felt stretched and full, she felt him rock again and tensed up her thighs. “No, I can’t!”

“Yes you can.” Ozpin moved his arm wrapping it around her, his tone was smooth and soothing. “Just a bit more and you can lay on my chest.” He pet her side trying to calm her down.

Ruby whimpered and lowered herself slowly only managing a centimeter before stopping and
shaking her head. “I can’t.” She raised herself up and off of him, then snuggled against his chest his member between her butt cheeks.

Ozpin silently laid back down and stroked her back as she muttered against his chest. “Stupid size difference, should have tried to jump Qrow before he left. Or practiced with bigger dildos.” Oz chuckled and shook his head. “You’re such a goof.”

Ruby giggled against his chest, she still ached one from the stretch two for still wanting more. She wiggled and asked. “Do you know a better way to try?”

“I do.” Ozpin said but did not move.

“Can we do it?” Ruby asked at his stillness.

“It’s not the most intimate position. Not really what I to give you for your first time.” Ozpin said looking down as she sat up.

“Well we can always change again after I get used to… it.” Ruby blushed again.

Oz worried his lip, she was just so small against him. “Alright, but just say Red if it ever gets to be too much.”

Ruby nodded and got off of him as he rolled she was surprised when he got off the bed and walked to his wardrobe. He opened the bottom draw and pulled out a big pillow, as he walked back Ruby’s couldn’t help but get distracted with her gaze decidedly low.

Ozpin caught her staring and smirked. “Like what you see?”

“It would be better if it was a bit more manageable.” Ruby said, the bed dipped as he got on and put the pillow in the middle. Ozpin laughed deeply at her statement. “First time I’ve heard that one.” He grabbed her by the waist pulling her against him and stole a kiss, sliding his tongue forward as she gasped and sliding it over hers. Ruby moaned as he forced her tongue to dance with is, all to fast he pulled away. “Now my dear, turn around and bend over.”

The dark utterance of the words made Ruby shiver as she did, she could feel the heat from him. She shifted so the pillow was supporting her hips and spread her legs. Oz grabbed them and tilted them upwards, he could see her stretched sex and groaned softly. He took himself in hand and lined up pushing slowly into her. He grabbed her hips his eyes closing, gods she was just so tight, her wet walls were almost too tight but her own juices made it easier. Ruby grabbed at the bedding and whimpered, it felt like too much she wiggled her hips away but Oz’s grip tightened and he pulled her back.

Ruby’s eyes flew wide and she panted. “Stop moving.” Ozpin growled behind her, her core clenched tight around him and Oz grit his teeth. “Relax or this is only going to get harder.” He moved over her pressing his chest to her back and pushed forward. Ruby writhed and panted, he moved slowly and constantly, she gathered up the bedding and bit down on it trying to keep quiet. He felt her walls spasm and stopped feeling the end of her and hearing the little yelp she tried to muffle. He wasn’t seated within her yet but he needed to give her more time.

The Silver eyed warrior wiggled only for Oz to pin her in place with an arm. “Don’t. I don’t want to hurt you and if I slip I very easy could.” Ruby froze as he flexed his hips to make is point bushing that deeper center of pleasure that made her core gush around him. She didn’t move an inch as Oz slowly started to rock, it felt good to her but Oz’s silence made her look over her shoulder. “Are you okay?”
“You are very tight.” He said through a clenched jaw. “Very near painfully so.” He moved slowly he could feel her walls protest against the action but he kept it slow. Making her body give into him, more and more, the slide grew smoother and Ruby whimpered into the sheets and Oz started to moan softly he let her hip go and lifted his weight off of her. Ruby shivered at the loss and pushed herself up on her arms, she shifted her legs further apart. He felt so good but she wanted his body pressed back against hers.

The petite woman tilted her hips up slightly and rocked back on him at the third rock. They both moaned as he bottomed out within her, heavy and hard filling her to the brim. “Oz!” Ruby cried out at the top of her lungs, Oz had to dip down and bite her shoulder to keep from shouting her name. After taking a moment to regain control of himself he said. “Shh, these walls are insulated but Bart is still in the flat below us.”

Ruby clenched tightly around him as her body struggled to adjust. “Can you come back down? It’s cold.”

“If I do that you’ll tighten again.” Ozpin cautioned against it.

“Please.” Ruby reached out back to him, Ozpin sighed and moved back over, wrapping an arm around her. Ruby felt what he meant as she drew her legs together again. Oz bit her shoulder groaning, grabbing the duvet with his other hand and pulling it over them. “Please stay still this time and don’t forget Red if you want me to stop.”

Ruby nodded and bit the sheets as he started to move, she whimpered as pleasure and pain mixed together. She loved the feel of his body against hers though, his skin was hot and the planes of his body were all hard and she could feel the strength in them. She could feel him restrain himself though, an evil little thought appeared in her mind. “I thought you were trying to break me in? Your not going to do much being so careful.”

Ozpingtoned. “It doesn’t work like that and you know it.” He let a little his strength loose in a sharp thrust just to hear her gasp.

“Got a response though didn’t I?” Ruby preened only for Oz to drive every thought from her mind. He pounded into her, short deep strokes that had her wailing into the bedding. “If it’s a response you want little vixen…” He reared back, pulling her up with him and yanking her down impaling her on his member.

Ruby screamed but he clamped a hand over her mouth. “Quiet remember?” He said with a smug smile and push his thumb into her mouth. “Bite if you want me to stop.” Ruby nodding and in the next instant he was rearing into her bouncing her in his lap. The pleasure crashed over her and she came with a high keening moan, her sopping walls clenching up like a vice around Oz.

He grit his teeth and threw his head back, he refused to come so quickly and he had only started with her. Oz squeezed his eyes shut and he continued to drive up into her his other hand coming around to hold her by the middle of her hips, his thumb finding her clit. Ruby threw her head back against his shoulders, screaming and crying her pleasure out muffled by his hand. As he forced her to ride wave after wave of pleasure.

Ruby clenched tightly around him over and over, it was pushing Oz’s control. He pulled her down on him once more and lowered her back to the bed withdrawing from her. Ozpin tossed the pillow to the floor and grabbed her by a leg rolling her onto her back. Ruby looked up to him blissful and confused.

Oz leaned down and kissed her again, parting his lips and she remembered purring happily and
following his lead. She parted her lips and legs, Oz was within her again in one powerful thrust that had her moaning into the kiss. Ozpin moaned as her body gave into him and moved into quick driving thrusts that had Ruby writhing under him. He pulled away to watch the euphoria upon her face, Ruby looked up at him those dark copper eyes and wrapped her legs around his back and wove her fingers into his hair pulling back into a kiss.

Their lips barely separated but to breath, Ruby could feel him draw close. The groans became barely audible grunts as he pushed himself into her over and over. He slid his arms under her and held tight, Ruby felt the throb of him start inside of her kissed him for all her worth. Oz moaned into the kiss letting out more of his strength into his actions as she screamed into the embrace climaxing again clenching tight around him. He followed and she could feel the repeating throb as he shot his seed deep into her.

Oz drew out of the kiss and let his head fall against the bedding by hers panting to regain his breath. Sweat was cold on his skin and he half-heartedly grabbed the duvet and tossed it over them. Ruby was too blissful to even think about being cold for several long minutes. Till Oz moved with a groan propping himself up on an arm. “Do you need me to move?”

Ruby opened her mouth to say no, but her legs chose that moment to complain about the exercise they had been given. “Yes please, I’m getting sore.”

Very slowly Oz withdrew and Ruby sucked in a breath. Now that they were done her body was protesting very loudly. “Oww.” She drew her legs together and curled up onto her side.

Ozpin leaned over and kissed her temple. “Give me one moment.” He departed to the bathroom and Ruby snuggled into the bed. He really did have a very nice bed. Oz returned and parted her legs as little as he could before pressing a warm cloth to her sex.

“Huh?” Ruby asked as he gathered her into his arms, making her sit up.

“You’ll thank me later.” Oz held the cloth in place. “Wet spots suck and the heat will dull the pain.”

“Ohh.” The silver eyed warrior snuggled against his chest. “Thank you.”

Oz kissed her temple and they sat in content silence for a few minutes before Oz discarded the cloth. They moved up into the bed, Oz pulling the duvet over them as the settled. Ruby rested her head on his chest and traced a pattern over his pectoral. “You didn’t have any memories intruding did you?”

“They did not.” Oz wrapped an arm around her. “From the new memories it seems I went rather celibate till this lifetime. So there isn’t anything new to taint it.”

Ruby giggled. “I can’t image you celibate.”

“Not wanting to accidentally sire someone that wouldn’t have otherwise been alive was a strong motivator.” Ozpin lifted a leg and trapped hers under it.

“So you did the guys instead.” Ruby said cheekily.

Ozpin chuckled. “Well… you’re not wrong.”

Ruby sniggered. “Cause what’s a nice friendly orgy between friends!”

“Don’t go saying that around James, you’ll give him ideas.” Oz said smiling at the newer much nicer memories.
Ruby sat up and stared down at him jaw dropped. “You’re kidding!”

“Nope~!”

“You and the General?” Ruby said in awe.

“Someone had to teach him, we both enjoyed Qrow as well as few of the more umm… adult clubs. For all he appears to have a stick up his rear, James did spend his last two years of training at Beacon. He’s more Valiate then he appears.” Ozpin pulled her back down against his chest. “Now sleep you, we both have to be up in the morning.”

Ruby yawned and wiggled she was totally on board with that idea. “Okay, goodnight… love you.” She fell asleep a moment later the murmur of the endearment repeated resonating in her soul.

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Ozpin sat in his chair facing the window sipping his hot chocolate as Glynda and James came in. Both were surprised by his appearance. While he still wore most of his normal attire his coat had been traded out for a heavy black woolen trench coat and black leather gloves covered his hands. It was getting nippy out but it wasn’t that cold yet.

“How are you?” Glynda asked.

“Fine.” Ozpin said turning his chair around to face them.

Both James and Glynda didn’t believe that for a minute. “You’ve been distant Ozpin.” Glynda said.

“Barely aware is more like it.” James crossed his arms.

Oz stood and put his cup down. “I am fine. Now there was a reason for this meeting I suggest we get started.” He turned away and walked over to the glass looking out over the city, James and Glynda were talking to him but reality kept slipping through his fingers. A memory pushed forward.

*Flames burst up from the city wave after wave, burning through the city. Burning away the old quarters, changing the face of the city…*

“With the Vytal festival coming we should start fortifying the city. Grimm numbers ARE going to rise, they always do.”

*The ring felt like iron around his finger, it wasn’t his. He’d assumed Striders life, his sword and turned out his throne, but he needed to be King of Vale. Funny how that worked out…*

“But your airships aren’t the way James, everyone will be wondering why they are here!”

Ozpin pulled his coat closed tightly around him, cold he was always cold now. At first he had tried not to change but the memories were not dwindling, if anything it was getting worse. More jumbled and out of focus. “Glynda is right James.”

*He raced through the forest, this was all his fault if only he had been more careful!*

*“Immortal man! Oh immortal man I will have your secrets!”*

*Fear spurred him faster, he was outnumbered and he didn’t want to kill any of them. He should*
have waited longer before coming back, disguised himself better.

“Ozpin, Ozpin!” James called out.

“Hmm yes?” Oz asked shaking his head trying to clear the memory, but he could still feel the sting of winter wind upon his skin.

“Are you alright? You’ve been distant since Halloween.” James asked.

“I’m fin-”

The chains were heavy around his wrists and ankles. No matter how he pulled he couldn’t get free the table under him was metal and cold.

“Tell me immortal man, God of the Wilds. How did you become so? For I do not believe you are a god… Tell me are you familiar with the works of Shan Yu?” The face of a old man, his teeth rotting and a horrible stench for breath came into Oz’s vision. “I will meet the real you Mister Immortal man.”

The vision twisted and Oz yanked against the chains over and over, his heart pounding. The hand holding the knife was old but he didn’t think it was the first man. It cut into his stomach drawing a line straight down the middle of his abs. Blood poured out over his skin and he screamed.

Ozpin barely saw his friends move, he toppled sideways.

Cutting.

Bleeding.

Pain… oh so much pain.

Questions… they feel on deaf ears.

Cutting.

Cutting.

Cutting…

Glynda saw Oz’s eyes roll into the back of his skull and only just managed to catch him before his head hit the floor.

Ruby ate her lunch with speed and determination. Her body still ached from her union with Oz last night and she wanted to finish her food before any of her friends caught on. Sadly it was not to be as Yang sat down beside her.

“You’re acting tender oh sister of mine.” Yang whispered. “Finally get some love’n last night?”

Ruby blushed and nodded.

“How was that?” Yang kept her voice low even as excitement crept into it.
“Really good, but… hard to handle.” Ruby said.

“Size difference?”

Ruby nodded and Yang giggled. “Wow, part of me really wants to image that.”

“I couldn’t even take him at first, we had to work up to it but when I could…” Ruby sighed happily.

“Details!” Yang shouted but then clapped a hand over her mouth.

“Nope.” Ruby said.

Yang pouted for a minute then lit up. “Oh Dad’s finished his mission so he’s coming by tomorrow to pick Zwei up.”

“Awesome!” Ruby said, she really missed her dad.

Team CFVY walked by talking and Ruby and Yang overheard the conversation. Velvet said. “I heard that Ozpin passed out and was being rushed to the hospital. Do you think that it was a stroke?”

“Unlikely he’s too young for those.” Coco said.

Ruby felt a sharp pain of panic and was gone in a blast of rose petals, Yang saw her direction and began racing after her. Pain and fear radiated through Ruby’s heart, but as she slowed to round the corner to the medical wing Yang managed to grab and pulled her to a stop. “Just what’s the plan here?”

Ruby paused, it was just instinct that was calling to her. Telling her to get to Ozpin now! “I don’t know…”

Yang sighed and peeked around the corner, the medical wing was largely empty though which bed Ozpin was in was obvious as it was the only one with privacy curtains drawn around it. Taking Ruby’s hand they crept into the room, quickly they heard the doctor speaking.

“I just don’t understand, every test I’ve run says he’s in perfect health… impossibly perfect health. A man of his age should have some problems but that body seems at least two decades younger then it should be. I can’t find one thing wrong, he’s… Perfect.” The Doctor sounded exasperated and a little bit in awe.

“What about his Aura?” James asked.

“Ah now there is something interesting going on there. When you brought him in his Aura was steady, however now it’s obviously fluctuating. See.”

Ruby and Yang couldn’t see but they heard James’ humm. “I’ve never seen Aura act like that before.”

“It is very interesting, it’s like something is constantly draining it, only he’s not using it and whatever is draining it is also restoring it. A cycle. Had I not been looking for it, it would have been impossible to notice.”

Ruby rubbed at her chest, she had a feeling she knew what was going on there. “I need to get in there.”

“Ruby..” Yang whispered.
“Surely you can do something for his… state.” Glynda said, Ozpin was writhing on the bed, thrashing his mouth parted in a silent scream.

“I’ve tried sedating him, but his system rejects it. Whether that is his Aura or something else I don’t know.”

“He’s in pain though!” Glynda said.

“It’s not a pain of the body.”

That was it, Ruby moved before Yang could stop her. The ache in her chest was growing worse and worse, she shoved the curtain open and used her Semblance to burst to Ozpin’s side. She ripped the restraints off faster then the others could move.

“Miss Rose!” Glynda yelled raising her riding crop.

Yang burst through the curtains and grabbed her arm. “No wait!”

Ruby wasn’t paying them any attention, she sat beside Oz as he grabbed the sheets so tightly his knuckles turned white. She reached out to him, cupping his cheeks and bowing over his body. She followed that call, that ache in her chest, her Aura flaring up on her skin as she pushed in into him.

“You still have nothing to say to me? Aura will only heal you for so long immortal man, let it go let me see just who you are.”

Ozpin screamed as the knife cut away another small section of his intestines. This was probably his most agonizing death yet, being vivisected. He looked down mostly by accident as he thrashed and could see his own insides.

Ruby ripped herself away from him and thankfully spotted the bucket. She lunged for it and threw up her breakfast and lunch and kept heaving till there was nothing felt. “Oh Gods…” She couldn’t get the memory out of her head, no wonder he looked like he was in agony.

“What was that?” James asked moving forward and rubbing her shoulders. He wanted answers but it was clear that Ruby was doing something he knew nothing about.

“Water please.” Ruby said shaking her head but forcing her eyes open. She knew if she closed them she’d see it again.

A cup was pushed into her hands and she downed it on one go before giving it back to James and pushing herself to her feet. She walked back to Oz who had started to pant, sweat clinging to his skin. She reached out and undid the buttons of his vest and pushed his shirt up out of they way.

“What are you doing?!” Glynda shouted, how dare a student be so familiar with Ozpin.

“Last time this happened Qrow knocked him out. Cognitive reset, was how he put it, but this is different.” Ruby sat down again and put a hand on Oz’s stomach, right over his belly button and started to stroke in soothing circles. She leaned down and slid an arm under his neck and rested her cheek against his and closed her eyes, reaching out again with her Aura.

“I would give you a break but then you’d just heal yourself… I’ve been researching you, that face of yours has been in books going back the last three hundred years. I’m a little surprised no one noticed before now.” The old man’s hand reached into his guts.

Ozpin screamed again as he rummaged around, he twisted trying to get away. The pain made all his
“Tell me how you do it, this eternal youth. I MUST have it. Is it your Aura? Your Semblance, or are you really a God?” The old man licked his bloody fingers.

Ruby was torn, she was seeing through Oz’s eyes. She felt the pain… oh gods the pain. Last time Ozpin had been present enough to force her out of his mind. Now she couldn’t even feel his awareness, it was all the memory. She tried pushing more of her Aura through him, trying to find the soul under the memory. If this was his mind struggling to adapt to new memories maybe what was happening was separated from his soul and if she could shield it…

“Maybe a rest is in order, you can hardly answer my questions if your throat is raw.” The man and the other figure departed, white light filled the room for an instant before shutting and leaving Oz in darkness.

He took several breaths as deep as he dared and called on his Aura. He clenched his teeth to keep from screaming as his flesh crawled back together. When that was done he focused on the chains, only they didn’t budge he half wondered if magic was woven into them.

“You can let us help you know.” Garrett appeared, another manifestation of his mind. “I have even less control over what they do then you do. We are both but their Keepers and the first rule of that title was learning to control them, lest they control us. Too bad the others didn’t understand just how little control they had.”

“How?” Ozpin asked, desperate enough to listen to his bane.

“You know how.” Garrett surveyed the room. “I’ve definitely been in more inspired torture chambers, though I image he will call what he doing to you ‘science’.”

Ozpin closed his eyes and Ruby swore that his mouth had suddenly become filled with maggots writhing on her tongue. She saw a scar, a brand really that she knew from the Day of the Dead. The simple key glyph upon the back of his left hand burned into light. He pulled on the chain grabbing it, under his fingers it turned to dust. He did the same to the other chains and rolled of the metal table stumbling to his feet. Upon seeing the ground he almost threw up, the sick bastard had a catch basin for his blood.

The door slammed open and white light filled the room. “Magic! You are magic!” The glee in the old man’s voice was sickening.

Ozpin backed away and reached for the glyphs again only for the glyph to become a plain brand again. “No please, let me go you don’t understand.”

“Seize him! I want that hand!”

The memories blurred in the frenzy of combat but Oz only remembered that he lost. Ruby watched as a cleaver was raised as Oz screamed and struggled. “Please don’t! You won’t get anything from this!” The cleaver fell and Oz screamed kicking out, the next instant something hot was applied to the stump and he wailed before passing out.

“I can’t have you bleeding out on me.”

Ruby tried to pull away as the process started again, only the fight was gone from Ozpin. He didn’t scream anymore, just watched his blood drip away and tried not to think about what they were going to do with his hand. Darkness pushed in on him as the old man started to do the cutting himself.
"You stupid pathetic man." Ozpin hissed. "You’ve wasted so much time hunting me and you will get nothing." Oz could feel himself dying as he looked over at his stump as his body started to dissolve into gold dust. Most of his deaths had been quicker, so he hadn’t seen himself die before, it reminded him of how a Grimm died. This time he welcomed that oblivion, he’d take anything to be away from here.

Ruby felt the darkness press in on them and for a long time there was nothing. Then new feelings, warm and soft, safe… Then she needed to breathe, they kicked out and hauled themselves from the pool.

Then she felt it, that cold that eternal cold. Ozpin coughed and sneezed trying to clear his lungs. Eventually he fell exhausted, still alone and cold upon the cave floor.

"NO!" Ruby shouted pushing her Aura forth saturating Oz. "You are not alone anymore!" She couldn’t just watch she had to do something. Ozpin had always been able to grab her Aura, hold it in his mind. She reached into him past the memory followed the call in her chest, wrapped her hands around… something and pulled.

Ruby’s eyes snapped open as she crashed back into her own body. She looked up quickly, Ozpin finally looked relaxed the Doctor was fussing and worrying, the machine that measured Ozpin’s Aura had gone completely dead. However the one monitoring his brain was just as active as ever, stating that he was still dreaming.

The young woman sat up and pressed a hand to her chest, she left heavy. Yang raced over. "Ruby are you okay… wow your eyes."

“What?” Ruby asked looked down to her hands, her whole body was tingling.

“Their gold.” Yang said as Ruby looked back to Ozpin.

He was sleeping again, peacefully. Yet the monitor for his Aura said it was dead, something had happened, but what had she done? Ruby stood up and wobbled. “I need to go lie down.”

“Why doesn’t he wake up?” Glynda asked baring Ruby’s way.

“He was reliving new memories… bad ones. I just... I don’t know. Made them go away, shielded his soul. I think his body is still dreaming them, so they are still being processed. I just took his consciousness and protected it. I don’t know when he’ll wake up.” Ruby said pushing gently past Glynda. “I’m really tired, I’m just gonna lie down on a bed here.” Ruby flopped onto the bed next to Oz and was asleep in the next second.

The doctor came over hold up an instrument. “May I take a measure of her Aura?”

“Please do.” James said looking between Oz and Ruby.

The doctor waved a scanner over Ruby, it promptly shorted out and almost exploded in his hand. “My word!” He exclaimed.

Yang took that as her cue to get her sister out of there before the Doctor had any other bright ideas. “I don’t think you should be poking at my sister and without her consent is illegal soo…” She gathered up Ruby into her arms. “We’ll be going now.”

“Now wait just one minute!” Glynda said but Yang blasted off bolting for their dorm.

James held out a hand stopping Glynda. “We’ll just ask Ozpin when he awakes.”
Ruby woke at around dusk, her team gathered in her room. She sat up with a groan, she still felt heavy. She jumped down from the bed and walked over to the bathroom.

Yang zipped over, “Hey are you okay?” she sucked in a breath as Ruby looked up to her eyes still gold.

“Feeling heavy and groggy. I’m gonna shower.” Ruby smiled trying to reassure her sister before pulling away. She closed the door behind her and leaned on the sink looking into the mirror. Gold eyes stared back at her, not Ozpin’s copper but a lighter more multi faceted gold. “Whisky Tango Foxtrot…” She blinked but the gold did not go away. “That’s so weird.”

She pulled away from the sink and stripped, she turned the water to hot and stepped under it. She washed the sweat off her skin, the memory of what Oz had lived through… died because of lingered behind her eyes. Her chest ached and she rubbed at it for a moment before stroking over her belly. Whole, perfect, toned, flawless skin, she had never been cut. The ache in her chest faded and she had the strangest feeling of being snuggled. Or maybe it was snuggling someone.

The Silver Eyed Warrior hugged her chest and started to humm softly.

:So the world goes round and round,
With all you ever knew.
They say the sky high above,
Is Caribbean blue.

If every man says all he can,
If every man is true.
Do I believe the sky above,
Is Caribbean blue.

Boreas
Zephyrus

If all you told was turned to gold,
If all you dreamed was new.
Imagine sky high above,
Ruby purred the little song made her feel better, her chest felt lighter as well. She finished washing and dried off, she figured she should go check on Oz. Yang looked up as Ruby got dressed in slacks and sneakers. As Ruby pulled on a baggy hoodie Yang asked. “You going out?”

“I’m just gonna check on Oz, I got a feeling he needs checking on.” Ruby said.

“Shouldn’t you be leaving that to Glynda?” Weiss asked, she knew that Ruby had been spending more time with Ozpin but wasn’t sure what it all meant.

“I think I know him better now, call it a hunch Weiss.” Ruby bounced over to the door.

“Okay just don’t get caught.” Yang called out after as her sister shut the door after her.

“Is it just me or does she spend way too much time with Ozpin?” Weiss asked frowning.

“Just leave it Weiss, Ruby’s a special case.” Yang picked up her comic and returned to reading.

Ruby peeked into hospital wing and was happy to find it empty, she walked over to Ozpin’s little closed off bed. He looked better then she had left him, the doctors had undressed him and put him in a simple hospital gown. It was the machine monitoring his brain that made him seem better, it was nowhere near as active. Meaning he was getting real sleep.

The petite woman sneaked over and kicked off her shoes before crawling onto him. She rested her head on his chest and listened to his heart beat. Her own heart felt warm, her entire being humming happy. She was a little surprised when he didn’t hold her, she leaned up and kissed him slowly.

The heaviness in her chest departed with a quiet flare of Aura. Ozpin groaned he had been warm and happy, not dreaming or thinking just being. His arms came up around Ruby and held her gently as he deepened the kiss. Ruby mewed softly into the kiss as his hands pet her sides. She drew away and asked. “Feeling better now?”

Oz slid his hands under the hoodie. “Cold and tired.”

“I get the feeling you feel like that a lot lately.” Ruby said softly stretching out over him.

“Always.” He drew her up so he could nuzzle her chest. That warm feeling he had been wrapped up in was gone and he wanted it back.

Ruby giggled and stroked over his hair. “How are you feeling mentally?”

“Better, my mind seems whole right now, not scattered to the four winds.” Oz mumbled to her chest.

“Do you want to stay here? Or shall we sneak off back to your flat?” Ruby tried to pull away but Oz tightened his grip around her.

“Flat I suppose.” He snuggled his face between her breasts.
“Then let me go and I’ll find your clothes.” Ruby said and smiled at the little whine that Oz made but his arms relaxed and she slid off of him.

Ozpin watched as she sneaked out of his little area and sat up looking down at the hospital gown. A memory pushed forward and he shut his eyes. “Go away!” He hissed.

Ruby returned having found his clothes and hurriedly put them on the bed. She grabbed his hands and kissed him firmly, the silver eyed woman felt him startle. Then he grabbed her deepening the kiss, tongues sliding over each other providing a sensation separate from the memory. Ruby pulled away her lips slightly swollen. “Come on let’s get you dressed.”

Together they managed to Ozpin dressed again and together they escaped the hospital wing. Dodging students and staff till they got back to his flat. As soon as Oz shut the door behind him he swooped down and picked Ruby up taking another long kiss. Ruby wrapped her legs around his waist and let him carry her off to the bedroom.

Their clothes were discarded in swift deliberate moves, but it was Ruby that parted them with a hand on Oz’s chest. “You need to eat, it’s been hours at least.”

Oz shook his head. “I don’t want to and I’m not hungry.” He pushed Ruby into the middle of the bed and rested his head upon her chest. “Sleep first, I’ll eat when I get hungry.”

Ruby stroked through his ashen locks. “Fine, but that will still be before I leave.”

“Fine~.” Ozpin said exasperated and kissed her breast. She just oozed warmth, he turned them onto their sides and curled up tight around her.

Ruby felt that ache in her chest again and reached out through it as she petted his hair. Calling it’s source into her, Ozpin purred softly swiftly falling asleep as that warm feeling surrounded him again.

Chapter End Notes

AN:
Ardy: *dies*
Kry: *pants head* There, there it wasn’t that bad.
Ardy: It was like six hours for that ONE scene, not counting editing.
Kry: And you did so well with it. It’s a really good scene. :D
Ardy: Still bloody murder though. Though I can’t decide whether it was fun or not channeling my inner Emperor Cartagia… With that in mind, I’m gonna be nice and drop my hint again. “Lyta had a little Vorlon, her skin as pale as snow. And wherever Lyta went, her Vorlon was sure to go.”
Kry: That does sound familiar, hmmm give me some time to think about it.
Ardy: You haven’t watched it. :P That said, thank you: Sportsfangirl815, darkvampirekisses, lillithschild, Celestialfae, Wolf_of_the_BlackRose

Song https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jl8iYa90pE Enya Caribbean Blue
“Like this?”

“You tell me.” Oz stroked over her behind.

“I… ohhh.” The dawning light was just filling the room, the curtains had been pulled back.

Ruby leaned forward a little bit more and tested the angle. “Ohh.” She moaned again, she was riding Oz in reverse while he petted over her behind enjoying the view. The petite woman eased herself down on him again, his thick member pushing firmly over several of her most erotic zones. She moaned again and started to bounce, her strong thighs lifting her up and down.

Ozpin pet over her butt, as she found what made her feel good, she wasn’t taking all of him but he didn’t mind right now. After warming her up to be able to take him again he had turned control over to her and encouraged her to find what made her feel good. That said the image of her toned voluptuous behind and back was something that he enjoyed immensely. His hands just itched to reach up into that red mane of hair, weave it around his fingers as he bucked up into her. He purred loudly at the thought and reached up to stroke down her spine pressing against it with his thumbs.

Ruby moaned dropping herself heavily down on him and yelped a little as he struck deep into her. She paused catching her breath at the sudden sharp pleasure and pain of the action. “Can I rim you?” Ozpin asked his gaze falling back to her behind.

Ruby blushed she knew what that was. “Yeah…”

Oz licked over a finger making sure to let his saliva collect on it. He spread her butt cheeks with a hand and started to draw light circles over the darker skin. Ruby moaned at the blooming sensation and started to bounce again grabbing at her breasts and massaging them. Ozpin smirked as she worked herself up steadily taking more of him in shorter strokes making him strike into that deep place that had her crying out over and over. He felt the tight sphincter of muscle relax under his touch and pucker up. Very cautiously he pressed his finger inward pressing along the front wall, he was curious if he could…

Ruby cried out in falling head over heels into ecstasy. She panted for a moment before moaning out. “Gods what are you doing that feels so good~.” She tried to move again, torn between riding his member and pushing back on his finger.

Ozpin chuckled and removed his finger. “Get off a second.”

Ruby reluctantly did, their juices gushed from her sex. She looked up at him and he gestured for her to turn around. “Hands and knees.” He ordered reaching into his bedside table and grabbing a well used bottle of lube. He pumpled some into his palm and coated his fingers. He moved back to her and could see the quiver that ran through Ruby. The anticipation must be killing her. He pressed one well lubed finger back to her anus and drew a light circle. “Deep breaths for me, try to relax.”

Ruby cried out in falling head over heels into ecstasy. She panted for a moment before moaning out. “Gods what are you doing that feels so good~.” She tried to move again, torn between riding his member and pushing back on his finger.

Ozpin chuckled and removed his finger. “Get off a second.”

Ruby reluctantly did, their juices gushed from her sex. She looked up at him and he gestured for her to turn around. “Hands and knees.” He ordered reaching into his bedside table and grabbing a well used bottle of lube. He pumpled some into his palm and coated his fingers. He moved back to her and could see the quiver that ran through Ruby. The anticipation must be killing her. He pressed one well lubed finger back to her anus and drew a light circle. “Deep breaths for me, try to relax.”

The silver eyed woman did as he asked, she trusted him entirely and before long the rest of her body got on board with that idea. Very gently Ozpin pushed his finger inward and paused, he shifted his legs, holding Ruby’s hips still as he pushed his member back into her. The moan Ruby let out sent a intense throb of desire through him and Oz bent over and bit down on her shoulder adding to
her collection of love bites. It was something he allowed himself to indulge in as her uniform and hunting gear would cover them. She was so tight when he moved his finger he could feel it upon his member.

He tested a few rocks of his hips mirroring them with much small actions from his finger. Ruby on the other hand was instantly moaned in pleasure and pushing back on him. “Oh, oh, please~.”

Well he was never one to deny a woman when they asked like *that*. He held her in place tight with a hand and hammered into her, Ruby *screamed* her arms giving out as she clapped her hands over her mouth in an effort to keep quiet. The duel sensations pushed her over in less then a minute, Ozpin groaned at the feeling but he was curious as to just how much she could take. Never slowing his hips he teased a second finger over her rim and when it allowed it pushed it in.

Ruby couldn’t think, he was spearing into her hitting her very core. Her body burned with the pleasure, then he slide a second finger side of her and *pressed*, while pulling her back on his strokes applying yet more force to them. She wailed her voice catching as her core clenched tight around him, her eyes rolling into the back of her head. That time there was no holding off the inevitable Oz groaned long and loud as he came, for several long moments pulsing his release deep into her. He stroked with his fingers a few more times before removing them and slumping over her catching himself on his arms.

Oz pressed a few tired kisses to her shoulders. “Are you alright?”

Ruby’s brain was still resetting, she turned her head her limbs feeling like they had been turned into noodles. “Yeah, wow… I think I blacked out for a second there.”

“I’ll add it to the list of things to do again then.” Ozpin nipped her neck and wrapped his arms around her, lifting her up to lay down on their sides without parting from her.

When Ruby was finally able to crawl out of the bed, with some assistance she and Oz made their way into the kitchen for some much needed breakfast. Ruby sat perched on the countertop clad in only Ozpin’s shirt which she had left the top half unbuttoned. She let her feet swing as she watched her lover cook up scrambled eggs and bacon is a silk green robe which he had left loosely tied together. Ruby could make out the grey hairs colouring his top of his pelvis and licked her lips around the mug of milk Oz had passed her.

“So what are your plans today?” Ruby nibbled on the toast as it popped out, some of the crumbs breaking off over her cleavage.

“Hmmm, mostly paperwork. The Vytal festival is here and with Beacon opening its doors to the other kingdoms I have much work to do. Though I hope to be finished with the bulk of it by lunch if you’d like to join me.” Oz turned the stove down to a simmer, giving him time to let his eyes roam over Ruby’s scarcely glad form.

The Silver eyes hummed over her mug woefully. “I would love to but I think my team are becoming somewhat suspicious of my disappearances.”

“You know, I think it would be fine if you tell your team the truth. I understand Yang already knows of our involvement.”
“Yeah but I wasn’t sure, I kinda wanted to clear it with you first.”

Oz turned back to the stove, making sure not to burn breakfast. “Well I see no concern if its just your teammates for now. Though I would be very surprised if Miss Belladonna doesn't already know of our relationship, what with her Faunus senses.”

Ruby took her toast and lathered a thin layer of strawberry jam on it. Thinking about what Oz said her eyes widened in realization. “Goodness you're probably right. Though Blake would generally keep that sort of information to herself.”

“So it’s only Miss Schnee who doesn’t yet know. I think it would be wise to tell her.”

“I think your right, again.” She said with a giggle. “Okay, I’ll talk to them all today, I don’t really like lying to them anyway.”

“Good idea, maybe tonight then we could go out for a meal and perhaps afterwards I can show you around some of my more frequented establishments?” He asked, turning the stove completely off.

Ruby took another bite of toast, “I like that idea.” A small blob of the jam fell off the toast, landing on her clavicle. Ozpin’s eyes immediately sought it out, hovering closer to the woman sat next to him. Ruby felt the heat of his gaze and dropped the toast back on the plate. “Do you know what other idea I like.”

“Hmmm, I can think of a few.” He growled, leaning his head down towards Ruby’s chest, flicking his tongue out at the sweet spot. Despite being all but hammered not so long ago Ruby still felt the spike of heat when Oz put his mouth to her chest. The collection of love bites and bruises from their lovemaking increased by one more when Oz sucked at the spot of flushed skin. His biting caused Ruby to whimper softly, begging for more, her legs parting on the counter, inviting the copper eyed man to come closer.

After ensuring she would remain marked Oz slid his mouth upwards, following a path of his own creation. His tongue and lips meeting many of the other marks Oz had graced her skin with earlier. He traveled higher, biting at the underside of her neck, grinning when Ruby gripped both hands on the sides of the counter. Ozpin moved his hands to cup hers, holding them down while he continued exploring this delightfully sweet skin.

Ruby wanted to beg for more but as soon as she tried Oz shot up, sealing her lips with his own, silencing her moans, swallowing them as his tongue clashed with hers in an age old dance. Oz pushed closer to her until they were chest to chest and all that was stopping him from plunging into her again was the robe fastened just high enough that he couldn’t wiggle free without letting go of her hands.

Together they kisses, licked and moaned in succession, Ruby was panting hard, squirming on the counter, unable to scratch her growing ich. “Please Oz.” She begged between kisses, her breathless voice spurring him on more. Oz growled dragging her hands together above her, one of his holding them there in place while the other moved down to release himself.

He was just loosening the belt, finally freeing himself to take her there on the counter when a door slammed open. “OZPIN!!” Echoed through the flat.

Glynda stormed into the kitchen barely able to keep herself from walking literally into Oz and Ruby as they joined together on the kitchen counter. “What the Hel- you said you weren't sleeping with her!”
Oz pulled away from the heaven of Ruby’s mouth but kept himself pressed close to her so as to not show off their state of undress to the flustered teacher. “Morning Glynda, well I hadn't planned on it when I said that, so I did not lie. Now however if you could come back later…"

Ruby was trying hard to stifle her giggles as she pressed her reddened face against Oz. To say Glynda was furious was not giving it justice, the look of the blonde woman’s face was nothing short of thunderous as she launched into a verbal attack on Ozpin. While he was being chastised Ruby saw it as her chance to escape into the bedroom and thrown on her clothes from last night. Though instead of changing out of Oz’s shirt she just buttoned it up a bit more, not wanting to part from the piece of cloth that smelled of her lover.

As she dressed she could hear Glynda yelling.

“What the HELL are you thinking!”

Ozpin’s response was to muted for her to hear.

“Are you going to do this with every generation pick one out to craft into your lover? What about Qrow? I got the feeling that you two were arguing so you just move to the next one!?”

Ruby jumped at the sudden bang that came from the kitchen and quickly pulled on the rest of her clothes. Her corset actually did a pretty good job of hiding the source of the shirt. She zipped back to the kitchen to find Glynda with her back against a wall with Oz towering over her speaking softly. As Ruby watched Oz moved away from Glynda with a harsh utterance of. “Get Out.”

Glynda stormed from the flat the door slamming behind her. Oz let out a long sigh looking to ceiling before returning to his cooking.

“I guess that could have gone better?” Ruby asked hopping up onto a stool.

She watched Oz’s shoulders slump again. “That’s one way of putting it.” He said and served up breakfast.

Ruby played with her fork and asked. “So what’s the plan? With the memories?”

Ozpin ran an hand through his hair. “I don’t have any idea what to do, they’ve lost all focus and just feel like one big jumbled mess. It’s best in the mornings but as the day wears on I loss control.” He sighed. “Glynda actually showed footage of me destroying punching bags in the gym, she wants to know what’s going on but I don’t want to tell her. It’s not that I don’t trust her, I just don’t want to answer… how this all came about.”

Ruby winced, she could think of several ways that wasn’t such a good idea. “She’s probably just worried about you. I mean you did blackout right in front of her yesterday. If I was in her shoes I’d be mad too.”

“That I can understand but she’s got no right to tell me who I sleep with.” Ozpin stabbed a piece of bacon in his ire.

Ruby ate a piece of egg thinking things over. “What did she exactly accuse you of?”

“Oh you don’t want to know.”

“Oz.” Ruby set her fork down.

Ozpin sighed. “You know I’m err, diverse in my tastes and means of which to set about meeting
them. She knows about Qrow and when I started teaching you… she was less than pleased. She thought I was trying to make another like him. A lover and fighter who only answers to me. I will admit I was considering grooming you to be a match in the field for Qrow. But never the other and then as you know… things just got all muddled and messed up.” Oz rubbed the corners of his eyes. “I think she believes that I lied to her.”

Ruby flinched at that admission and took a deep breath. “Does she know that Qrow and I are together?”

Ozpin barked a laugh. “Glynda puts up with me, but she’s not that open minded.”

Ruby ate a few more bits of egg. “I guess we’ll just have to work on that. Speaking of working on things, can we keep sparing? Maybe it will give you something to focus.”

After a long minute Ozpin said. “I think you may have a point there.”

“DAD!” Two half sisters flew at mach five through the air and Taiyang braced himself as his arms were filled with his daughters.

Weiss giggled watching the display she couldn’t imagine doing that with her own father but seeing it was endearing.

Blake felt a sudden pang of homesickness and Tai pressed a kiss to the temples of both girls.

“How are you too?” Tai said pulling away and putting Yang and Ruby down.

“Good!” Yang said bouncing on her heels. “Though the sparing just isn’t quite the same as at home.”

“Well Qrow lent me the keys to his flat so I’ll be around for it a bit I’m sure we can brush you up.” Tai reached out and ruffled Yang’s hair.

“You saw Qrow!” Ruby lit up clapping her hands together.

“Yeah, ran into each other on the way off the ship. Oh here!” Tai reached behind him and pulled out a long box. “Qrow said he saw it and thought of you.”

Ruby took the box feeling it’s weight she knew exactly want it was. She ripped off the brown paper and pulled the lid off. The sword was simple, a hand and half with, the word **blath** engraved just above the hilt in old runes. Ruby smiled her heart warming as she traced over the word.

“What’s is say? My Elder Speech is a bit rusty.” Tai said.

“Flower.” Ruby slid the sword back into it’s sheath. “I’ve been practicing with a sword more lately and I guess Qrow remembered that I don’t actually have one yet.”

“Why have you been doing that?” Tai asked cocking his head.

Colour crept up into Ruby’s cheeks. “I was not doing so well after the Breach and after running into me a few times Professor Ozpin started to teach me. As a distraction and to get me tired so I could sleep. He’s only been teaching me the sword though, I guess he thinks I’m either good enough with Crescent Rose or wants to diversify my skills.”
Taiyang hummed looking his youngest down as the blush intensified in her cheeks. “Uh Huh. Right it’s probably the latter.”

Yang swept into Ruby’s rescue. “Come on Dad let’s find an empty arena!”

“Sure thing kiddo.” Tai and Yang walked ahead as Ruby hung back giving her sword a hug.

Blake looked over to her. “Why didn’t you tell him the whole truth?”

“Just didn’t seem like a good time.” Ruby said.

Weiss looked between them and sighed. “Come on, I want to see someone who can actually beat Yang.”

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Ozpin held Narsil in his hands, it had been over a hundred years. Even with all the care and love he showed it the blade was starting to deteriorate past the point of no return. He looked up to the forge he had bought a few days alone with, to the plans he had drawn. Strider had asked him to take care of it, this was just another facet of that.

He set the old blade on the anvil and raised his hammer.

“Oz.”

Ozpin jerked visibly coming back to himself, he looked down to his lover her hand resting upon his arm. “Sorry.”

“Don’t be.” Ruby stepped away and pulled Flower from its sheath. “Qrow sent me a present with dad, do you like it?”

Ozpin looked over the simple sword, it was perhaps a little long for her but he had a feeling she would grow into it. “Better for fighting then that oversized gardening tool of yours.”

“Hey Crescent Rose is a beauty… but yeah the more I learn the more I see the flaws in a scythe. Great for Grimm, this kinda thing, not so much.” Ruby brought both hands to the hilt like she had seen Qrow do so many times.

Ozpin pulled his cane from his pocket and extended it. “You’re telegraphing again. Don’t forget who taught Qrow all he knows.” He moved into fencing position.

Ruby rolled her eyes. “I know.” She blasted forward lashing out in a volley of quick strikes.

Ozpin stepped neatly out of the way of each.

“Sword up!” He snapped at the student, dashing forward.

The blonde boy barely blocked, stumbling back as Oz advanced.

Oz blocked with a last second movement as Ruby cleaved for his middle. He went on the offensive, swinging for Ruby’s head only for her to jump back. Then forward again, the pace of the fight increased.
“RAA!!” The boy dashed forward his plain sword clashed with Oz’s new cane.

Ozpin struck him twice, once in the thigh the other on the arm. The boys rage was palatable, he lunged forward, Oz stepped out of the way sticking his foot out the boy tripped tumbling head over feet.

The copper eyed man blinked barely getting his weapon above his head to block in time as Ruby kicked him in the chest vaulting off of him. She shot forward her eyes widened as her blade connected with Oz’s side, the force flared his Aura and sent him flying. Oz hit the stands the stone cracking under the impact.

“Sloppy, focus! If you let your emotions control you, you will fall.” Oz flicked his cane around.

“Shut up!” The boy hauled himself to his feet grabbing his sword.

Ozpin shook his head and looked over to Ruby who was staring at him in sheer shock. He grit his teeth and fired off the wall.

“EEP!” Ruby dissolved into rose petals as he burst through where she had just been. She reformed and yelped as the cane came down for her head. She parried with a clash of metal on metal, Oz pushed his advantage. Ruby’s eyes wide as she attempted to keep out of the way, but steady failed his attacks beating on her Aura.

Ozpin flicked his cane around into a reverse grip, their weapons collided. “When will you learn Arc?”

Ruby used her Semblance again dodging out of the way materializing behind him and swinging out for his knee. Only to get a face full of foot. She crashed into the wall leaving a new crater. “Oww.” She fell to the floor and picked herself up.

“When you give up that throne you stole!” Arc screamed and broke away, pulling a dagger from behind his back.

Ozpin shoved Arc away and dodged by mere millimeters, the dagger drawing across his Aura.

Ruby saw the delay in Ozpin and surged to her feet grabbing her sword as she went and lunging forward. She saw’s Oz’s eyes widened and focus on her, she tried to redirect her sword suddenly afraid for him. Oz grabbed the blade and kicked her square in the chest.

Arc flew backwards slamming into the ground forming a trench. He looked up to Oz to who was holding his dagger. He panted holding his chest, Oz approached slowly and knelt. “How much do you know Arc?”

“Enough to know you’re a liar and a thief!” The blonde boy with blue eyes snapped.

“You’re the eldest of your family aren’t you. You have six sisters and another brother?” Ozpin asked.

“You’ll stay away from them!” Arc attempted to surge to his feet.

Oz drove the dagger down through the top of his armour. He Aura died as the blade cut cleanly into him. “I’m sorry, but I can’t have you ruining everything. You have no idea what I’ve given up to ensure the world does not change. I’ll take care of your family, you died with honor.”

Arc grabbed at Oz’s training leathers, his mouth parted rage in his eyes. Then slumped against the
Oz pulled the dagger free and cleaned it. He slid it back into it’s sheath taking the dagger then collecting the Arc family sword. He’d have to return it as well.

Ozpin returned to the Arc and set a hand on his head, a moment later the body turned to dust.

Ozpin blinked and found his hand around Ruby’s throat, his chest was sore from where she had been kicking him. He dropped her as if she had burned him. “Gods Ruby I’m sorry!” He knelt as Ruby coughed holding her throat, the purple hand print around him cause guilt and worry to spike through Oz’s heart. The copper eyed man reached out his fingertips brushing over the bruising, he let his Aura dance over her skin healing the wounds.

“What happened to not sharing Aura?” Ruby asked.

“You’re hurt, it’s my fault.” Oz reached out to her and Ruby snuggled him. “I’m sorry, I’m so sorry.” He hugged her carefully, afraid to break her again.

“Hey, I’m fine it’s okay.” Ruby lifted her head and kissed him. “I’m not a Mistral doll I can take it.”

“You shouldn’t have too.” Oz draw away and squeezed his eyes shut.

“Was it a memory? I was really surprised when I started getting hits in.” Ruby asked shifted to kneel, pulling him gently by the shoulders to rest his head upon her breast.

“Yeah.” Ozpin said nuzzling her chest, listening to her heart beat.

“Do you want to talk about it?” Ruby asked.

“No.”

Ruby felt tears wet her blouse and started to pet through his hair. They remained like that for several minutes before Oz pulled away. “I’m sorry, I just…” He shook his head. “I can’t talk about it.”

“I understand, there are times when Qrow gets the same way.” Ruby leaned forward and kissed him. “Do you think a different form of distraction would help?”

Ozpin’s first instinct was to say no, but here she was warm, willing and it had helped before. “Oh yes please.” Oz reached up and cupped her hair taking a deep kiss.

James Ironwood watched Ozpin, they were old friends after all. Glynda was nothing short of furious with Oz for a reason she refused to tell him, that said James had many was to gather information without dear Glynda’s help. He lounged in bed after a long day of work with holding his Scroll up watching a feed from one of the combat classrooms.

Ozpin and Ruby were fighting, weapons in hand. James as a little surprised how easily Ruby seemed to be using the sword. He also studied his old teacher the most of the two, he seemed to have a almost desperate edge to him. Openings he wouldn’t have normally left…Ozpin held Ruby up by the throat. James sat up his hand tightening on the bed sheet, he could see the purple blooming under Oz’s fingers. Then suddenly it was over, Ruby fell to the ground crumpling and coughing.

Oz was back in the next instant, obviously worried healing her neck with a little bit of Aura. They talked for a bit Ruby knelt and Oz rested against her chest. Eventually they pulled away again and this time there were kisses. Ruby pushed Oz onto his back and straddled him, her hands going for his
bent.

James’s brow flew up as the two lovers, fucked on the arena floor. Ruby riding him cautiously at first, only for Oz to roll them over and pin her to the ground and start to really pound into her. James couldn’t help but think Ruby looked pretty magnificent her body falling into ecstasy.

Well this explained why Glynda was so annoyed. He wondered if Qrow knew but then he remembered the Masquerade Ball how the three of them acted together. He shut off the video leaving the lovers to themselves and opened up the corresponding files deleting them and everything that would be recorded in the next half hour. He figured that would be plenty of time for Oz to get whatever was in his system bothering him out.

James set his Scroll aside and closed his eyes, trust Oz to pick the really remarkable student to take to bed. He frowned, there had to be more to it than that though. Qrow had been remarkable too, but it was clear to anyone who had seen the two that they were head over heels in love. Had that become the case with Ruby as well? He wouldn’t put it past Oz, Ruby and Qrow were very alike. He hmmed thinking about it all, it was clear he needed to have a chat with Ozpin. If only to help get Glynda off his back.

Ozpin leaned on his desk, his head on his arms as the files that needed his attention went on ignored. He was just so tired, Ruby helped but she couldn’t be around all the time. They couldn’t fuck every time an unpleasant memory, for there were a lot of them showed. Gods he missed Qrow, he peaked lifting his head up.

:Are you there?:

The message he had sent was simple, but Qrow would know it meant so much more than those three little words. He would know it meant ‘I need you’, Ozpin’s heart ached waiting for the answer.

The elevator doors binged open and James Ironwood strode in. Ozpin quickly shoved himself up and fixed his glasses and hair.

“Relax Oz, I’ve seen you with way worse bed head.” James said resting a hand on his hip. “Heck I’ve caused it.”

That got the desired reaction, blush tinted Oz’s cheeks. “Is there something you need James?”

“You look worse for wear, long night?” James walked over and leaned on the desk, he watched Oz pale.

“Uh no. Why do you ask?” Ozpin felt dread pooling in his guts.

“You really should know better than to fuck in the arena’s. Everything in them is recorded, be thankful I already went through the files.” James said.

“It’s not what you think.” Ozpin stood abruptly.

“Looked pretty clear to me, no wonder Glynda is so pissed with you. Does Qrow know?”

“Qrow has been her partner for longer then I.” Ozpin answered.

James let out a long whistle. “That’s impressive, so what now they are both yours?”
“Something like that.” Ozpin crossed his arms.

“Lucky dog, I know you always wanted a woman in your little… party.” James smirked.

“You are enjoying this far to much.” Oz grumbled.

“Just a bit, I figured after I left you picking up a second was pretty inevitable. Don’t get me wrong you and Qrow are great for each other but sometimes I got the feeling you were both. Hmm too much for each other, a third would balance you all out. Plus I get the feeling Ruby’s a submissive and that’s something you’ve always needed but made do without.” James said, he was a dom not to Oz’s level but the three of them had always been a bit strained on that front.

Ozpin sighed, he got the feeling there would be no getting out of this conversation. “What about you? Found anyone since you left?”

It was James’s turn to sigh. “No, I met a woman at the Masquerade here but her costume was amazing. I don’t even know the colour of her eyes. Though I am pretty sure she’s on the younger side, which will suck but it will depend on her. Assuming I ever figure out who she was.”

“At least you have hope.” Oz said looking away, memories dancing behind his eyes.

“What’s really wrong Oz? I know we have our differences but you and I have been good friends for years. When it counts I can keep my trap shut.” James reached out and rested a hand on Oz’s shoulder.

Oz reached up and squeezed it, then out a long breath. “Over Halloween Ruby, Qrow and I changed my curse. I’m still immortal just no more reincarnating into the body of others. By accident some time ago, Ruby awoke a soul that never got assimilated correctly. He’s very… forceful and had a magic all of his own.” Oz rubbed the back of his left hand, right now the brand was invisible. “He took us into the past and changed… how I am reborn. When we came forward… I have five hundred years of new memories to go through and no control over them. When I passed out a couple days ago that was because the memory was particularly.” He paused searching for the words. “Traumatic.”

“What was it?” James asked.

Ozpin shook his head his throat closing, he pulled away and walked over to the window looking out over the city. James followed him. “Hey Oz, don’t do this. I know I’m not Qrow but I got the impression it wasn’t pleasant. Ruby hurled on her first attempt at helping you in the hospital wing.”

Oz stood in silence for a long minute, the words came slowly. “I think it was about two hundred years ago. It started with running away in a forest and ended.” He snapped his jaw shut as the phantom pain flare over him again. “Please James, I can’t talk about this.”

James strode up and pulled Oz into a hug, the man just oozed pain. “But it might help if you do. I know Glynda’s being… well Glynda. But I can’t help if I don’t know.”

“I don’t know who it was, I don’t remember that part of the memory yet. But I was vivisected, a old man wanted to learn how to be immortal and somehow learned about me. Wearing the same face for five hundred years.” Oz did a mix of a laugh while crying. “Well it came with some downsides.”

“Gods.” James tightened his hold on Oz as the other man closed his eyes and tucked his head against James’s neck. “No wonder you blacked out.”

“Didn’t save my soul though.” Ozpin said.
“No I got the feeling Ruby did that. Are all the memories like that?” James asked.

“Not all, but very few are pleasant. Major events, traumatic experiences. Sometimes it’s more situational, directly related to what I see around me. Looking out over Vale is a risk right now, sometimes I see it burning, other times I see the city from centuries ago. It’s only on good days that I see it as it actually is.” Oz drew away, pulling his long coat closed around him and James let him go.

“If Vytal wasn’t around the corner I’d suggest you take a leave, all this new stress can’t be helping.” James said.

“It’s really not, but I can’t leave. Not with everything else going on, I’ll just have to deal with it.” Ozpin said and his computer beeped, he could see the message from where he stood. :For you, always:.

James looked over and huffed. “So he’ll message you but not me.”

“This is Qrow, he’s only been gone just over a week. You are so impatient.” Oz shook his head a smile creeping over his lips.

James also smiled. “Talk to Qrow, I’ll have a word with Glynda and cover for you as need be.” He turned and walked out.

Oz stopped him calling out. “James… Thank you.”

James turned back and waved, with a little flick of his fingers. “Anytime Oz.”

As he left Oz returned to his chair, his fingers hovering over the keys unsure of what to say. In the end he picked something simple. :How are things going?"

Chapter End Notes

Ardy: Not a whole lot to report today. The next chapter will be a little bit different then normal, but I am looking forward to it. As much as I like Qrow, Ozpin and Ruby, they are far from the only characters I like to write.

Kry: Thank you too: Nova_Belaqua, Jamie, Silenaislife, darkvampirekisses, lillithschild, Sportsfangirl815 and Celestialfae for all your comments.
Hunting for a Gentleman

Chapter Notes

Ardy: Blaa Bllaaa, temporary pairs aren't tagged, causal intimacy is fun. Time for a change of pace.

Bring on the Weiss and James chapter!

Morning had always been Weiss’s favorite time of day, the weather was cool enough to remind her of her home without its spike of frost towards more unpleasant past times. She also had a very detailed agenda in the mornings, mostly because she was never certain in what plans or mischief her teammates would engage in once they were up and about. So after a lengthy shower and brushing out her long platinum hair Weiss set the task of dressing and her other morning tasks. As she straightened her bed-sheets her eyes peered up into the bunk above hers for the head of dark hair and finding it empty, again.

There was a barely registable sigh before Weiss; now finished and satisfied with her morning tasks, left the dorm. Both Blake and Yang were sleeping still and She had long learnt that waking either girl on a day off, such as it was, was never a wise decision. She had hoped however that Ruby would still be in bed so as to speak to her and ask for her help. Since Halloween she had either been unable to find their elusive leader or been too busy by the mixture of classes and festival preparations.

Thinking of the events or at least one particular event that had happened on that day pulled another more wistful sigh from the Heiress before she could control it. Thankfully the halls were mostly empty this time of morning which relaxed her. After the initial shock of the Schnee Heiress studying at Beacon most of the students ignored her now. It wasn't because Weiss hadn’t lost her icy personality but because she had warmed up to a group of select individuals.

Weiss was about to turn into the canteen when she caught the tell tale sign of Ruby’s roses floating further down a corridor and deviated from her path to follow Ruby.

“Ruby!” Weiss nearly winced at the shouting. Winter would be most displeased if she found her sister not using her indoor voice but it was important that she speak with the crimsonette. Seeing Ruby stop encouraged her to quickly job over to her before she lost her chance.

Ruby had just heard Weiss and turned to greet her partner. They didn’t actually have classes today but it was encouraged for teams to practice for the festival or study. Ruby had planned on staying with Oz today but after searching his cupboards and not finding any cookies she had decided to run to the canteen and ‘liberate’ some for them. She had just been on her way back when her friend called out to her. “Hey Weiss! Whatcha doing?”

The Heiress very nearly changed her mind about asking the younger woman for help. Then she reminded herself that Blake was likely to ignore her request and unless she wanted it spread through the whole school talking to Yang was out of the question. “Ruby I was hoping you could help me with something?”
“Sure!”

“There was a guy on Halloween that . . . I would very much like to find again. Do you have any idea who he was.”

Ruby did a little O with her mouth, she remembered the man Weiss is speaking of, he was the only one that she knew her friend danced with. “I don’t know sorry.”

The disappointment was very much evident on Weiss’s face so Ruby cringed inwardly. “Maybe I can help you find him.”

“That would be very kind of you Ruby but I have no idea where to start.”

An idea from when she was younger popped into the younger woman’s mind. “I have an idea! Let's do some ‘People Watching’ come on!” Holding the bag of cookies in one hand Ruby quickly took her friends hand and tapped into her Semblance, moving them quickly through the halls and outside in a blur of red and white rose petals.

Weiss felt the rush to her head and the flowing scent of roses all around her. There was a weightless freedom in Ruby’s mode of transport and she almost felt like a strong wind could blow her away. Weiss wanted to hold on tighter to her partner but her body was so out of it that by the time she felt any sense of grounding they had already arrived in the courtyard. Apparently Ruby hadn’t realised that her Semblance could be jarring to someone not accustomed to it. The Heiress had her head bent low and her breathing was a little more uneven.

While Weiss was catching her breath, finally feeling more comfortable Weiss asked. “Ruby what is ‘People watching’?”

Ruby took a seat on the bench and picked out a chocolate cookie to munch on. “Well it’s exactly that, we sit here and watch everyone who walks past. Yang and I use to do this all time the, we would sit together and make up stories about people who walked by or try to guess what someone’s job was by how they dressed, walked, what they had with them, that kind of stuff. Since we are looking for someone you don’t know and you never really saw his face, did you?” She asked Weiss, the Heiress shaking her head. “Then we’re look for traites you remember and try to fit them against people who walk by. Maybe you’re remember more then you think.”

“Ok I think I understand.” Weiss took the seat by Ruby, hands gently straightening her skirt on her lap. “So we are watching people.”

The two women sat together watching students, teachers and even traveling Huntsmen wandered past. Most heading towards the canteen for breakfast or towards the airships that would take them to Vale. Weiss accepted a cookie from Ruby, while it certainly wasn’t what she would have chosen for breakfast she was hungry. Munching on the sweet treat she almost missed Ruby’s exclaim. “What about him?”

Weiss studied the man that walked past. Tall enough, yes but with too light of hair. “No he had dark hair.”

“How’d you know.” Ruby asked.

For the first time and definitely not the last, Weiss blushed hard. “Well we sort of left early and ‘enjoyed’ ourselves. Physically.” She added.

“Ooooh~”
“Don’t you ‘Oh’ me. He was a perfect gentleman and treated me kindly.”

That was getting filed for later, Ruby thought and smirked under the guise of eating another cookie. Who would have thunk it? Weiss Schnee playing kissy face in the halls, with a stranger no less! She was sorely tempted to tease her white haired friend but Weiss ‘had’ come to her for help and she seemed so earnest. The least she could do was respect her friend’s decision and help where she could.

Another man, this one running past them caught her eye. “Well what about him?”

“He could be my stranger, though he isn’t very fashionable. He doesn’t fit.” Ruby almost sighed again. This was going to be a long morning.

While they waited for the next male to go past Weiss turned to Ruby on the bench. “So where have you been lately Ruby? I apologise if its none of my business but your lack of presence lately has been bothering me.”

“Errr, I’ve been, you know . . . around.” Shifting in her seat the silver eyes tried distracting Weiss with another cookie, which she declined.

“Yes well it’s just that you’ve been spending less and less time with your team, even Pyrrha said team JNPR haven’t seen you lately.”

“You’ve been asking them where I’m at?”

“No. . . Yes. I tried asking Yang but she just said you were ‘fine’ and since you always come to classes and haven't neglected your duties as team leader I haven’t said anything before. However I am growing a bit more concerned by your constant disappearances. You’re not in trouble are you?”

“What you talkin bout? Of course not.” Ruby joked but after seeing the serious expression Weiss sent her way she sombered. “It’s . . . complicated but honest, I’m not in any danger, I promise you.”

It seemed like the best answer she was going to get for the time being so Weiss conquered with a nod and the two went back to people watching. Ruby worried her lip, Oz had said it would be okay to tell Weiss. “Actually Weiss, on the topic of my frequent disappearing. I’ve been working with and seeing Ozpin.”

“Like when he brought you back after you fell asleep on him?” Weiss asked.

“Uhm, no more the. . .” Ruby made a circle with her thumb and finger and moved another through it. “The other kind of seeing.”

“You're sleeping with the Headmaster!?” Weiss slapped a hand over her mouth, both girls looked around but no one had heard her outburst.

“Um yeah.” Ruby grabbed the edge of her skirt and pulled at it. “That okay with you?”

Weiss paused for a minute, blush creeping up into her cheeks. “It's fine so long as it doesn't affect your school work. Besides I think the man we're looking is on the older side too.”

“Ohh.” Ruby said and the girls sat in silence before Weiss spoke up again. “Sooo, what is it like?”

“What's what like?” Ruby asked.

“You know… sex. I mean he is older and really attractive so he must have had lots of lovers, so he must know what he's doing.” Weiss bit her bottom lip, there was no way she was going to ask
Winter about this kind of thing and the internet was only so useful. Plus getting her hands on Blake's books was hard.

Ruby giggled, well knowledgeable was one way to describe Ozpin. “It's, I don't know. Not really like that romantic stuff you read, but I kinda like it. It's more the after sex cuddles where he's all romantic. He's really kind too, always worried about me first. I think that kind of comes in when you consider just how much bigger than me he is.” Ruby bit her lip. “And every time it's different.”

“How so?” Weiss asked. “I was always taught that sex is for reproduction, I know lots of people just do it for fun but it wasn’t really a view that was encouraged at home.”

Ruby nibbled on her lip trying to figure out how to describe it. “Well I’m on birth control, so it is just for fun, but it’s also more than that. It’s a way to really get to know a person. Like I said Oz is really kind, he doesn’t push me for things. Though the dynamic does usually change as we get more into it, it usually starts with what I want but part of that is again size difference we have to start slow. Then when I’m err adapted to him, then he takes control. Which I really like, it’s a really intense feeling. Not just the pleasure of it but letting him do what he wants, but trusting him with my body.” Colour darkened Ruby’s cheeks and she hugged herself. “That element of trust is what I really like, he always asks and checks in. Makes sure I’m not hurt in any way before continuing. I don’t know how to explain it. Sometimes after a mission it relaxes me too, to give him that control, to not have to be the one in charge.”

“That does sound really nice, I think I’d always be worried about doing the right thing.” Weiss said.

“Well I am not sure there is such a thing as the ‘right thing’, I mean porn would have us believe in that money shot crap. Oz hasn’t even brought up oral, or anything like that. He likes to be bur-.” Stuttered to a halt her cheeks turning as red as her cape. “I mean, uhh. You know, he likes to be pressed close when he, you know… finishes.”

Weiss was also turning red, imagining that as Ruby stumbled over her words. “I’m just saying I think it’s more about talking and finding what you both want rather then what pop culture would have you believe you want.”

“Ruby when did you become such a sage?” Weiss asked, a little bit amazed at the wisdom coming out of Ruby’s mouth.

Ruby shrugged. “Too much time hanging out with Ozpin? Actually maybe we could go ask him about your mysterious gentleman, he knows a lot of people. Plus he’s probably wondering where I got too.”

“Sure.” Weiss said, thinking that it would be kinda cool to see the Headmaster in a casual setting.

Ozpin opened his door and almost jumped when Weiss stood behind Ruby.

“Cookies!” Ruby declared holding up the bag and bouncing into the flat.

“So your liberating skills paid off I see.” Ozpin said smiling at his lover, he turned his attention to Weiss as the heiress picked her way into the flat. “She told you then?”

“Yeah, I’m fine with it.” Weiss looked over the clean but homely room.
“I’m glad. Hot chocolate ladies?” Ozpin stepped away heading towards his kitchen.

“Yes please!” Ruby declared having picked the middle of the couch to sit on the cookies on the coffee table.

“Yes please sir.” Weiss said moving to sit beside Ruby.

Oz paused in the eve of the doorway. “Ozpin is fine Miss Schnee.”

“Then Weiss is fine too.” Weiss smiled as Oz turned away to make them a drink.

Weiss lowered her voice. “He’s so different.”

Ruby grinned and nodded. “The Headmaster is a stick in the mud, Ozpin however is really fun.”

The white haired woman glanced around, she could see it in the flat. Movies stacked by the player, books open with pages marked. A blanket over the back of the couch for late night snuggles. Then Ruby, who looked so at home snuggling into the couch, resting her cheek on the blanket.

Ozpin returned armed with three hot chocolates. “So what brings you to my humble abode Weiss?”

How he said it made Weiss giggle. “I uh, well I asked Ruby to help me find someone and she mentioned that you might have an idea.”

“Oh?” Oz said sitting down, Ruby instantly snuggled up to his side and he wrapped an arm around her waist handing her a hot chocolate before taking one for himself.

Weiss took the last cup and had a long drink and purred, oh wow it was as good as Klein’s. Blush dusted her cheeks, talking to Ruby was one thing but admitting a crush to Ozpin seemed different. She took a deep breath. “Well at the Masquerade a few weeks ago, I met a man who… who I’d really like to find again. I know he was tall and broad with black hair. I think he was wearing contacts so I have no idea what his eye colour is.”

“That’s definitely not much to go on. But I remember watching you dance with him so I know the man you mean. Did he do anything else that stood out?” Ozpin asked.

Weiss squirmed. “Well we… left early and enjoyed ourselves but he was a perfect gentleman. He was respectful and kind, but he had just… command in his touch.” She bit her lip, distracting herself with her drink trying to fight down the blush.

“Any chance he posed as being left handed?” Ozpin asked, remembering a conversation he had not so long ago.

“I… yes how did you know?” Weiss looked over sharply.

Ozpin smirked, set his cup down and started to stroke up and down Ruby’s thigh. “Because you aren’t the only one looking for their partner from the ball.”

“You know? Already?” Weiss couldn’t help but watch as Oz’s hand drifted higher up Ruby’s thigh. The crimosette was starting to do that aroused squirm.

“James mentioned he found a woman at the Masquerade, given that you were the lion lady and you just described him to the letter. I think it’s safe to say he’s your man.” Oz was having a little too much fun tormenting Ruby. “He’s also been at a loss to your identity.”
Weiss’s world tilted and she covered her mouth trying to hide her shock. She had played around with the General, gods if her father ever found out. Her first instinct was to pretend it never happened, they were so unsuited their positions alone would forever be a problem. Her eyes darted over to Ruby, she had set her cup aside and turned to Oz peppering kisses along his neck. Then again Ruby and Ozpin made it work, they weren’t even really hiding it. Weiss bit her lip, she really liked him. More than Neptune by a large margin.

Her gaze flitted back to Oz and Ruby, she couldn’t help but wonder what it would be like to be intimate with someone the way they were. She had to admit to herself that watching them was exciting, her own body reacting almost in time with Ruby’s. She took a deep breath. “Can I borrow Ruby Ozpin?”

“Of course.” Oz drew away.

Ruby pouted as the touching stopped but Weiss was her friend too. “Okay.”

Weiss got up and grabbed Ruby’s hand. “Thank you for the hot chocolate Ozpin.”

Ozpin leaned back resting his arms over the back of the couch and parting his thighs lazily. “Anytime Weiss, be sure to send James my regards.”

The position he took made both girls blush and Weiss pulled Ruby away, they ended up in a smaller secondary courtyard in a secluded corner.

“Wow Weiss slow down.” Ruby pulled her hand free and grabbed Weiss’s shoulders. “Are you okay?”

Weiss’s stomach flipped and flopped. “I don’t know! I mean the General! Out of everyone it could have been it had to be him!” She sat and sighed. “I don’t even know how I’d even approach him!”

“Well Oz said he has been looking for you too. Plus seeing as you two made kissy faces you should just go up and kiss him. Find him when he’s not busy, go over and grab him by the collar and plant one on him, get some tongue in there too.”

“Ruby that is a terrible idea and I wouldn’t use tongue anyway, its vulgar and besides everyone knows it’s biting the lip that gets men riled.” Weiss said.

“What are you talking about?” Ruby asked.

“Well I’m not completely inexperienced and everything I’ve read includes lip biting.” Weiss said cheekily.

Ruby quirked her lips. “Well I disagree! None of my kisses so far have had any biting.”

“Well then you’ve missed out.”

“How about we have a kissing contest then, whoever riles the other up the most wins!” Ruby said putting her hands on her hips, she was confident she could win this sort of contest.

“What? Ruby were both girls!?” Weiss was a little stunned by the suggestion.

“So? It’s just a game. You like me, I like you. It’s not like we have any romantic attachment. Call it educational!”

Weiss squirmed, she guess Ruby did have a point their and it would be a way to settle this argument once and for all. “Okay… how should we start?”
“Well how about I kiss you how I like to be kissed, then you do the same and we go from there.” Ruby said moving over a little closer to Weiss.

“Okay.” Weiss put her hands in her lap. She watched Ruby leaned over, then closed her eyes as their lips met. Ruby started slow, sensing how nervous Weiss was. She coaxed Weiss to slowly copy her, their lips parted and Ruby teased just the tip of her tongue over Weiss’s. Weiss moaned softly her hands moving to hold Ruby’s. As Ruby withdrew Weiss leaned forward and caught Ruby’s bottom lip better her teeth and pulled slightly. Ruby leaned back into the kiss.

James and Ozpin walked at a quick pace, trying to think of places where their ladies could have hidden themselves. James had been very surprised when Oz swept into his office with a shit disturbing grin on his face. Needless to say Oz had brought him up to date very quickly and they set off to look for the women. They both came to a lurch when they saw the two girls. Ruby half in Weiss’s lap as they kissed with increasing depth. James felt his trousers tighten very rapidly, one look at Oz told him he was in the same predicament.

James hung back as Oz strode forward coming up behind the girls. He watched as Oz traced a hand down Ruby’s back and nipped her neck while saying. “Not I mind watching at all my dears, but what brought this on?”

Ruby’s moan as she pulled away from Weiss’s kiss and into Oz’s touch. “We had a disagreement over the best way to kiss, so we decided a contest was the best way to resolve it.”

“Hmm, far be it from me to stop you. However why don’t we take this to a more private venue.” Ozpin shifted his head pressing another kiss to Ruby’s neck before withdrawing.

Weiss looked away from the show Ruby and Oz were putting on to find James staring at her. Arousal was already pounding through her body, but the look he was giving her. Like he was undressing her with his eyes. Her breath caught and she said. “I think that is a very good idea.”

They ended up back in Ozpin’s flat on the couch, Ruby and Weiss in the middle with Ozpin and James on the corners watching. Weiss was too nervous to relax but Ruby kissed her again and after a little while she managed to forget about the two men watching them. Weiss quickly lost track of time as the arousal burned in her belly, she had to admit that Ruby was very good at kissing. Weiss distinctly heard the leather creak then Ruby moaned and drew out of the kiss. “Oz.” She whined and Weiss looked over Ruby’s shoulder.

“Don’t mind me.” Ozpin said and as Weiss looked down she could see that Oz was massaging Ruby’s behind. “Please continue. Though if you perhaps move to lean on James, I would not protest.”

Weiss pulled away from Ruby at the suggestion and looked over to James. He reached out and pulled her to rest against his chest, moving a leg against the couch so he was facing them. Ruby followed at Oz’s prompting moving to kneel then kiss Weiss again. Ruby moaned into the kiss as Weiss reached up and wove her fingers through Ruby’s hair. She focused on the kiss but she could feel Oz doing something to Ruby, the smaller girls moans picking up. Though it would take Weiss a while to admit it this was really hot. James didn’t touch her but she could feel his arousal contained, pressing against her behind.
“Weiss looks very flustered Ruby my dear why don’t you help her with that?” Ozpin suggested as he sank two fingers into Ruby’s dripping core.

“Can I?” Ruby asked drawing away, saliva lingering between them for a moment.

“Yeah.” Weiss said her mind was fogged with arousal, she reached for the lacing of her dress and James helped her. In no time they had her nude and Weiss decided that Ruby needed to be the same way. The clothes piled up on the coffee table. Ruby took Weiss’s lips in another kiss and reached out petting over the smaller breasts of the other woman.

James swallowed as Oz smirked really getting into what he was doing to Ruby, he could see the third finger that Oz pushed into her. He pulled his gaze back to the women in his lap, Ruby moaned more and more. Ozpin pulled away and pulled off his clothes, James could see Ruby jerk at the sound of his belt clicking. He remembered videly the last time he and Oz had played together, those many years ago.

Ruby whined long and loud and Weiss pulled away. Her eyes widened as Ruby keened, Ozpin standing behind Ruby half kneeling on the couch as he held Ruby’s behind and pushed his large member into her. Weiss started to pant just watching it sink into her friend, her gaze flicked up to Ruby, she was panting those silver eyes lidded as the moans tumbled from from her lips.

Weiss didn’t think as her fingers sought out her core. Oz pulled Ruby back and she cried out her fingers dug into Weiss’s thighs. James’s fingers joined hers but she was too distracted to do anything other than to push onto them. Oz’s gaze moved to Weiss and he smirked and pulled out, pulling Ruby with him and spinning her around. He leaned down and kissed her before grabbing her by the butt and lifted her up as he stood.

Ruby squeaked and grabbed him, only for him to bring her down on his member. Ruby screamed at the sudden intrusion and the sensation. Oz lifted and moved her with ease, setting a quick pace that had her clawing at his biceps.

James dipped his fingers into Weiss’s sex while gently teasing a nipple. “Exciting isn’t it? Oz has always liked to put on a show. Once upon a time I was just like you. Discouraged from even looking up sex much less doing it for no other reason then it’s fun. Oz and Qrow taught me much better than that, opened my eyes and let me into their bed. Just watching them was enough for me for so long.” His fingers curled inside of her, stroking in quick movements over one of her sweet spots while doing the same over her clit. “If you want, I could do the same for you. Show you just how it can be without the duty of it getting involved.”

Between the actions before her and James words and touch Weiss came with a high cry, the orgasm seemed to last so much longer then normal and she slumped exhausted against James. Meanwhile Ruby heard and the mere thought of Weiss getting off to watching her pushed her over as well. She clung to Oz as he slammed her down onto him once more, holding her tight as he filled her. He walked over to the couch and sat, Ruby snuggling up on his lap out cold.

James looked at Ruby who was dozing away and chuckled. “Show off.”

Oz laughed and pet over the back of his little lover. “Well I’ll admit it’s a bit of a habit when people are watching.”

Weiss came around and thought Ruby looked really cute cuddling Oz. She sat up and blushed covering her chest with a arm. She reached over and grabbed her dress quickly pulling it on. “Umm, thank you Ozpin for all your help.”
“You’re welcome.” He waved them off as James stood as well. “Have many orgasms in my name.”

James did a mix of a snort and a chuckle. “Gods you haven’t changed.”

“I’ll take that as a compliment.” Oz returned to petting Ruby.

James and Weiss departed, the later blushing to the nines. “Has he always been like that?”

“Where sex is concerned? Eh a bit, he gets off on people watching him.” James paused as they walked behind a pillar that would hide them from casual observers. “Weiss, Ozpin told me you were looking for me and I have also been looking for you. If you would permit me to court you, I’d be honoured.”

Weiss blushed and offered him her hand. “I’d like that… James.”

James took her hand and bent from his waist and pressed a kiss to her fingers respectfully.

James approached Glynda’s flat armed with a hundred year old bottle of White Wolf wine. He had a second bottle of Mahakamm vodka but that was for later. He knocked on the door and put a smile on.

Glynda opened it looking grumpy and annoyed. “Have a drink with me?” James asked holding up the bottle turning it so she could see the label.

That did the trick, the door opened the rest of the way and Glynda let him in. “I’ll get some glasses.”

James closed the door behind him and progressed into the flat, the set up was much the same as Ozpin’s only less personal. More clean and pristine in the placement of things. He sat on the couch and pulled the cork off the bottle.

Glynda returned with two cups and sat beside him, James poured the very alcoholic drink and had a tiny sip.

Glynda took more of a gulp and pulled her glasses off and rubbed her eyes. “You’re not getting laid tonight, don’t think that one bottle of wine will get me that drunk.”

James’s brow lifted for a second before he controlled himself, *wow someone’s in a very sour mood.*

“That wasn’t at all my intent Glynda. However you’ve been out of sorts and I got Ozpin to talk to me so I felt it would be wise to fill you in.”

“So he’ll tell you but not me. Seems like he tells the people he sleeps with everything and the rest of us get hung out to dry.” Glynda took another large gulp.

“That is hardly fair.” James took a deep breath swirling the wine. “To sum up, Oz, Qrow and Ruby changed the execution of his curse over Halloween. Only somehow they did so in the past, by several hundred years. Ozpin has been struggling with the shift in his memories and is still processing them. While we were talking the other day, he was being tortured in his mind. He mentioned many of the memories are unpleasant and he does not wish to talk about them.”

“He could have just told me that!” Glynda finished her cup and poured herself another.

“He didn’t want to tell me it, no offense Glynda but you never had a chance. He knows and trusts
you but Oz has always liked to play things close to the chest.” James said.

Glynda got up her drink sloshing as she drank and stormed away from him. “He lied though! I asked him when he started teaching Ruby what his intentions were! He said he wasn’t interested in sleeping with her. Low and beyond, I go to his flat and he’s seconds away from fucking her on his countertop!”

“You could learn to knock first. I think I’ve lost count of how many times you’ve walked in on him having some sort of sex.” James fought down a smile, it had become a bit of game between him, Qrow and Oz. Glynda really did need to learn to knock so whenever they had a feeling she might come around they decided to do something sexual just in the hopes she’d learn her lesson.

“That’s not the point! A student AGAIN. Qrow was bad enough, now he’s an immortal mess of power and alcohol with no self control.” Glynda fumed and drank again.

“Ruby is a young but mature adult, as a team leader I think that’s aged her very quickly. I have a feeling she knows more about Oz and what she is getting into then you do. Before you bring up Qrow again, Qrow and Ruby have been together for sometime from what Oz told me. It was Qrow and Ruby bringing Oz into their relationship not the other way around.”

“You can’t know that for sure.”

“You could try asking Ruby herself.” James said putting his mostly untouched cup down.

“There is no point, Oz is too good at what he does. She probably thinks it was all her idea and that she is in control of the situation.” Glynda drank again and wobbled. “She’s too inexperienced to know better.”

“I think she is handling it well. Her school work is unaffected, perhaps even better for it. She helps him cope with all the changes that he’s going through. He mentioned having the same face for five hundred years. So one can reason he has had the memories of the present for an equal length of time. Glynda, he’s been waiting for them. Her and Qrow both. I know you dislike how he uses sex but we all have our vices.” James gave her second mostly empty cup a pointed look. “Oz doesn’t whore anymore, he’s kept to Qrow almost exclusively since Qrow was a student. Ozpin doesn’t love easy, I should know that better than most. But when he does, he’ll go through hell and high-water for that person. I think Ruby has earned that affection. Please, just leave them be.”

“It’s still wrong.” Glynda came back and finished her cup.

“Come on, I’m the Atlassian that’s supposed to have a stick up my ass about sex. Ruby’s doing fine, Oz is getting better. If I was you, I’d apologies for storming in again and let sleeping dogs lay.” James said.

“I’ll think about it. Go and leave the wine.”

James stood and said. “It was a gift.”

He picked up the second bottle he had hidden in the eve of the door after leaving Glynda to her thoughts and walked to the elevator. A button punch later and a short ride he tapped lightly on Oz’s door before opening it.

There were no lights on but the sliding doors were open and a gentle breeze blew through the flat. James could see Oz out on his balcony looking up at the sky. He toed his boots off and progressed silently into the flat. He visited the kitchen finding the shot glasses exactly where he remembered before joining Oz out on the balcony in the brisk autumn air.
He poured a shot for them each and set the bottle between them. James turned the clear liquid back and forth in the glass.

Ozpin looked over and picked up the shot glass. He raised a brow and lifted the glass towards James, they clicked glasses and threw the shot back.

James purred at the strong sharp drink.

“Oh that’s the good stuff.” Ozpin said after swirling the drink around his mouth before swallowing.

“Burns.” James said. “I’ve always envied your ability to down vodka.”

“It’s a skill.” Ozpin poured the drink again. “Oooo Mahakamn.”

“I remembered it was your favourite.” James looking out to the stars, it wasn’t be best view but it was alright.

“Still is.” Ozpin threw the the shot back again. “So what brings you to my home at this hour?”

“I talked with Glynda and gave her the cliff notes version. She’s still pissed you took Ruby for a lover but I think she’ll come around, in time.” James followed suit and gasped before filling the shot glasses again.

“You’re so out of practice, not like it’s tequila.” Ozpin said, before looking away. “I really should talk to her as well, but I don’t think she’d believe me if I said I really didn’t intend to take Ruby for a lover when I started teaching her.”

“How did you three get together anyway?” James asked.

Ozpin winced. “It was messy. I did a lot of stupid for a while, Qrow was pulling away and I didn’t know why. Then I learned that he and Ruby were together and it just went downhill from there. Qrow and I eventually got to talking again and I’ve been trying to repair the damage I did while being a stupid jealous idiot.” Oz took the shot faster then before and poured himself another downing that too.

“You jealous? That’s a first.” James said and filled Oz’s cup again.

“Well you know that I always loved Qrow.”

“Yeah, plain as day. I think the whole school expected you two to swap rings.”

“Qrow didn’t know.” Ozpin said leaning on the rail.

“... Oh, crap.” James said a bit stunned. “I can see how that ended up going down hill over time.”

“Yeah.” Oz sipped at the shot.

“I take it you two had a heart to heart?”

“After some fighting, shouting, more stupidity from me. More yelling and Ruby acting as a mediator and then a proper talk. We did sort it out and both of us got ourselves pointed in the right direction.” Oz finished the shot. “Yeah I fucked up big with her. Thankfully she’s... she very intelligent.”

“I got that impression after looking at her grades. You never shoot for average do you?” James said taking his shot and pouring again.
“Average is boring, give me the weird and the wonderful.” Oz said.

“Too true there!” James lifted his glass and they drank together.

Oz poured again and James asked. “So what is she doing to your Aura? It’s obvious something is going on there.”

Ozpin bit his lip and looked away again. “None of this gets back to Atlas?”

“I swear it on my remaining limbs and fleshy bits.” James crossed an arm over his chest.

Oz barked out a laugh. “I honestly don’t know. Whatever her soul is doing I like it. Melding with her is so different then it is with Qrow, she’s got all the control and just sweeps you up with her … essence. I’ve been trying not to wonder what it would be like to do it while having sex.”

“Probably one hell of a high.” James said. “While you were out in the hospital she came and… well I didn’t say anything at the time I think she moved your soul. The machine monitoring your Aura died and when the Doc tried to take a read of hers it damn near blew up.”

“I don’t remember much of anything after I passed out. But I do remember a period where I felt safe and warm. Maybe you’re right, I don’t know but I know that she’s something special.” Oz smiled looking up at the stars.

James took in Oz’s easy smile and relaxed posture. “You love her don’t you?”

“I waited for her. Five centuries of remembering her, knowing that she was going to be there one day. So I waited, there is still a disconnect between the new memories and the last few months. I can remember waiting for her, but I knew I couldn’t change anything. It’s like having two sets of memories for one time period. One were I was stupid and jealous and not knowing any better, than another small feeling of waiting. There confusing, I waited and was jerk, but I couldn’t change anything or I won’t have changed at all. Ugh, time travel is a pain.” Ozpin said.

“Particularly when it’s your own timeline. I think there is reason writers tend to avoid that.” James said smirking.

“Since when do you have time to read science fiction?” Ozpin asked.

“I make time!” James snapped his human fingers.

They laughed at that and drank again, a yawn sounded from behind them.

“Oz~. Why are you here?” Ruby wandered out of the flat nude and rubbing her eyes.

“Aren’t you cold?” Oz asked though he was only wearing slanks.

“Na.” Ruby blinked a few times and jumped. “Eeek! Uhh hi General.” She scrambled to cover herself and was mostly unsuccessful.

James chuckled and pulled his coat off setting it around her shoulders. “Good evening Ruby.”

Ruby blushed. “Good evening Sir.”

“James is fine, I think we will be getting very familiar with each other.” James smirked.

Ozpin punched him humorously in the shoulder. “Quit flirting with my woman. You’ve got one.”
“I don’t know, if the ladies want to play again I think I might get more involved.” James said with a purr.

“No way, you’re too much of a White Knight to plan that far ahead.” Oz stuck out his tongue.

“Not all of us have the time to sink into planning everything High Protocol man.” James quipped right back.

“At least I’m not a Fluffy, unlike someone here. You barely play the rolls at all anymore.” Oz teased.

“Hey! Qrow’s the Fluffy not me!” James said taking his shot.

Ruby looked between the two of them. “Oh my Gods, they’ve multiplied.”

James and Ozpin looked to her and burst into laughter. “Oh, you have NO idea.” James said holding his side as he laughed.

Ruby cocked a hip the coat parting a little bit. “Oh I get the feeling I’ll learn.”

James’s laughter deepened. “Damn, Oz. I see why you like her.”

“Hmm hmm. Can I pick them or what?” Oz drank his shot.

“Are you two drunk?” Ruby looked between them and the bottle.

James made a so-so gesture with his hand. “Just a bit.”

Ruby giggled covering her mouth. “Okay then.” She pulled James coat off and handed it back to him. “I’m going back to bed. Don’t steal my Dom all night, James. It’s hard keeping his bed warm all by myself.” She turned and bounced away.

Both men openly ogled her butt as she departed, Ruby looked over her shoulder and giggled before disappearing.

“Little insatiable vixen.” Oz said with a low aroused growl.

“If she ever lets you paint that ass, I want pictures.” James said taking his shot and filling the glasses again.

“Only if she says it’s okay, and if you draw me some outfits for her. Your corsets were works of art!” Oz said his voice slurring slightly.

“Still can’t draw, I’m working on it though.” James held up his left hand. “The fine motor just isn’t in the right and relearning is hard.”

“Why not try getting upgraded then? Those are old and I’m sure better can be put together now.” Oz said leaning on the rail again.

“Too much risk, what if Salem found out? She must have spies everywhere and the recovery would put me down for months. I can’t be away from my job for that long.” James held up the now mostly empty bottle. “I think we’re out of the good stuff.”

Oz finished his shot, then turned the glass upside down as he set it on the rail. “You need to think more about what’s best for you. Rather than your Kingdom, if it can’t survive a few months without you then you didn’t structure your command very well.”
“You have a point there.” James finished the shot and bottle. “I think I will retire while I can still walk straight. You should get back to Ruby, I bet she could do with a warming up.”

Oz chuckled. “Oh I’ll do that and more.”

“Hey you know the rule, drunkenness and sex don’t go together.” They grabbed their glasses and Oz grabbed the bottle.

“I’m not that drunk! Plus she’s might like the scent, given how she’s used to Qrow.” Ozpin said putting the glasses away in the kitchen and grabbed two large glasses and filling them with water. Both man drank the water and then two more before talking again. “I’ll be off then, hopefully that will dissuade any potential hangover.”

“See you around James, and don’t forget what I said about getting an upgrade and those drawings. I miss playing around with you and I think having Ruby and Weiss will give things a much needed shake up.” Ozpin said.

“I’ll think about the former and if you guys ever visit Atlas we’ll have to talk about the latter. Night Oz.” James said as he shoved his feet into his boots and pulled his coat on.

“Night James.” Ozpin closed the door as the General departed. Right he had a woman to warm up, he turned and stumbled a bit. Putting a hand out on the wall he thought that maybe James was right and just cuddles would be a good thing right now.

Chapter End Notes

Ardy: There one fluffy, silly but informative chapter done! On to, It's a Brawl in the Family! (About freaken time if you ask me).
Thank you too: darkvampirekisses, Celestialfae (I can only approve or delete a comment, not control want's in them. If something got deleted it wasn't on my end and it's more likely that Ao3 messed up. Which can happen if the internet is flaky where you are)lillithschild and Sportsfangirl815
Kry: Time to get this show on the road.
Ardy: I'm curious if I can condense this next arc, I'm so ready to move on from Beacon. For anyone wondering, I've only 2 or 3 James/Weiss chapters to be sprinkled throughout ER, I figured it would be easier then giving them a separate story.
Eyes danced with deranged delight as Qrow sunk his blade deeper within Sanguira. Her scarred face smiled at him as finally life began to drip away. Sanguira cackled at him. “Eat, drink and fuck as much as you wish but every time you close your eyes it will be her face staring back at you as you claw into her supple body. Crimson blood will flow like tears from her eyes and you know deep in your heart of hearts that you will take nothing less then her death. You are no better than I Qrow Branwen and the best part is, you’ll hurt her, you’ll give in one day and you’ll take her and you’ll hurt her. Because that’s the only thing you know how to do.”

Ruby and Weiss watched as Qrow and Winter wrecked up Beacon’s courtyard, Ruby wasn’t afraid she knew that Qrow could pound Winter into paste. She and Weiss had just heard that Winter was coming and rushed to meet her but by the time of their arrival Winter was already deep within a brawl between herself and Qrow. They broke apart and Qrow hit the lever on his scythe, Harbinger unfolded into all of its glory. Ruby bit her lip as a slight red glow emanated from Qrow. Why had he not told her he was back?

Winter glared at him and unleashed her speed glyph, shooting down the courtyard. Only just as she moved to strike Qrow was no longer there. Her sword sliced through empty air and the blade of Harbinger was around her waist. Qrow whipped it around cutting into her Aura and sending her flying into a pillar.

Winter shook her head trying to clear it and raised her swords just in time to stop Harbinger from cleaving her from head to groin. She was unprepared for the strength behind the attack and it broke through her guard easily. Qrow’s hand shot out and grabbed her by the neck squeezing.

The crowd that had gathered to watch the brawl slowly paled and took almost a collective step away. Ruby stepped forward even as Weiss tried to stop her, Winter’s Aura broke with a crackle but Qrow did not let up. The Silver Eyed Warrior blasted over and grabbed his arm looking into his eyes. They were dilated and unfocused, dread pooled in her gut. She had seen that look on him before. “Qrow let her go.”

Winter clawed at Qrow’s hand kicking out but failing to hit him.

Ruby tried again lowering her voice so only Qrow would hear. “Muninn, let her go.”

Like a switch the name had Qrow dropping Winter immediately, the Atlassian coughed and reached for her throat. It was a dark purple and it was only sheer dumb luck he hadn’t broken her windpipe. Qrow looked over to Ruby, the memory fading along with the haze of drink. “Come.” She said and pulled him away from Winter, he went willingly moving into a run as she did. They bolted from the courtyard just as Ozpin, James and Glynda arrived at a dead run.

Ozpin looked at Winter then saw Ruby pulling Qrow away. He broke off from Glynda and James and followed the pair, though Ruby quickly pulled Qrow into her Semblance and blasted away from the school.
Ruby and Qrow materialized with a jerk deep in the Emerald Forest. She knelt panting as Qrow broke away from her pulling his flask out of his pocket and chugging like it was going out of style. Ruby saw as she caught her breath and walked over grabbing his wrist. “Enough, stop you’ve had more than enough.”

Qrow looked down to her but she had a feeling he wasn’t really seeing her. He pulled his wrist from her grasp easily and moved to drink again. Ruby reached for him. “Qrow… Muninn stop.”

Again Qrow lurched to a stop, Ruby took the flask away capping it and tossing it to the ground. “I know you’re hurting but come here.” She held his hands and he moved to her kneeling and resting his head on her chest. Qrow squeezed his eyes shut and held her gently. Ruby started to stroke over his hair, she could already tell he was not in a talking mood. “Just listen.” Ruby whispered as she took deep smooth breaths, keeping herself calm and her heart rate slow and steady.

Ozpin burst into the clearing, almost tripping on Harbinger where it lay forgotten in the grass. He picked it up and put it in it’s collapsed form. Oz walked over and set it on the ground, he said softly. “Whisper a secret to me Muninn.”

Qrow hauled himself away from Ruby, eyes completely black his nails turned the same. He reached up and grabbed Oz by the coat, whispering rapidly in that old tongue to the man. Ruby watched Oz’s eyes widened, then the look of pain and worry. Oz wrapped his arms around Qrow as soon as he finished giving his report the smaller man broke down into sobs. Loud and hacking as he clung to Oz like he was the only thing left in the world.

“Shh, shhh, it’s all in the past now.” Oz stroked up and down Qrow’s back.

James and Glynda raced into the clearing but came to a halt as they heard Qrow’s sobs. Ruby watched as Glynda looked so utterly surprised, James looked a mix of worried and grim. She gathered up Harbinger and Qrow’s flask and then put a finger to her lips. James nodded then looked over to Ozpin and Qrow, the latter showed no signs of stopping in his tears. James lifted a hand and quickly signed out in combat shorthand. :We need to move him.: 

Ozpin nodded in a barely perceptible gesture. He stroked up Qrow’s back again and whispered. “Shh, time to sleep.” He pressed on the two low points of Qrow’s neck and a few seconds later Qrow slumped against him unconscious.

Ruby, James and Glynda were gathered in the living room of Oz’s flat. The silence was oppressive and Ozpin returned a few minutes later, he looked tired in a way that Ruby hadn’t seen before.

“What the hell happened?” Glynda asked.

Ozpin didn’t say anything, just pulled his Scroll from his pocket and connected it to his television. He pulled up a file and sat with a flop on his sofa putting his head in his hands.

First and foremost there was a picture of the battlefield. Ruby felt ill just looking at it and quickly moved to read the battlefield summary. It was painfully brief, a Huntsman had interrupted a slave auction and it had resulted in a blood bath.

Ozpin spoke softly. “When I made Qrow my eyes in the world, I gave him a perfect memory. He can’t forget.” He picked up the Scroll again and pulled up the face of the slaver. She was a shark
fanaus with white hair and pale blue eyes.

“Oh dear.” James said, he could see the resemblance to Winter instantly.

“And Qrow is very drunk, even by his standards. I’ll take care of him and figure out someway to apologize to Winter. She was just in the wrong place at the wrong time.” Oz said, and mused he could do with a drink as well.

Glynda scowled at Ozpin. “Is this just more ‘house cleaning’ to you? Something you can brush under the rug? People took videos, this won’t just go away.”

“Winter is alive and will be fine. He stopped when it counted that is the important thing. He was obviously drunk, it can be blamed upon that.” Ozpin said.

“How did you get him to stop?” James asked Ruby.

Ruby bit her lip and shook her head. “That’s private.”

Alright.” James said and Glynda looked over to him in sheer disbelief. “You’re letting this go, just like that?”

“I have no right to the private lives of Ruby and Qrow Glynda. Nor do you, I am well aware you dislike what Qrow has become over time but we have other things to worry about. Ruby and Ozpin know Qrow best, let them help him and resolve this.” James crossed his arms over his chest.

“Thank you James.” Ozpin looked over to Ruby and took a deep breath. “Ruby seeing as you are a part of this now I think you should stay for what we are going to talk about.”

“You’re telling her?” Glynda snapped. “She’s just a student just because she warms your bed-.”

“Enough!” Ozpin rose and rounded on Glynda. “Ruby is one of our best students, her family is already connected to this. She has the right to know what I send Qrow out looking for. I have complete trust in her, you could stand to learn to do the same.”

“You’re not thinking with your brain.” Glynda stood her ground.

“Neither are you.” Ozpin said.

James sighed. “Ruby, the people in this room and Qrow form a… secret alliance to protect the Seasonal Maidens. Women with magic that Ozpin created in a past life, these women are in turned tied to the Relics of the Brother Gods, with each Maiden capable of opening a vault that contains a Relic. Recently the Fall Maiden Amber was targeted and injured by a group of unknown assailants. We’ve been looking for someone to replace her.”

“Half of her power was stolen but the rest is still tied to her Aura. We believe we can move it but are still looking for the right person.” Ozpin said.

“So, who are you thinking of then?” Ruby normally would have been stunned but since she started spending time with Ozpin she had seen plenty of magic. A little more wasn’t hard for her to wrap her mind around.

Ozpin sat back down beside her. “Pyrrha Nikos, she is more experienced than you and doesn’t already have a magic inherent to her. I’d just reclaim the magic, but I don’t know what that would do to Amber.” Ozpin clenched a fist. “Or to the magic itself, if it was all in one place I’d just absorb it back to myself.”
“But because this other person has half of it your worried it would backfire and seek out its other half?” Ruby asked, and couldn’t help but look at his left hand.

“Exactly.” Oz gave a tiny smile and leaned forward in his sofa. “Amber shows no signs of waking up and sadly her condition is getting worse, not better. I fear we are almost out of time.”

“So you’re gonna ask Pyrrha?” Ruby said. Ozpin nodded and sighed, that was a conversation he was dreading. Ruby worried her lip. “I guess I could talk to her too, I’ve hung out enough with you to already believe and understand magic a little bit and since I now know about it maybe I could give her someone to talk to about it.”

“That would be very helpful Ruby.” James said.

“Then that is settled.” Ozpin stood again. “You should go and spend time with your father and sister, fill them in. Just say that Qrow will be spending the night with me and will be better tomorrow.”

“Okay.” Ruby got up and gave him a quick hug. “One day you’re going to have to teach me how you take care of him.”

Ozpin reached up and brushed a lock of hair out of her face. “Something tells me you will have your own method. He already responds when you call his name, that may be all you need to find a way deeper.”

The silver eyed woman kissed his palm and stepped away. “Talk to you later.”

“Goodbye, don’t let Tai barge in here.” Ozpin said with a chuckled.

Ruby giggled and departed. James wove an arm around Glynda’s and pulled her towards the door. “We will be going as well, we both of work to do.”

“We’ll talk tomorrow and I will speak with Pyrrha after the team match.” Ozpin said.

“See you then.” James and Glynda left.

Ozpin looked over to the tv and turned it off as well as his Scroll. Qrow would not want to see any of that when he came around, though he was probably already awake and just waiting it out until everyone had dispersed. With a sigh he returned to the bedroom, he had drawn the curtains but just enough warm light crept through by see. Qrow was half curled up and staring out blankly.

Oz walked over and sat on the edge of the bed, he reached out and stroked through Qrow’s hair. The younger immortal closed his eyes and let out a long contented sigh. “Would you like anything?”

“To feel.” Qrow said. “I feel… tired and stuck. I can’t get her out of my head.”

Ozpin reached over to the bedside drawer and pulled out a long piece of black silk. “Would you like me to shut out the world for you?”

“Yes please.” Qrow pushed the blankets out of the way and slowly stood. “Maybe I could just hang for a bit?”

“Of course.” Oz leaned down cupping Qrow’s head and kissing him once slowly. Qrow sat back on the bed and closed his eyes, listening to Oz move around. Set up the rig, gather the rope in no time at all he returned. “Come, I am ready.” Qrow opened his eyes, Ozpin was standing under the ring, a long length of hemp rope in hand. He took a few slow steps over and turned crossing his arms high behind the small of his back and presenting them to Oz.
Qrow let his eyes slide closed as Oz behind to bind him, the scratchy yet soft feeling of the rope as Oz bound his wrists. The start of the harness, The rope pulled over his chest as Oz worked, crossing the two pieces over. Qrow loved the feeling, one piece of rope was to contain. Within Shibari it was much more common to fold a piece of rope in half, instead of the bite of a single length of rope there was the feeling of support that came with two. The red eyed man breathed deeply as the rope moved against his skin. Little touch by little touch.

Down Oz went, his skilled fingers making the rope dance into beautiful shapes to hold and support. His hands brushing along Qrow’s skin as he worked. Oz moved behind him anchoring the rope, to the bindings upon the back. Pulling slightly to make sure the whole harness was perfect.

Qrow felt Oz step away and knew it was to get another length of rope. He returned and began with a simple tie around Qrow’s waist, low on his love handles. Another wrap around then Oz worked down one leg, creating handles with the rope about every ten centimeters. Qrow let out a long breath as Oz worked back up, creating more holds weaving a thick support along the length of Qrow’s thigh in a intricate weave of rope.

Again Oz stepped away and Qrow heard him pick up another long length of rope. He could feel Oz create the link from the support harness around his chest to the rig mounted in the ceiling. Then the rope came down and Oz wove a hold around his ankle. Now it came, Oz looped the rope back up through the ring and pulled, lifting Qrow’s leg from the ground pulling it up behind him. Anticipation coiled in Qrow’s belly, this was one of his favourite parts, the first feelings of suspension.

Ozpin moved around him and tied the rope to the harness he had made upon Qrow’s thigh, then up again through the ring. Finally he pulled again lifting Qrow completely off the ground hanging horizontally at three points. His thigh, ankle and the chest harness. Qrow looked at the floor for a moment before closing his eyes as Ozpin finished with the knots.

Oz stepped away and he watched Qrow relax, heard that little sigh of release that the red eyed man let out as he settled. He knew that point where anticipation became relaxation, he returned to the bedside table and retrieved the black silk. Qrow opened his eyes when Oz knelt before him, the copper eyed man reached up and traced a finger feather light over Qrow’s lips. Qrow closed his eyes again and tilted his head and Oz moved to him. The kiss was light and slow, lips melding in a smooth dance.

Time slid away from Qrow, Oz withdrew and tied the black silk over Qrows eyes. Qrow moaned softly as Oz’s fingertips played over the pressure points of his head. He remained relaxed as Oz moved away again, a minute later the sound of rainfall emanated gently through the flat. Thoughts dribbled away, rain was Qrow’s favourite sound. The gentle pitter patter of rain upon leaves, he heard Oz return and undress. Those hands he loved so much joined the tight protective feeling of the rope. They caressed over his chest and stomach as Oz laid down underneath Qrow.

Qrow let his head hang, he loved this feeling. The rain in his ears, to have his sight removed but to have Oz’s embrace wrapped around him, holding him up so lovely. He felt Oz reach up and turn him slightly, back and slowly forth, rocking him. The slightest of breezes ticking his cheeks. He felt Oz move to kneel and adjusted the ropes, Qrow’s legs drew together the one with rope around his ankle pressed to his thigh as the harness upon it became the highest point with his head a few centimetres above the ground.

Qrow felt Oz settle again and knew their faces were close. He knew that Oz would have a pillow now and would be watching him. He could feel Oz’s breath tickle his hair and moaned softly. Oz here with him, the rain, all the worry and pain was forgotten. There was only the comfort in
suspension, the light touch of his lovers elegant fingers upon his jaw.

The kisses were slow and deep, Oz wove his fingers into Qrow’s hair and held him where he wished to kiss him. Qrow purred softly into the kisses, he felt so light and wonderful. So safe. Arousal played through him but it was a secondary feeling to the tranquility. Ozpin withdrew and watched Qrow fall into a sleep like state. The tension and pain falling away, giving away to feeling, to sensation to the connection. Ozpin reached up and removed the blindfold, Qrow didn’t need it anymore. He traced over his brow and down Qrow’s nose to the bow of his lips.

Fluidly Oz moved, dipping down to kiss upon Qrow’s neck and work his way up his chest. He rested a hand upon Qrow’s chest as he kissed, following the flow of rope upon his lovers body. His tongue found a nipple, he teased the barbell piercing rolling it gently earning another low moan. He kisses his way over to the other and did the same, his hand moving to stroke upon Qrow’s stomach. Teasing along the path of the rope.

Qrow arched his back slightly another moan slipping from him. Oz’s hands roamed over him, tracing the rope that extended embrace. Rain pitter pattered in his ears, Ozpin’s touched flowed like rain over him. Little by little the touches eased off, Oz returned to laying upon the ground watching him. Calm resonated through the apartment, there was no past or future. Only the moment, only the rain in his ears, the embrace of Oz and the safety. Qrow finally fell away into serenity.

Chapter End Notes

Ardy: So we were originally going to post this as one big chapter but the contrast between the tones of the first and second bit is so huge we decided splitting them would be better.
Kry: Thank you too: Silenaislife, darkvampirekisses, Celestialfae, Baker1762, Sportsfangirl815, lillithschl, QueenofSpades19. It was really awesome to see how well received the last chapter was.
Qrow snuggled into Oz as the man stood behind him, his arms wrapped around his torso. Qrow teased his thumbs over the red marks upon his wrists and sighed happily, the memory of that tranquility imprinted onto his skin. They stood hidden in the eve of the walkway that led up to the Vytal colosseum's arena and were currently watching team RWBY hand team BRNZ it’s butt. The reason they were here and not elsewhere was because after every team match there was a student vs huntsmen battle. Where students could challenge any huntsmen on the provided list. Which was just about every huntsmen in Vale, Qrow and Oz were of course on it.

As expected team RWBY won and Yang, Blake and Weiss walked off the platform in a small huddle. Yang giggled at Qrow and Oz when she saw them as the team came to a stop beside them. When Qrow gestured to the remaining figure on the stage Yang shrugged. “Ruby wanted to solo it. Think she’ll pick one of you?” Yang asked.

“I find it very likely.” Ozpin said.

Upon the stage Oobleck and Port projected the list of names for Ruby to choose from. Murmurs already filled the arena as people speculated who Ruby would pick. While it wasn't rare for a solo match most teams preferred to work together to take down a huntsman. Ruby had other plans in mind and called out. “How about we make this a foursome? I'd like to challenge General Ironwood, and I know Qrow Branwen is around… And Professor Ozpin, cause that will just make this interesting.” Ruby rocked on her heels.

“That is very bold of you-” Port started to say over the mic.

James stood from his place in the stands and stepped over the wall dropping into the arena with a bang. “Sounds like fun to me Ruby. If Oz and Qrow are in I’ll play.”

“Oh of course I'm in, like I'd turn down the chance to have a go at you Jimmy.” Qrow strode out from where he had been hiding. While there were some mumbles about his behaviour the other day most were wagering on how Ruby Rose believed she could best not one but three powerful huntsmen. Qrow ignore them and came to a stop between the two the three of them making a triangle.

James huffed. “That's not how I recall our last… engagement going.”

Ruby giggled and called out. “Come on Oz, I know you're hiding there. Come make our little party whole, I need someone to call the shots before those two get the rulers out.”

That did it, sure enough Ozpin stepped out from behind the eve very alike Qrow. “Hmm, they'd ignore you in favour of measuring.” Ozpin said getting laughter to burst out through the stadium. “Are you quite sure you can handle all of us my dear?” Oz raised a brow coming to a stop beside her.

“Oh I know I can't, but that is why I intend to rig this game.” Ruby grinned rising up on her toes.

“And how do you intend to do that?” Oz asked.

“Come down here and I'll tell you.”
Ozpin bowed and Ruby leaned up whispering into his ear. Qrow, James and the rest of the audience watched Ozpin’s jaw drop. He pulled away and cleared his throat. “You have a deal my dear.”

Qrow and James formed up and backed away as Ozpin shifted his attention to them and smiled. “Ruby what did you offer him?” James pulled out his gun, he had a feeling this wasn’t going to go well for him.

“Just one of his favourite things.” Ruby called to Oobleck and Peter. “Four by four and random please.”

Oobleck and Peter shared a long look, they were well aware of the history between the three men. Oobleck put a smile on. “As you wish Miss Rose. I do hope you understand what you are getting into.”

“Don’t worry professor, I’m intimately acquainted with their tastes.” Ruby said as the arena did it’s random generation, the audience laughed at her little remark.

“Very well, good luck to you Miss Rose.”

Ozpin chuckled and reached up brushing a lock of her hair out of her face. “I’ll take James, you lock down Qrow.”

James snorted. “You won’t be taking anyone right now. Perhaps later or in the reverse, I do recall a few bouts where it went the other way. Working you up has always been fun.”

“Ha, I’d like to see you try.” Ozpin said as the arena spun down. They had forest, a plain field of water, volcanic and Dust desert.

“Oh I will and I think with an audience, turnabout is fair play after all.” James said.

The arena settled and Ruby pulled out her sword, the gift from Qrow had become very familiar in her hand. She hadn’t used it through the fight with BRNZ, she had been waiting for this. Crescent Rose was still strapped to her hips if needed.

“Well it seems that Ozpin and James haven’t forgotten how to get under each others skin.” Peter commented as the countdown started.

Ruby readied her Semblance watching as her three occupants shifted into fighting stances. Just as the count hit zero, she blasted off barreling straight into Qrow and carrying them both into the trees.

Qrow battered his way out of the whirlwind of petals too late to avoid one of the trees, smashing his back into the trunk. His Aura barely even flickered from the impact as Ruby re-materialized in front of him and raced with her new sword at him. Qrow neatly danced to the side avoiding the attack and pulling Harbinger from his back. The blade barely touched with Ruby’s, just enough for him to use the momentum to move backwards, Ruby following in his wake.

It was certainly different, Ruby using a sword instead of her scythe, he was use to being able to dodge her weapon but whatever training she had been doing with Ozpin had made her faster and more versatile.

“Someone’s been learning new tricks.” Qrow said lashing out with his claymore as Ruby ducked neatly under it.

“Oh you have no idea. Ozpin is a very thorough instructor. I can’t wait to try something he taught me to do with my hips the other day on you.” Ruby grinned, her evil master plan was going to work she
Qrow stumbled for a second and just barely got his face out of the way of Ruby’s blade, it drawing across his Aura. His brain turned to wholly not combat situations as she pounced on him again. “Oh really? I’m sure I’ve got a trick or two that Ozpin doesn’t have.”

“Well I should hope so, he’s just so big it can be rather limiting.”

Qrow couldn’t help it he burst into laughter. “Ohhh I can’t wait to see how you manage that.” He would have never imagined Ruby would be so bold as to make a cock joke, though he did hope that people wouldn’t catch on too quickly. The shot from Crescent Rose had him barreling into a tree, he quickly shook his head and tried to get it back in the game… Not the head Ruby was referring to though, even if he really liked that thought.

James who had been momentarily distracted by Ruby’s rose burst barely got his arm up in time to block the strike from Oz’s cane. He backed away as Oz pushed the offensive, dancing around the lightning fast stikes and getting the water field behind him. With a flick of his fingers, he pulled on his Semblance gathered the water in his awareness and powered a punch forward- with the water backing it up.

Ozpin’s brow fired up as he was back tumbling into the lava field, it splashed around him clinging to his Aura. “

“Oh my it seems the General is not pulling his punches tonight. Right out of the gate and making full use of his Semblance, for those who do not know. James Ironwood Semblance is telekinesis.” Oobleck commented as James took a few steps back putting himself in the water field and gathering it around him.

“A risky move to use it so readily, for Ozpin has more Aura and much greater speed. If I were to wager it, I’d say their strength is about equal. At least till they makes use of their Semblances. Though what rotten luck on Ozpin’s part to land in the lava field.” Peter said.

Meanwhile Oz blasted forth, James sweeping his arm around to direct the water and stepping with Oz, keeping him in his field of vision. Oz jumped intent on hammering down on James from above only for the water to meet him in a huge wave. Oz grit his teeth and pulled on his Semblance, the water slowed to him almost standing still. He stepped on it, twisting around it. Time snapped back to normal and James raised both hands to block the thunderous blow. It shattered his concentration and the water fell back to the ground.

“Ohh now that’s a rare treat to see.” Oobleck said. “Ladies and Gentlemen you just witnessed Ozpin’s Semblance. Last he explained to me, he manipulates time in a field around him. What can seem like a second to us, can be several minutes to him.”

“It seems both Headmasters are going all out, I wonder how Miss Rose knew that would be the case,” Peter asked.

“I get the feeling she knows more about her three challengers than we do.” Oobleck pushed the nose of his glasses up.

Ruby and Qrow launched at one another, swords dancing in a maze of Aura infused strikes. Qrow was smirking while Ruby was a mix of smiling and scowling. “Well love, seems those lessons from Oz really haven’t been going to waste.” Qrow purred, right time to throw her off as she had him.

“Stop toying with me.” Ruby jumped back landing with her feet on the trunk of a tree before
launching herself forward. Stabbing forth with her blade.

Qrow sidestepped and catch her by the back of her cape and swung her down into the ground. Ruby rolled out of the way adding a burst of her Semblance to get out of the way of his sword. Qrow turned to her and cocked his hips. “If I didn’t toy with you, you’d be the first out of your own match.” He looked up to the screen playing James and Ozpin’s fight. The two had broken away and were running side by side throwing punches with James firing as much as he could. “Though I do have to know what you offered to Oz to get him so motivated.”

Ruby grinned. “You’ll just have to wait and find out.” A crash had them looking towards the desert landscape.

James groaned and pushed himself out of the crater he made in the side of the mesa. The dark brown stone crumbling all around him. He saw Ozpin leap intent on pumpling him into the stone. He curled his fingers and shot his hands forward, hundreds of stones fired forward.

Ozpin’s cane was a burr as he smashed them out of his way, but James was already moving he jumped for the desert sand and swung his arms out. Gathering the sand around him into a dense storm, he hammered down into the stone ground breaking it up.

Oz’s eyes widened as he caught on to what James was doing. “Oh HELL NO!” He fired off the wall but it was to late.

Sweat gathered around James brow as he poured his Aura into his Semblance. He levitated the stone around him and added it to his maelstrom. He jumped up into the air and held himself in suspension. The crowd sucked in a breath as Oz jumped forward, only for James to swat him from the sky.

Oz tumbled head of heels and smashed through a few trees into the clearing where Ruby and Qrow were fighting. He came to a stop grabbing the ground and shaking his head. “Ugh, a little help Qrow? If we don’t tire him out quickly enough, he’ll smite us both.”

Qrow took a lazy step towards the General, eyes lighting up to fight someone he wouldn’t hold back on. “Well you heard him Jamie, come on down here and let me show you something real good.”

James only raised a brow giving the thinner man a look of pure glee. “Big talk for someone getting their ass handed to them by a Huntress in training. Tell me, is that your technique, talking your way to victory.”

“Why? What you going to do. Gag me?”

James didn’t drop the smirk but his eyes did flash with something very familiar to Qrow. “Oh I’ll do more then gag you Qrow and you may not find it wholly . . . unpleasant.”

"PFFT!"

“OH DEAR! It appears we are having technical difficulties with the mic for General Ironwood.” Oobleck quickly said from the announcers box, muting James’ mic before whispering to his colleague. “We can’t air stuff like that can we?”

Port’s bushy mustache failed to hide the bright red coating his cheeks. “Errr I believe not.”

Back in the arena Qrow sputtered several times, his eyes wide. James still had the grinning cat who got the canary smile on his face and he looked between James and Ozpin… “Uhhh NOPE! You’re one your own!”
“Hey can we add that to the bet? I’d so be game to watch.” Ruby asked the three of them.

“Why watch when you’re going to be getting in on the action. I did ask if you could handle all three of us?” Oz responded his own smile getting wider.

“Would be very unfair if you didn’t keep to that bargain Miss Rose.” James added, his eyes shifting from Qrow to Ruby.

Ruby made a squeaky sound in her throat, very reminisce of the one Qrow had made, her silver eyes wide as saucers. True to her nickname however she replied. “That only counts if you win and I don’t think you will.”

Qrow launched at her with Harbinger, she yelped and danced away.

Ozpin laughed. “See now you’ve gone and motivated him!”

Port and Oobleck turned the three of there mics back on and prayed there were no talented lip readers in the audience.

James rolled his eyes and looked over to the volcanic zone and summoned a large Fire Dust crystal up into his storm. While they bickered he set about pulling the crystal apart molecule by molecule, till it was a fine dust. Then with a wave he spread it through the forest with a gentle breeze.

Ozpin sniffed as the Dust settle around him, his eyes widening as he realized what was going on. “MOVE!” He roared blasting forth with the addition of his Semblance his arms wrapped around Ruby, one hand holding her head to keep it safe. James smirked and snapped his fingers.

BOOM!

The Forest section exploded, bits of debris rained down around their ears as Oz bolted back into the centre of the arena. Qrow wasn’t so fortunate he was blown clear and with his luck straight into a pool of lava. He heaved himself out but his Aura was falling, he was almost tapped out. He looked up at James, the ever moving shield of sand and rock made it almost impossible to come anywhere near him. However he looked up at the Aura boards, everyone could see how fast James was draining his. Qrow blinked as the lava started to ooze up in the sky.

James laughed as the three stared up at him trying to gather their wits enough to form a plan. “That all you’ve got Oz?”

Oz set Ruby down just in time get another face full of lava. He called on his Semblance and side stepped out of the way… straight into a geyser vent just as it went off. Ruby had to tilt her head all the way back to watch his flight path. She looked over to the Aura boards and knew he’d be back. She grabbed her sword and rose-petal-burst straight for Qrow, slamming into him with such force they went tumbling towards the edge of the arena.

Qrow shoved Ruby away only to get a face-full of stone and lava, the arena blurred past as James knocked him clear into the stands. His Aura broke with the shear force of hitting the wall, he was plastered to it with stone and cooling lava before falling to the floor.

“Ohhh, that’s got to hurt.” Peter commented.

“And Qrow Branwen is out but Aura and knock out. Though I do think his Semblance got a few good hits on Ozpin.” Oobleck said.

Ozpin landed on top of the mesa gracefully and called out. “Come and get me James. You’re mother
was a hamster and your father smelled of elderberries!"

The audience burst into laughter as James threw several stones at Oz. Ruby on the other hand saw that Harbinger had fallen from Qrow’s hand and was laying on the ground. She scabbard her sword and raced for it, the claymore was heavy in her hands but she had an idea. “Hey Oz!”

Ozpin saw her and caught on to her thinking. “Right!”

James figured it out too. “Oh no you don’t you buggering son of a-”

Oobleck muted James mic. “Sorry folks we are appearing to have technical difficulties again.”

Ozpin’s fingers wrapped around the hilt of Harbinger, his finger found the lever and the weapon unfolded into all of it’s scythe glory. This time when James sent stones his way the scythe was a burr of action, cleaving them apart the debris falling to the left and right of them. Ruby hung back behind Oz, with all the sand spinning around James they still couldn’t get close. She looked up to the Aura display. Ozpin and James were almost tapped, her Aura on the other hand was almost full.

She reached up and pet over the Rose in her hair, then took a few steps back. Sending a spark of Aura through it, Oz stiffened as though she had touched him and looked back at her out of the corner of his eye. Not too sure how she had managed it but somehow able to feel her intention he nodded sharply, to her. Ruby closed her eyes and called on her Semblance, turning herself into a dryad before blasting forward pouring Aura into the Rose and picking up Ozpin and almost thrusting him into herself. It resulted in her usual red petals bursting in colours of green and red and headed straight towards James.

James was unprepared for the typhoon of green and red rose petals that rocked through his sand shield. Ozpin materialized out of the storm, Harbinger cleaving straight into James metal shoulder and pulled the man from the sky. The storm died as James Aura flicked on impact with the ground. Ozpin landed on top of him, a foot planted on his sternum Harbinger posed at James throat.

Ruby panted trying to catch her breath as Peter announced. “And James Ironwood is out by Aura deletion.” Now for the last phase of her plan, she gathered up all that remained of her Aura and blasted forth.

Ozpin was feeling a sense of weightlessness as he gazed down almost unseeing at James. Leaving him completely unprepared and blindsided when Ruby slammed into him with everything she had. He went flying through the arena and into the stadium wall not far from where Qrow was laying prone.

“And Ozpin is out by Knock Out, Miss Rose emerges victorious!”

There was a moment of silence, most of the audience unbelieving that a Huntress in training had managed to win a match against three of the greatest Huntsmen to date. The silence was quickly broken by a thunderous sound of applause so loud it echoed throughout the area. Ruby smiled widely and stepped over to help James sit up.

“Well played Miss Rose, well played indeed.”

“Thank you General, for the match and . . . everything else. I should go check on my boys, I bet their a little sore right now.” Ruby grinned looking over to her two lovers.

James stood, dusting himself off and chuckled. "I think it's safe to say they tripped on their pride and fell on their honour."
As Ruby giggled, rushing off to see to Oz and Qrow the announcers sat back and relaxed. "What a superb match, as you can see folks, these three have a history together. And I dare say Miss Rose knew that when she picked her challengers."

Port gave a full bellied laugh. "Indeed she did, well done Miss Rose."

Ruby bounced over to Oz. "Should I go shower? While you lick your wounds in peace?"

Ozpin dramatically rolled over with a hand on his chest. "Please and take your time I will need to prep everything." He finished into his pocket and pulled out a key. "No hiding out in your own dorm, you said I could do whatever I wanted."

Ruby took the key and put it away. "Thank you for your help."

Ozpin snorted. "You just put us all in a position to work each other up. Remind me to ever underestimate your creativity again."

"Na, where would the fun in that be? You should help Qrow, I think he is still playing dead." Ruby offered her hand and Oz grabbed it hauling himself up to his feet.

They walked over to Qrow who had sat up and was gently touching the back of his head. "Oww. Ruby did you really need to throw me so hard?"

"Well I couldn't get you out of the game any other way." Ruby said and walked behind him gently touching his skull. "You are a bit tender, you should probably make sure you don't have a concussion."

James had walked their way and said. "I'll make sure he gets to the hospital wing, I get the feeling you two have plans."

Ruby kissed Qrow's cheek. "Thanks James."

"You really need to stop moving so much." Oz said, stroked the brush down Ruby’s leg leaving a trail of orange paint behind it.

"It tickles though."

"We're almost done, just a little longer Ruby." He almost smudged again when the redhead giggled again, twitching her leg out of his grasp. After a careful sigh he grabbed the limb in his other hand, holding her still as he fixed up the last few patches of skin with paint.

The door to his apartment opened loudly as Qrow wandered in hearing the young woman giggle. Where usually was Oz’s couch and a long table that Qrow was intimately familiar with, upon it Ruby was nude only instead of a bare white butt. Which he was very fond of, he was greeted with a dusty orange butt. His eyes roamed over the paint then he burst out laughing. "And here I thought I'd walk in on your riding him. Your bribe was to let him paint you!" Qrow held his sides as he laughed.

"I am just taking the opportunity to make her insides match her outsides." Ozpin said as he touched up a few layers of brown and orange to her behind. "Though I do intent to fuck her later. My little vixen."
Ruby looked over her shoulder at Qrow. “See I’m a fox now!”

“Ruby part of the deal…” Oz trailed off.

“Fine~, sorry I’m a vixen.” Ruby said and giggled as Oz finished painting her butt.

Qrow stared at it. “That you are.” He picked his way around Oz’s many supplies and sat on the couch, his gaze fell upon Ruby’s rose on the coffee table. “Hey Ruby did you do something with the rose during the fight? I felt your Aura at one point. It was weird.”

“I did direct some Aura through the rose, I figured it would be a way to get Oz’s attention without James noticing.” Ruby said.

“It most certainly did that.” Ozpin said.

Qrow picked it up and walked over. “Do it again, I’m curious.”

“Sure.” Ruby took it from him and called on her Aura, completely recovered from the fight. She closed her eyes and pushed a little of her Aura into the Rose, with all her practice with Oz lately it had become very easy.

Both men suddenly felt paint drying on their skin, arousal coiling in their bellies though it wasn’t from them. Beyond that a sensation of happiness and contentment. Ruby purred setting her head back down on the rest and snoozing lightly.

Qrow took the rose from her. “Well that’s interesting.”

“Agreed. Don’t do that all the time though, I can see it being very distracting if your emotions are coupled with the Aura.” Ozpin shook his head and finished painting. “Now stay still till you dry. Qrow and I need to go and speak to Pyrrha.”

“Okay, could you put some music on? I’d like to nap.” Ruby asked, smirking thinking about all the ways she could tease them if the rose did carry her emotions with her Aura.

Ozpin walked over to his audio jack and plugged his Scroll in, a moment later the soft tunes of Enya filled the room. Qrow patted Ruby’s head as he past. “Now don’t smudge it, I’m sure Oz plans to take lots of pictures.”

When Ruby was confident that the paint had dried she very carefully got up and turned off the music. She wandered into Oz’s bedroom and admired herself in the mirror. Ozpin really was good at this body painting business. She look utterly lovely, he hadn’t directly painted her nipples, instead created a pattern of fur that accented them. She blushed and found that she looked very pretty and that a fox suited her. She grabbed a loose tank top and skirt and headed back. Upon the table Oz had left her a pair of nipple stickies painted to match the rest of her pelt. She put them on then the tank top and skirt, very carefully as not to disturb her paint.

She put her boots on painstakingly carefully then headed for the cafe. It was almost lunch time and she knew her friends would be there.

The laughter and woots, that erupted from the students in the cafe made Ruby glow. She looked
good and she knew it. She pounced over to her team and JNPR. “Hey guys!”

Yang looked over and burst into laughter. “D’aww whos the cute foxy!”

“No I’m a vixen!” Ruby corrected, Oz said she had to correct everyone that called her a fox. Following the little instruction made her insides warm and she knew that he’d reward her for it later.

Weiss giggled. “You look adorable.”

“Oz really knows his stuff.” Ruby reached down and pulled the tank top off and turned letting everyone see just how far the paint went.

Ren whistled. “That is good work.”

“So is that what you wagered with Ozpin?” Weiss asked, her insides did a flip. Memories of the last time she had seen Ruby in a state of undress rose up in her mind as well as all the flirting that had happened during the match. She had already swapped messages about it with James and was more open to all the play they had between them.

“Yup. He used to do this competitively and has wanted to paint me for a while.” Ruby said and looked over to Pyrrha. “Hey you okay Pyrrha?”

The red head shook her head trying to clear it, her talk with Ozpin, James, Glynda and Qrow was rattling around her mind. “I’m fine.”

Ruby bounced over the bent to look at her. “Na, I know Oz can be pretty… well when he talks about serious stuff it can be kinda scary. Come on lets chat, he’s already told me everything.”

“What?” Pyrrha asked as Ruby pulled her out of her seat.

“He told me that he planned approaching you.” She pulled Pyrrha towards the door and waved at her friends. “Catch you later, Pyrrha and I need to chat.”

They watched Ruby pull Pyrrha away and Nora asked. “What just happened?”

“Let’s go and get something to eat.” She said taking Pyrrha’s hand and pulling her over into a little hole in the wall restaurant. There were a lot of wolf whistles and looks from people but Ruby only smiled at them. She wasn’t feeling exposed or embarrassed by Ozpin’s work but did have to stop from rubbing her arms a few times which would ruin her new paint job.

Pyrrha had a harder time, kindly waving to a few of the sweeter cheers but with a strained smile and less warmth then usual. Not that it was really noticed by anyone other then herself and Ruby. It wasn’t every day the Champion was seen walking with another girl painted as a fox- or vixen she was reminded and with the new information she had been given the amazon was feeling a little more than overwhelmed.

She sat Pyrrha down by one of the windows and ordered a pair of strawberry milkshakes, she put one in front of Pyrrha and sat beside the girl, taking a long drink of her own.

Pyrrha blinked a few times at the drink and softly asked. “So you are aware of why I was called to speak with Professor Ozpin?” When Ruby nodded she continued. “How can you eat after that?”
Ruby smiled. “The paint? Oz’s work is really good so I’m happy.”

That caused the redhead to smile slightly and take a sip, it was a very good smooth milkshake. They drank their drinks in silence for a moment before Pyrrha asked. “Ruby, may I ask how long you have known? About all of this, about Amber?”

The shorter woman peered out through the window in thought. “Hmmm, well I have known some of it for a little while but about in regards to you and Amber, about as long as you have. Oz mentioned some of it to me, I think he would have picked me but I’m already a Silver Eyed Warrior. I’m not really allowed to say anything to anyone, not even to my team.” Ruby said. “But I offered to talk to you about it and Oz okayed it.”

“Oh.” Pyrrha asked suddenly understanding how Ruby had managed to keep it a secret. “I take it no one else knows?”

“Nope. Just you, me, Oz, Qrow, Professor Goodwitch and General Ironwood.” Ruby said.

“There is a lot more to this isn’t there?” Pyrrha asked, her hand absently stirring the drink rather then drinking it.

Ruby nodded and played with the straw of her milkshake with a tiny smile.

“But, you’re not allowed to tell me.” Pyrrha stated.

Ruby sighed. “It’s not that I don’t want to, but Oz’s trust is a hard earned thing. I promised him I would never say anything about any of it. But I will say I think he’s got a pretty good idea of what will happen to you and I know he wouldn’t ask this of anyone if there was another way.”

Pyrrha rubbed her fingers through the condensation on her cup. “What do you mean?”

“Oz has been around for a very long time Pyrrha and in that time he has tried to protect others. He’s not perfect of course but from what I understand if Amber were to die, her power. . . ” Ruby lowered her voice some more, so that it was barely a whisper and no one other then the redhead sat opposite her could hear. “Her power would go to the person who hurt her. This would put a lot of lives at risk. When Oz mentioned he needed a someone who he thought was worthy to pick up her torch. Someone who could fight for the protection of mankind, it didn’t surprise me when he chose you.”

Ever the humble one Pyrrha tried to protest. “Ruby I can’t be the best person for this task and the risk-”

A orange skinned hand took hers over the table. “It’s okay Pyrrha, to say no. I imagine the only people actually worthy of such things are the ones who don’t ask for it. People who want power often want more and more and it corrupts them. You’re more worthy of it then you realize but I agree with them. This is ‘your’ life and only you have the last say in this. I won’t pretend to think the risk is small, no one knows for certain what will happen. Just know whatever decision you make, there will be people standing behind you, supporting you and I’ll be there too.”

The green eyed girl wasn’t sure what to make of that and she felt the beginning of tears string her eyes. “How do you deal with knowing all this?”

The silver eyed girl shrugged again. “I don’t know, I just do. I’ve always wanted to be a hero from the stories, I just you know. Put one step before the other and well, my Qrow says to never stop moving forward.”

“You really love him, don’t you and Oz too?”
Ruby nodded with the most gentle smile Pyrrha had ever seen. “Yeah, I really do.”

Pyrrha smiled and took another drink, Ruby’s words as fumbled as they were, helped.

“Flirty please.”

Ruby posed again, quirking her butt to one side with her hands above her tail bone.

“Lovely.” The camera flashed again and Oz grabbed the photo it printed out and shook it thoroughly. He studied it for a moment and put it into the new photobook.

“You’re so old school.” Qrow said watching from the sofa.

“Harder to steal.” Ozpin closed the book and looked at the time and sighed. “I’ve got to run, Glynda wanted to go over something. Something tells me she was less than pleased with all the flirting we did in the match.”

“I will never understand why James ever tried to date her.” Qrow said as Ozpin got dressed to leave again.

“Something about expectations of an Atlas elite I’m sure. Don’t burn the place down while I’m gone.” Ozpin said as he walked out.

“We won’t!” Ruby called after him as he closed the door and giggled. “We haven’t gotten to properly say hello.” She strode over to Qrow taking the effort to lengthen her steps and dip her hips.

Qrow swallowed as she approached, her nude painted figure was very alluring. Her dusky pink nipples were free of the coverings and he got the urge to lick and tease them. “No we haven’t. I’m sorry about that.”

Ruby moved into his lap and snuggled up to him. “Are you okay now? You’ve seemed better.” She reached up and picked up one of his wrists, tracing over the still red skin.

“I’m managing.” Qrow said taking her hand and pressing a kiss to the back.

“Do you want to talk about it?” Ruby asked.

Qrow shook his head. “No.”

“Oh okay.” The Silver Eyed Warrior bit her lip then leaned forward and kissed his lips tentatively.

Qrow closed his eyes and tried to focus on just the kiss, he let her hand go and put his hands on the sofa. He heard Ruby whine softly. “Why won’t you hold me?” She asked her lips brushing his.

The garnet eyed man lifted a hand and tried to ignore it when it shook. He brushed his fingertips gently through her hair. “Please don’t ask.” He pressed forward catching her lips in another kiss.

“Alright.” Ruby whispered and let him control the slow pace.
Ruby left Yang in their room, her sister was still trying to process what happened after her fight with Mercury. She smiled widely as she picked a seat in the Colosseum, looking around at the assembled crowds, to her she spotted a familiar, glaring face on the other side of the arena. “Emeralds’ here?” Ruby asked, then she glanced around and got up running towards the exit tunnel.

Oobleck’s voice was muffled but she could still hear it. “All right, it’s now time to begin the randomization process for our next fight!”

The sound of the roulette could be heard, but what makes Ruby stop in her tracks was the sight of another unexpected ‘friend’ stepping out from a nearby tunnel, completely unharmed and definitely not going home.

“Mercury? What are you doing here?” Ruby stared at him dread growing in her stomach.

Pot’s voice came in over the PA. “It looks like our first contender is… Penny Polendina from Atlas...And her opponent will be... Pyrrha Nikos from Beacon!”

Understanding rapidly dawned on Ruby. “No..” She clenched her fists and glared at Mercury, whatever he was doing here wasn’t going to be good. This had been what Ozpin had been training her for as she moved into ready position raising her hands, palms flat ready to deflect his kicks.

Mercury missed the change in Ruby and putting a hand to his chin. “Ooh, polarity versus metal. That could be bad.”

“Move or be moved.” Ruby growled activating her Aura, it flared to life with an angry crackle.

Mercury’s face fell but he still smiled cocky when the countdown finished. “Showtime.”

Ruby darted forward, enhanced by her aura and threw a punch for Mercury’s face. His brows rose surprised and he parried with a hand, Ruby moved faster and faster, raining down punches. She was used to trying to hit Oz, so Mercury was a piece of cake in comparison.

Mercury stopped playing around, he never in a million years would have expected this level of skill from Ruby. Her blows were light compared to Yangs, but she was MUCH faster. Close combat was meant to be his advantage, not hers but she never backed off, never put any space between them and she bent like a reed under his kicks.

Ruby ducked under another kick jumping up and landing on Mercury’s shoulders before spinning off him and kicking him in the back. She dropped to the ground to avoid the wide kick from Mercury, then launched herself, driving her fist into his gut, her hand glowing red as she poured Aura into the strike.

Mercury flew back tumbled over a few times before he righted himself with a stumble, he looked over to Ruby, utterly amazed by the younger woman’s show of power. Her lips were pressed thinly together and the expression on her face that of steel, she practically radiated power.

Over the PA came Pot’s voice. “My word! What a tremendous display of power by Miss Polendina!”

Ruby’s eyes widened momentarily and she spun on her heel taking off for the entrance to the area, she needed to stop the match! Mercury fired a pair of shots after her but Ruby activated her Semblance, dissolving into Rose petals before he could hit her.
Ruby spun back into her physical body race into the arena just one moment too late. The sight of Penny’s robotic body, broken in pieces from the force of her own weapons slicing her apart shattered Ruby as she fell to her knees. “Penny.” Tears started to flow freely as she sobbed for her friend.

Mercury came out behind but her smiled and retreated.

A voice echoed out throughout the Colosseum, Ruby was so engrossed at the scene on the Arena floor that she almost missed the familiar tone. Cinder? “This is not a tragedy. This was not an accident. This is what happens when you hand over your trust, your safety, your children, to men who claim to be our guardians, but are, in reality, nothing more than men. Our Academies’ Headmasters wield more power than most armies, and one was audacious enough to control both. They cling to this power in the name of peace, and yet, what do we have here? One nation’s attempt at a synthetic army, mercilessly torn apart by another’s star pupil. What need would Atlas have for a soldier disguised as an innocent little girl? I don’t think the Grimm can tell the difference. And what, I ask you, is Ozpin teaching his students? First a dismemberment, now this? Huntsmen and Huntresses should carry themselves with honor and mercy, yet I have witnessed neither. Maybe Ozpin felt as though defeating Atlas in the Tournament would help people forget his colossal failure to protect Vale when the Grimm invaded its streets. Or perhaps this was his message to the tyrannical dictator that has occupied an unsuspecting kingdom with armed forces. Honestly, I haven't the slightest clue as to who is right and who is wrong. But I know the existence of peace is fragile, and the leaders of our kingdoms conduct their business with iron gloves. As someone who hails from Mistral, I can assure you the situation there is... equally undesirable. Our Kingdoms are on the brink of war, yet we, the citizens, are left in the dark. So I ask you: When the first shots are fired... who do you think you can trust?”

The screens cut from red and black to complete static.


People from the audience, most of whom had been stunned into a silence and froze in their seats thundered to life. Shouts and cries pierced the stands as the hundreds of watchers ran for the exits. Overhead the cry of a giant Nevermore started to beat down on the activated shield protecting the Arena causing more and more of the people to panic, all of them running blindly to escape.

Ruby sat stunned hunched over as they passed her in their panic. The sound of more incoming Grimm pulled her out of her shock. Seeing Penny’s body still laying there was hard, seeing Pyrrha kneeling down besides her in shock, tears streaming down her face was harder yet. Ruby kept her eyes on the scene, taking a long deep breath then shook her head and cleared her mind, there would be time to mourn later. Right now she was a Huntress and she had a job to do!

Jaune ran into the courtyard having left Pyrrha and Ozpin to fight. He spotted Ruby, Weiss, Violet and Coco, Jaune pulled out his Scroll and said. “I think I’ve got Goodwitches number.” An explosion went off somewhere behind them, they could see orange light blast out of the headmasters office.

“AAHH!” Ruby grabbed her chest with a scream, pain ripped through her and all she could see was fire. Weiss raced over to her and held her tight her. “Ruby! What happened.” Ruby came back to her senses and shoved Weiss to her feet, she stumbled forward with a cry of. “OZ!” Pain sharp and acute
in her gut cause her to fall again with another scream of pain.

Jaune’s Scroll rang and rang but Goodwitch didn’t pick up. He glanced around and spotted a bullhead on a landing pad. Pyrrha on the other hand was looking at the tower. “Pyrrha? What was all of that?” He walked over to her, forgetting about his mission.

“I…” She started up at the tower as the dragon started to fly over and shook her head. “There is no time. Go get to Vale and find help.”

Jaune reached of her but she batted him away. “Go!” She snapped and started running towards the tower. Ruby pushed herself to her feet again and gasped out. “Muninn, Muninn, Muninn. I’m going too Pyrrha, you guys stay here and hold the Grimm off.”

“You’re not leaving me behind!” Jaune snapped out tightening his grip on his weapons, but the two warriors were already in motion. The three teens raced back to the tower and Pyrrha shot Jaune a glare but didn’t waste any more time arguing with him. She would just have to find a way to protect him. Using her Semblance she lifted the elevator raising the three of them into the headmasters office.

Cinder turned to look at the elevator as the doors were forced open by Pyrrha’s Semblance. Ruby blasted into the room, wasting no time firing at Cinder, her hole body hurt but it was down to a manageable level. Unable to reach out for Oz through her Aura Ruby felt the tears gather in her eyes, “I’ll kill you.” she hissed, Ozpin was gone. She knew he’d be back but there was no telling how long a rebirth took and the pain. What had Cinder put him through? Cinder smiled forgetting about Pyrrha for a moment, the spear wielding girl threw her weapon at Cinder, the Fall Maiden dodged it by mean millimeters and caught the shield that followed up. Pyrrha looked up to her shock and Cinder blasted her back with a fireball to the gut. The dragon moved off the tower and started to fly away in an arc slowly coming back.

She raised herself up flying above the three as she rained down fire. Ruby and Pyrrha started to tag team the Fall Maiden, Ruby providing long distance support while Pyrrha pushed the offensive. Jaune raced around to flank Cinder racing into strike from behind. Cinder twisted catching both Pyrrha and Jaune’s swords as they attacked together, she grinned at the two of them only for Pyrrha to start a rapid collection of kicks to her stomach.

Cinder blasted them away with a wave of power, Jaune and Pyrrha tumbled back and Ruby dashed forward. Crescent Rose coming in a fast sweep of arcs that glowed crimson red. Cinder summoned up her swords and blocked each attack, smiling as she saw the tears in Ruby’s eyes. “Did you love him?” She asked with a curious cock of her head.

The dragon smashed into the tower and Ruby leapt back to dodge the falling metal. Her eyes started to glow silver even as she felt something strange fill her crimson Aura pushing through her. Qrow. Red tinted her eyes and she spun Crescent Rose to the side moving her hands down on the hilt like Qrow preferred. The tears ceased and her lips thinned as she glared the Maiden down. Cinder smiled at Ruby, not understanding what was happening. Her pain ached through the bonds she held and Qrow was reaching back as best he could, lending her his strength.

Ruby saw Jaune and Pyrrha pick themselves up and leapt at Cinder, swinging down and catching the woman over the shoulder with Crescent Rose. With Qrow’s strength she yanked Cinder from the air, savoring the surprised smile. Ruby jumped back just in time for Pyrrha to slam down every gear in the place down on Cinder with her Semblance. The red Aura from Qrow waned as Ruby watched the gears start to glow red.

Cinder explode the metal outward, Ruby was blasted back hitting the stump of a wall her Aura
breaking. Jaune leapt forward just in time to shield Pyrrha and they tumbled back their Aura’s breaking together. Jaune heaved himself to his feet shaking his head trying to clear it. Cinder was floating above them looking down on them again with that twisted little smile. Almost lazily she blasted Jaune with fire again knocking the shield from his hands. Then she summoned her bow, cocked an arrow made of black glass and fired.

“JAUNE!” Pyrrha threw herself in the way, the arrow finding her heart instead of Jaune’s.

“Pyrrha!” Jaune screamed and grabbed her and her body slowly fell to the ground. Ruby’s eyes widened as Pyrrha gasped and jerked a few times before going still. She turned her gaze back on the one who had caused this, feeling a burning pain behind her eyes. The injustice and pain engulfed her being as Silver light exploded from Ruby’s eyes and she knew nothing more.

Ruby drifted in and out of consciousness, the first thing she remembered was hearing her Qrow’s voice. “It’s alright. I got ya. I got ya love.”

Then it’s her dad and radio static, he sighed and said. “Nothing”

“Just turn it off. Without the CCT, there’s no point.” Qrow’s was irritable, she could tell by his tone and she’d bet he was drinking again.

“Communication down across the entire Kingdom, no way to contact the outside world… and Ozpin is still missing.” Taiyang said.

“Yeah.” Qrow said with a pause that Ruby knew for sure now he was drinking again.

“This is bad, Qrow.”

“Yeah, this is bad.”

Chapter End Notes

Ardy: WOOHOO!! That took… AGES!
Kry: It's done and I must admit its really good.
Ardy: Now we move into editing HELL.
Kry: Isn’t that the best hell? This also concludes the first Arc of the story right?
Ardy: Yes, and for the next one I’m pretty sure content will remain largely the same as it was in the original. With editing to clean up the errors and discrepancies, as well as probably merging of chapters and adding where we see fit.
Kry: So much fun ahead, yay!
Ardy: Thank you too: darkvampirekisses, Baker1762, Sportsfangirl815, lillithschild, jamie, Celestialfae for all your comments!
Kry: The support is very much appreciated and we love hearing or reading all those comments so thank you very much! Now onto Arc 2, starting with, well let’s just wait and find out. Have a great day!
Ozpin put himself between Cinder and Jaune and Pyrrha, of course Cinder would be here now. Now Amber was dead and the agent of Salem had all of the Fall maiden power. Part of him wondered if he could get close enough to take it all back, it was his after all. Pyrrha broke out of the pod, summoning her weapons as she raced forward Ozpin put out and arm stopping her. “Take Jaune and get out of here! Find Glynda! Ironwood! Qrow! Bring them here right away! The tower cannot fall!”

“But I can help.” Pyrrha said desperate to do something.

Ozpin looked Pyrrha in the eyes and said in a hard voice. “You’ll only get in the way.”

Pyrrha hesitated but did then raced over to Jaune helping him up and running away. Cinder watched them go glowing with the Fall Maiden’s power. Ozpin took a deep breath, he only needed to stall for long enough for help to arrive. If he could just get close enough to take the power back without getting burned alive that would be enough.

Cinder summoned her swords. “She was right about it, to have this under our feet this whole time. Such arrogance.”

Ozpin spun his cane around into his ready position, let her think that, her arrogance will be her undoing. He blasted forth battering down on Cinder, green strikes of pure Aura against the Maidens power. Cinder wasn’t quick enough to block all of them as Ozpin sent a punch into her stomach.

Cinder tumbled back head of heels before right herself melting the floor underneath her. She stumbled her feet turning the metal into cold shards as she summoned up to blast at Ozpin. He fired off to the side dodging. What’s taking them so long? He worried blasting forth and striking Cinder with a barrage of strikes.

If I make a run for the elevator she’ll blast me in the back. Cinder flew backward summoning up her power into a single blast. Ozpin kneeled creating an orb of aura shield as Cinder, summoned her full power to bare down on him. His mind was arguing how if he attacked her he would die, he couldn’t use the Relics power. If he let himself die then Salem would ease up and he’d move to the next body. The thought alone made him shiver, it wasn’t as easy as just moving. He’d be weak and vulnerable for several months at the very least, in a Kingdom infested with Grimm. No dying was not an option. Instead he leapt backward before the Aura machine, let his shield fracture and break and braced himself for a world of pain.

Cinder grinned baring her power down on the man, he twisted out of the way at the last moment and the machine behind him exploded.

Fire and shrapnel made Cinder throw up a shield, Ozpin however let the fire over take him. He was encased it and he felt a pain though his gut and he knew something had impaled him, the smell of his flesh burning filled his nose. His body wanted to cough to retch, but as he tumbled to a stop on the cold floor, fire and metal all around him, he forced himself still. To hold his breath as his blood pooled around him. Moments passed before the sound of Cinder’s sharp clack heels approached him.

He had to be still, his flesh was burning way, his clothes all but destroyed, he forced his eyes open to stare blankly up at the dark ceiling. For Qrow, for Ruby, oh please let this work. Maybe help will
Cinder stood above him a sick twisted smile on her face. “Oh Ozpin, what a way to go. Death by collateral damage, it’s unbecoming for such a Huntsmen as you.” She knelt and Oz had to force his eyes not to follow her, forced his oxygen starved lungs to be still. He could feel the ground under him growing wetter and wetter, if she didn’t leave soon he was going to die regardless.

She reached up and touched his temple drawing it down his cheek, she had half a mind to vaporize him. “You don’t deserve a good burial, let the Grimm have your corpse.” With that she spun on her heel and stalked away.

Ozpin blinked and let himself take a shallow breath, waited as she strode into the elevator shaft and flew away before he let his body react. He let out hacking cough and rolled over more blood flying from his lips to join the pool underneath him. He was burning, his head, his back, it all burned, he looked down his body and saw a large long piece of metal sticking out of his lower abs.

“Fuck.” He hissed and grabbed the piece of metal and grunted, it had gone through him he could feel the exit wound. He needed to get up, the infirmary was down the hallway, they had kept Amber there until James brought the machine. He reached out a hand and heaved himself across the floor, he knew he wouldn’t be able to stand like this, he just needed something to help him get up. He’d have to hope the fire would burn away the blood trail.

He could hear glass crunch around him as he pulled himself along the floor, a hand holding the shrapnel in place so it wouldn’t widen the wound. He crawled over to a pillar, reached up and drove his fingers into it and heaved himself up with a scream. He could feel blood oozing out of his burning back, he let go of the shrapnel and used the red hand to help climb to his feet. He drew himself up with clawing lurches till he could get his feet under him. Oz slumped against the pillar for a moment, catching his breath while blood started painting it bloody, his shoulder screaming against this action. He pressed a hand back to the sharple and rolled over with a lurch into motion all the while fire still licked and bit away at his flesh. He stumbled down the hall, it seemed so much longer than it used too before falling into the infirmary and felt his body start to chill. He realized he was going into shock, bleeding out, “Fuck.” he hissed and threw himself forward, yanking open draws till he found and rescue adrenaline shot. He tore it out of the plastic package, bits flying everywhere in his hurry and pulled the needle casing off the long needle.

His vision swam like a black sea as he tried to aim the needle, he grabbed the shrapnel and pulled on it very slightly, the pain made his vision clear enough to slam the needle into his chest before it could waver again. The pain drew more acute as the adrenaline flooded through him, he forced himself off the counter and to another drawer. This was filled with heat sticks, they were only used in emergencies by field Huntsmen and perfect for what he needed right now. He cracked the stick and carefully held it by the end while the rest turned red.

He turned to lean against the counter again and turned the stick so it faced him and poised it over the piece of sharple. Taking a deep breath and holding it he ripped out the piece of shrapnel and drove the hot stick into the wound. He let out another blood curdling scream, throwing his head back as the smell of flesh cauterizing filled his nose. Muscles strained and convulsed from the pain, his Aura completely gone by this point. He held it there for a moment before pulling it out, he dropped it and pressed his hand against the hole, taking deep shaky breaths. At least that would stop most of the bleeding, he reached up and ripped off the tattered remains of his shirt, he could feel the blood oozing out of his back. The fire burning just under his skin, he leaned on the counter and made his way to the sink grabbed a clean cloth as he went.

His hands were slippery with blood, but he managed to get the tap turned to cold and the cloth in the
skin. He saturated the cloth gritting his teeth against the pain and slapped the cold cloth over his back. The relief was crippling and he had to grab the counter as his legs threatened to give out. The burning finally stopped as he pulled the cloth off his back, it snagged against his blackened flesh. He out a soft shudder as he rewet the cloth and set it over the other side of his back, he left it only long enough to quell the fire, dull the pain before moving it over his chest and legs. His hands shook through the pain as the cloth turned red.

Time was of the essence he need to get out of here as quickly as possible. With his mind clear enough to think straight he opened another drawer and grabbed a hypo of painkillers and shot his shoulder. Then dug through the cupboards till he found bandages and by that time the painkiller had kicked in enough that he could wrap up his wounds without shouting in agony. He grabbed all the painkiller shots as well as the smaller adrenaline stims and forced himself back to the wreckage and found his cane.

Pressing a hand to his gut wound he forced himself to run to the elevator, the sounds of battle echoed down the shaft. Thanks to the painkillers he could gather enough of his strength to jump up the shaft, again and again, till he reached the ground floor. He hauled himself up into the clean air and sounds of fighting filled his courtyard. He glanced over and could see his students fighting the Grimm, he dearly wanted to go to them, but then Salem would know he was alive and this time he really would die. He forced himself to his feet and bolted from the grounds, heading into the Emerald forest. He threw everything he had into running, he had a plan, Vauco, it was the easiest place to remake yourself. From making a new identity, to forging a huntsman's license.

He managed to get deep into the forest before pausing to take another shot and forcing himself to run again.

The first settlement he came across was a farm, which luckily he had found a trench coat big enough even for him hung up in the barn. It stabbed at him to steal it, but he couldn’t linger, not this close to Vale and not blackened and bloody. It would draw too much attention to himself and he needed to get far away from Salem’s hold as possible. Only when he pulled it over his shoulders did he pause and feel his head. All his hair had been burned away and in its place was a gooey mess of blackened skin, blood and flesh. His hand shook as he passed it over the rough damp flesh. Bile rose in his throat, he hadn’t paused long enough to take an inventory of his body, now he really didn’t want to. Taking another painkiller and a stim, he started running again, his feet flying westward as fast as they could carry him.

He didn’t let himself sleep for three days. When he couldn’t run from exhaustion he walked, when he couldn’t walk he stumbled, his eyes hardly remaining open as he pushed and pushed himself. The stims kept his awake and the painkillers curbed the most agonising pains from his body. His Aura slowly returned but Oz kept using it in conjunction to the stims to keep running. Only when he stumbled into a steam did he physical have to stop himself, scooping up mouthful after mouthful of water, uncaring if it was clean or not. Just something to cool his throat and keep him from passing out. Oz didn’t think about cleaning the blood off so enamored with moving, forcing his staggering body to walk again.

He was so blinded by the need to run and the pain, he didn’t notice when a familiar red Aura patched some of his wounds. Finally he came to a town in the dead of night. It thankfully had a lien machine, Ozpin pulled out a large amount of his savings and hoped Watts wasn’t paying attention. Shoving the cards into a empty pocket, he ran a hand over his head again, he desperately needed food and rest.
but could he afford to stop for either when he was still too close. He drew the coat tightly around him and walked through the streets, he ended up stealing another piece of cloth to wrap around his head before he gave himself the last of his pain killers. He forced his walk to steady as he entered the towns’ inn, thankfully it was mostly empty and those that were there looked to be too deep in their cups to notice him

He walked up to the counter and pulled out a lien card and said hoarsely his voice warped by pain and exhaustion. “A room.”

The innkeeper was a young human woman, but she had been around long enough to recognize a Huntsman that need to be left alone. She took the card and run up the transaction gave it back and said. “Follow me please.”

He followed her up to the second floor his legs feeling more and more like led. She opened the door to a small single bed room. “Let me know if you need anything.”

He stepped inside and finally let his weight fall against a wall. “Does this town have a Doctor?”

“Of course Huntsman.” The girl said smiling softly.

“Then I’ll pay double your nightly fee if you bring me breakfast and go to your Doctor in the morning and get the strongest painkillers he or she has. Can you do that?” He was bone tired and he was sure it reflected in his voice.

It wasn’t that odd a request, at least from a Huntsman, she took in how he was leaning against the wall. “Yes Huntsman, goodnight Sir.” She closed the door behind her and departed to tell the manager they had a huntsman who was in a bad way.

Ozpin pulled off the trench coat and threw it over the back of a chair and stumbled towards the bed. For one brief moment he felt completely confused about where he was. Every corner a stranger to his pain ladled mind. Ozpin put one hand on the bedspread before falling into it and he was asleep before his head so much as touched the pillow.

He woke with a soft scream and an elderly voice saying. “Hush child!” He blinked twice his throat felt like sandpaper and his vision was blurry. Somewhere in the back of his mind he realized he must have lost his glasses in the explosion. He felt a hand push away what remained of his pants to view the site he had been using for injections. “Gods, lad what have you done to yourself?”

“Vale.” Oz croaked out, blinking in the bright sunlight. “Needed to run, raided a clinic first.” He tired to move but every muscle of his body was locked up tight.

“Oh good you are awake. How many stims have you taken and painkillers?” The voice asked and when Oz tired to roll over into his back, a strong weathered hand stopped him. “Lad your bandages are red, you can’t lie on your back till I’ve taken a look at it.”

Lad? Ozpin wondered at that for a moment, then remembered he had no hair. He guessed he would look younger then, it was part of the reason he let it be silver before, it made him look older. What had been the man's question again? Oh right now many stims, he honestly had no idea the last three days were a fog of pain, fever, running and shots. Time was only of importance in how far he needed to get away to keep his supposed death secret. “I- I don’t know, ran here . . . from Vale.”
He heard the man sigh. “Alright no more for now then, but I have to remove these bandages. Is there a place that is the worst?”

Ozpin reached up and touched his side, wincing as his arm screamed at being moved. Once he started moving the rest of his body tried to do the same, pain raced through every limb in protest. “Impaled, used a heat stick to seal it.” He said groggy, he knew he should of been turning down the help. If Salem looked for him…

“Impaled?”

Ozpin could hear the shock in the man’s voice and could only give a tiny nod, his strength failing him. “You ran for three days on nothing but painkillers and stims after being impaled?” Even as he spoke Oz could feel cold scissors cutting through the bandages covering his back. Ozpin gripped the sheets tightly as the Doctor peeled, literally peeled the soaked bandages from his back with a wet squelch.

He could hear someone make a gagging sound and the smell of burned flesh and infection reached his nose. Oz tried to turn his head to muffle the shout that almost escaped him but his neck killed that idea as he shuddered violently letting out a yell of pain.

There was a sloshing sound and cool water dripped over the exposed flesh, the Doctor spoke again. “Pantone, go get extra sheets and bandages, cloths and more water, boil it then cool it. We are going to be here for a while.”

The girl was almost glad to be given the task fleeing the room as quickly as possible.

The sheet tore under Oz’s fingers as the Doctor continued to cut and pull away at the sodden sticky bandages. “I can’t stay.” He hissed through the pain, as the bandages tugged on his ruined flesh.

“Then you’ll die before you reach the next town, Aura alone can’t fix something like this and that is assuming the Grimm don’t eat you. You’ve got bone showing, more burnt dead flesh then not and,” the Doctor paused and pulled out another shot and injected him at the shoulder. “What’s not black is infected, you aren’t going anywhere for a long time.” He pulled the last of the cloth on his back away and Oz hissed again. “And I haven’t even looked at the rest of you lad.”

“What did you hit me with?” Oz asked. Now that the painkillers had been eaten away by his body the pain was running up and down his body was immense, it took all of his will not to whimper and scream the building down when he felt his back flare up. It was like something was attacking his body constantly, the pain wouldn’t subside.

“Antibiotic, get a head start on battling the infection, you’re going to need it.” The Doctor said pushing Oz forward slightly so he could see the mess of flesh better, it made a mix of sick squelching sound and crackling from the blackened flesh.

Oz grit his teeth and forced his hand to relax before he damaged anything any more.

The Doctor was silent for a moment. “You got a name lad?”

Oz had a moment of unease, he didn’t know these people, was it safe? No, not safe. He needed a name and used two deep hissing breaths to think of one. “Obsidian Volren.” He gasped out when he had the reprieve.

The Doctor chuckled, he pressed a cool wet both to Oz’s back. “Well I can guess where you were born.”
Oz had to smirk at that, the cloth was nice he let out a little sigh of relief as the Doctor placed another on his back and let it drip there. “What about you?”

“Goldenrod Lyi. Doctor Lyi to you lad. I guess it’s too much to hope that you cooled your burns properly before wrapping yourself up?” Doctor Lyi asked, he knew the answer but if he kept Oz talking it would distract him from the pain a bit.

“No.” Ozpin said. “Just made the fire stop burning.”

“Alright, when was your last adrenaline stim?” The doctor asked again, and changed the cloths before they could start to stick.

Oz managed to focus this time. “Maybe three hours before I got in.”

“So approximately sixteen hours ago, did you take a painkiller at the same time?” The Doctor dried his hands and pulled on a pair of medical gloves.

“Yeah, and another just before I came to the inn.” Oz said trying to ignore the sounds of the gloves going on.

“I’m going to give you a topical anesthetic, with the other drugs you’ve had and the stims I don’t dare give you anything more. So this will still hurt, I’m going to start removing the dead skin.” Doctor Lyi put a bowl a little ways down the bed and injected Oz three more times equally distanced down his spine.

The injections almost instantly dulled the pain and Oz found the tension easing out of his shoulders. Then the doctor started cutting and Oz could feel the pull on the living flesh and pain again, though it was dull compared to before. The sensation was very unpleasant but he understand the importance and attempted to stay as still as possible, letting the anesthetic dull the pain while his mind remained somewhat fuzzy from the lack of nutrition. He concentrated on moving his fingers in slow patterns on the bed sheet, he didn’t want to fall back asleep until he felt safe.

“Are you going home then kid?” The Doctor asked as he worked.

“Home is gone, but to Shade yes.” Ozpin licked his dry lips and kneaded the sheet again when the cool scissors touched his back.

The girl returned with the water and bandages, standing to the side attempting to look useful and failing. Her face continued to look pale as more blackened flesh was cut away and when she averted her gaze again the Doctor cleared his throat.

“Bring water and soup for our friend Pantone, he hasn’t eaten in days. I can’t put him under so we might as well feed him.” The Doctor spoke like he wasn’t cutting away rotting flesh.

Pantone went green and raced from the room again.

“Thank you.” Oz said, focusing on his breathing.

“One you’re a Huntsman, two with the amount of Lien you flashed coming in here you’re a good one. Putting you back together so you can continue working is what any Doctor worth his salt would do.” Doctor Lyi grumbled like it was the most obvious thing. “Though I must say I am impressed you must have one hell of an Aura and pain tolerance, I figured you’d pass out once I started cutting.”

Oz let out a soft grunt when the Doctor pulled away a piece of flesh and dropped in the empty bowl.
“You could say that.” He hissed through clenched teeth.

Lyi paused and removed the clothes hiding the rest of his wounds and began cutting away the remains of his pants and undergarments so he could put more cool wet cloths on the burns, as well as one to protect his modesty when Pantone came back in. Lyi smiled when Ozpin let out a long low sigh of relief at the cool cloths.

Pantone came back a tray in hand and a small pitcher hanging off a finger. “Aero gave me the day off to help you Doctor.”

Doctor Lyi nodded and picked up a tweezers so he could start pull the remains of Oz’s blackened clothes from his wounds. “Then you can start by helping Obsidian with some water, then we’ll pull the rest of bandages off and let his skin breath.”

“Ohay.” Pantone said softly and walked around the bed setting the tray on the side table and the pitcher on the floor.

Oz got his first look at the woman helping him, he’d be the first to admit he remembered very little of last night. Pantone was to be put simply, a lovely young woman, soft wavy blonde hair, soft cheeks, big green eyes and pale fair skin, she was also short, only a few inches taller than Ruby. “Sorry about last night, I was in a fog of painkillers and yet more pain.” He croaked out.

Pantone smiled. “It happens more often than you’d think, it’s alright.”

“Less talking more drinking. He needs fluids and calories to start building up his Aura again.” Lyi said, knife in one hand tweezers in the other, giving the young woman a dertering look.

Chastised, Pantone grabbed the up and held the straw so Oz could grab it without having to move, she brought the cup over to him and he greedily grabbed the straw and sucked down the wonderful cool water, feeling it slowly flow in his body like a healing balm.

She took it away when it was empty and refilled it, offering it back.

Ozpin managed a second glass before his stomach started to protest unused to having anything in it after days of being barren. As she filled the cup again. “No more, I don’t feel well.” He said biting his lip.

Lyi offered her the scissors he had used to cut away the bandages from his back. “See if you can go down his right side, then pull it away in sections, leave his arms for now.”

Pantone nodded and Ozpin closed his eyes rather then watch her so close to his skin with those sharp things.

Snip snip snip, went the scissors, his front was much better than his back, he missed the relieved look from Pantone. “Can you lift your arm?” She asked softly.

Ozpin lifted it ignoring the pain.

She quickly pulled away way the bandages covering his chest, she let out a soft shriek when the hole in his stomach came into view.

Ozpin forced his eyes open to look at her, she looked like she was about to throw up, with a hand over her mouth and the other pointing at his stomach. He watched as she swallowed. “Doctor you better look at this first.”
Ozpin let his eyes close and his head fall deeper into the pillow, he was suddenly so very tired. The last thing he heard was. “By the Gods lad, why aren’t you dead?”

The next time Ozpin woke the sun was sinking and he was lying on his back, he felt much better, all his bandages had been changed, he also had an IV coming out of one hand. He looked down his body, he still hadn’t been given any pants, instead just had a towel over his genitals.

Doctor Lyi had just come back into the room and had caught that he was awake and gave him a very unimpressed look. Doctor Lyi was a short man with a small pot belly, a crown of grey hair and sharp brown eyes. “Five hours.” The Doctor started. “It took me five hours to put you back together, and one of those was just for that gut shot! I’ve seen Grimm victims with less damage.”

Oz wasn’t sure what to make of this. “Uh Thank you?”

“That Atlesian knight must have exploded spectacularly.” he watched over picking up a small bowl along the way.

Ozpin looked in it to see at least a dozen bits of metal and glass of different sizes, the smallest no bigger than a pea the biggest was about half his finger. “Oh.” Ozpin had been so distracted by his back and stomach he hadn’t noticed any other shrapnel.

“You ran with this in you kiddo, I’m amazed you could even stand, much less make the run from Vale to here in three days. It’s my professional opinion you should be dead.” Lyi put the bowl back on the dresser and picked up a stool and set it by the right side of the bed. “Where were you trained Huntsman?”

Ozpim was impressed he was able to school his features, the last thing he needed was to relieve the last time a doctor had taken interest in his healing abilities. “Shade, but my mother was good with Aura, said I had a strong one, I just used it to keep moving.” One lie followed easily into another, he had a bit of trouble with the lie, it didn’t sit right with him, the same as when he stole the trench coat but he needed to heal and fast. As thankful as he was to the doctor for patching him up he couldn’t be allowed to know the truth, no one could.

“So you had training outside of the academies, I guess that explains it.” Doctor Lyi said.

Oz tired to sit up, he could smell food on the side table. “Can I eat?”

Doctor Lyi crossed a leg over the other. “Yeah, I’ve sealed your intestines back up.”

The vision of the last time he had seen his intestines, falling from his body as a knife cut over his stomach filled his mind. He kept his back to the wall, continuing to face the doctor and the door, just in case he needed to escape, he couldn’t let himself be trapped in this room. Oz reached over and snagged a lukewarm bowl of soup, from the bedside table. It was thin simple chicken noodle, he guessed the Doctor didn’t want him eating anything more substantial for a while.

Lyi watched him for a moment, pleased when Oz all but inhaled the soup, it was easy to see that the man was famished, when Oz had finished the soup he asked. “What are your plans?”

“I’d like to get moving as soon as possible.” Ozpin said the soup had been an heaven send to his poor stomach, though he still felt sick and the fear hadn’t subsided.
“I take it you’ll need a new weapon?” Lyi had noticed the lack of any way the boy could defend himself. Going back out there with the Grimm crawling around and wounded as he was would be suicide.

“Yes, but quality time with a forge is all I really need. I can do the rest on my own.” Ozpin said, his back was starting to hurt again, he slowly laid back down.

Lyi nodded. “Give your wounds and your Aura a few days to recover, I’ll get you some clothes when you’re fit to move.”

Well that was one way to keep a patient in bed, Ozpin could only nod, plans of running taking a back seat to getting clothes and healing. “Alright.”

Doctor Lyi got up and put the stool back against the wall. “I’ll send Pantone up with some more soup in a bit, your bandages should be fine for at least another hour.”

“Thank you.” Oz said watching the Doctor walk out of the room.

Lyi only scoffed.

Ozpin drifted in and out of awareness but was woken by a knock on his door and a soft call of. “Obsidian?”

“I’m awake.” He called out and set about the long process of sitting up.

Pantone came into the room with more soup, this one smelt strongly of cheese and a tall glass of milk. She smiled at the sight of him. “You’re up!”

Oz shifted himself to get comfy and smiled at her. “As best I can be.”

She walked over and set the lap tray his lap fixing the legs so it didn’t rest on his thighs. “How are you feeling?”

Ozpin picked up the soup and stirred the thick, creamy cheese and broccoli soup. “Much better thank you for asking. And sorry about not warning about my stomach wound.”

Pantone waved him off with a smile and sat on the edge of his bed. “You did mention it, I just wasn’t expecting something so … big? Anyway it’s alright, I’m usually a better assistant to the Doctor but I’ve never seen burns and wounds as extensive as yours or anything like what you had in your stomach.”

“You help Doctor Lyi often than?” Oz asked taking a sip of his soup.

Pantone nodded, “Usually only when he needs an extra set of hands, but he is getting old so that happens pretty often.”

“I see.” Ozpin said eating slowly the soup from before had settled well but this one was much heavier, with large chunks of corned beef and potatoes. It was heavenly.

Pantone bit her bottom lip and blushed watching him. “So how long do you think you’ll stay?”
Oz’s saw the blush, Oh dear, he thought. I best get that idea out of her head as quickly as possible.

She brushed a lock of blonde hair back and said. “It’s just so rare that any huntsman stays here very long and you can’t exactly rush out the door like they do.”

“As soon as Doctor Lyi sees fit to release me and I make a new weapon, I am going back to Shade.” Ozpin said trying to keep his tone soft but firm.

“Oh.” Pantone said slumping slightly. “Do you have someone special waiting for you in Shade?”

“Yes.” Ozpin said, though he knew Qrow and Ruby would eventually make their way towards Mistral, he would too but if Haven was Salem’s’ next target then he wanted to have a new identity before he went back into the game.

Pantone deflated, “Oh I see.” she got up and made her way back out of the room. “I’ll come and get the tray later.”

Ozpin watched her go, he could practically hear Qrow in his ear calling him stupid for sending away a fine piece of ass like that. Then again, since he and Ruby had been together he hadn’t actually cared for any other. He could find a way to get a Scroll, contact Qrow and Ruby and ask them if they objected but in all honesty all he really wanted was to hear their voices. Pantone was forgotten in an instance when he realized that even though she was very lovely looking and seemed interested in him, he simply didn’t feel the same way. He wanted Qrow. He wanted Ruby. They were his lovers and he really wished they were here right now.

Ozpin was bored, there was no other way to put it, and the longer he had to stare at the ceiling the more he wondered just what had happened to Beacon? What had happened to his home? To his friends, to his family, to Qrow and Ruby, what was James going through? Ozpin cursed under his breath knowing the latter he was blaming himself for Vale right now. He needed a Scroll, he needed to get in contact with his friends. He had no idea what happened after fleeing from Beacon and he needed to know they were alright. He ached to hold them in his arms, kiss them and protect them.

Things had gone too wrong, after the android Penny was destroyed Oz had taken Pyrrha and Jaune down to the chambers where Amber was being kept alive. Such luck as it was that Salem’s agents had found them before Miss Niko could have Amber’s Aura transferred to her. Cinder Fall had proved to be too powerful and there had been something else about her power, something he believed Salem had had a hand in creating, making the dark haired woman powerful enough to hold against Oz.

He let out a long sigh and worked himself to sitting up, he hadn’t been able to stand yet, shrapnel had done a number on his legs. Once he finally stopped for rest and healing, his body flipped him the bird when it came to getting moving again. He bit his lip and grunted as he sat up and swung his legs over the edge of the bed. Maybe if he could just make it downstairs he’d be able to learn something about his home.

Doctor Lyi came into the room with a waddling walk, new bandages over his arm a clean bowl of water in hand. “Trying again? That’s the third time in a hour, do you really want to leave that badly?”

“How did you?” Ozpin asked

“Look at the floor lad.” Doctor Lyi set the water down on the bedside table and put the bandages on
the bed.

There was dried blood from his last few attempts at standing up. “Ah.”

Doctor Lyi started unwrapping his chest and Ozpin winced when the cold air ghosted over his flesh. The doctor shot Oz with another antibiotic and started cleaning the burns out again.

“What happened to Vale?” Oz asked softly, he had to know.

“A dragon Grimm broke out of a mountain, and destroyed the CCT tower, but people say that some kind of silver light froze it at the top of the tower, now it just draws more Grimm.” The doctor said calming waiting on Ozpın’s reaction.

Ozpın’s eyes widened RUBY! He lurched into motion his heart racing, he was up and off the bed reaching for his coat before he even realized he was up. If Ruby has unlocked her Silver eyes then Salem will have found out about it by and has probably already sent someone after her! Watts, Hazel . . . no, Tyrian would be obvious choice. Oz’s stomach lurched at the thought of Tyrian going after Ruby, he stumbled forward bracing a hand against wall as his stomach heaved at the thought.

“Wow lad! Where the hell do you think your going!”

Oz felt hands on him and he grabbed at his gut wound, Qrow would be with Ruby but Tyrian was a piece of work. Probably even Qrow’s equal, even with Qrow’s semblance. Panic set in Oz’s heart, racing as he fought the urge to throw up. If Qrow failed or was just a moment too slow, one moment was all Tyrian needed. He fell to a knee his heart in his throat, Tyrian was a sick piece of work, he’d do worse then just kill Ruby. He’d break her, soul, body and mind, tear her apart slowly.

Plaster crumbled like paper under his fingers as Oz pulled himself back up right, he shoved the Doctor away casually sending the elder man stumbling into the bed. He had to get to Ruby, had to protect her and Qrow, he and Qrow they could stop someone like Tyrian, fuck his plan. He reached out for his coat blood pulsing down his back, everything hurt but he ignored it.

“I need some help in here!” Ozpin heard the doctor shout, he tried to put his arms through the coat. He could feel skin pulling and cracking, puss oozing down his back.

The door slammed open and two Huntsmen stood in the doorway trying to take in the scene.

He set his lips in a grim line and pulled the coat on sharply, he moved to push past the two men but both tried to grab him. He managed to get one punch out, then he felt a sharp pain in his left thigh and oblivion took him.

Ozpın came around slowly, he was back on his back and in more pain he had been in since he got in. His bandages were changed and he saw that Doctor Lyi was sitting at the bottom of the bed glaring at him. Oz swallowed his throat like sandpaper again, he glanced down to see that the IV had been replaced from where he had so rashly tore it from him in his haste to get up. He forced his eyes back on the doctor who was now holding up a needle.

“Do you know what this is?” The doctor asked.

Oz swallowed again the action hurt and asked. “Another sedative?”
“No, this is a class four painkiller, I’m half tempted to give you something weaker, just to see if the
pain will keep you from moving. Those huntsmen wanted to tie you do the bed, for someone who
was burned alive, you have a very impressive right hook. They are still fixing the guard rail. So you
have a choice, you can stay there as you are now and if you try to make another run for it before I’m
satisfied with your healing I will sedate you and have you on the floor before you get into the hall.
Or I can give you this, and you can enjoy some painless sleep and you will stay put till I discharge
you. Do we have a deal?”

He could still run after the shot, Ozpin nodded. “Yes.”

Doctor Lyi gave him the shot and he just enough time to realize the Doctor had lied before he was
sleeping again.

Ozpin went through the next few days in a haze, sometimes he’d awake long enough to eat
something, he could distantly feel more medical equipment added to him. Sometimes he heard
someone changing the bag for the IV, opening or closing the blinds turning him over to change his
bandages or to prevent bed sores.

Sometimes he’d wake in the middle of the night with no one around to sedate him again. In these
moment’s he adjusted his Aura, made a few shifts to his person that would ensure his hair came back
in black, if it grew back at all. He looked out the window, Pantone had left it open clearly not
thinking he’d be getting up again any time soon. He looked out at the cracked moon and wondered if
Ruby and Qrow were alright, were they back in Patch? Already on the road? How was Qrow
coping with his disappearance, probably very badly but he had Ruby.

Ozpin looked down his body and rotated his feet, tensing and releasing up the muscles going up his
legs testing. He reached out with his left and touched his stomach, the pain was dulled, he figured
they must have him on a drip now. He’d have to pull the equipment out of him if he wanted to leave
and that was something he didn’t know how to do. Even then, he had calmed enough to come to his
senses. He couldn’t risk going to Patch and potentially putting himself and Ruby or Qrow at risk and
he couldn’t return to Vale. Thankfully the Relic was with him, even if Cinder found the Vault there
would be no Relic there for her to find. No he needed to organize himself and Vacuo was the best
place to go for it.

Ozpin drifted for several days more before he was allowed to come back to the world of the living,
minus all the medical equipment, with clothes at the end of his bed and a room to himself.

He sat up slowly and ran a hand over his head, pleased when it was covered in a smooth stubble.
There was no pain, maybe a ache in his bones from not moving for so long. He took it carefully this
time, bit by bit working his way to standing up. He swayed on the spot, then walked carefully
around to the bathroom. He flipped the light on and rubbed his eyes at the bright white light stabbed
at them and looked up into the mirror.

He barely recognized himself, he’d lost weight he couldn’t have afforded to. He looked harsh and
gaunt, with black stubble over his jaw and head. His head had healed well and as he ran a hand over
it again though he could feel that the scars wouldn’t affect his hair. He turned the tap on put his
hands under the cool water and looking down to them. There were new thin white scars over his
hands and knuckles, the further up his arms he looked the fewer shrapnel scars he saw and the more
burn scars there were. They were still all red, raised lumpy and angry, ugly. Oz shifted his hands and
grabbed the sink, as he leaned forward he could feel the scars covering his back pull and ache.

He took a deep shaky breath, he had Aura he could fix this. He’d have to before he left, he couldn’t
afford to have such distinguishing marks. Oz turned off the water to focus, he moved his aura to
focus on his back and speed his healing. He let out a long shudder as he felt his skin crawl as it
healed, he stayed like that for several minutes then took another breath and turned so he could look in
the mirror.

Ozpin smiled slightly at his work, the lumpy swollen flesh had faded away to silver scars and he
could see the muscles of his back. Those silver scars would be much easier to hide, he ran a hand
over his back and was satisfied with the feel of the skin.

After tending to his body's needs and a shower he walked back to his room feeling much better. He
only then noticed that the bloody trench had been removed and his Lien and collapsed cane were
beside the offered clothes.

They turned out to be black boxers, socks, and pants, with a dark red dress shirt, under it all was a
long light black leather duster. Lastly a pair of black boots that came up to his knees, clearly for
fighting. The cane was tucked into a pocket and Oz grabbed his Lien pleased to find it all still there,
he'd have to take the rest out before he left then create a new account when he got to Vacou, if he
did it all at once. It wouldn't give Watts much of paper trail to follow and even if it raised some flags,
perhaps he would think someone had robbed him if it went in one fell swoop.

He walked out of his room with a long smooth stride and down to the bar. Pantone was at the till
with Doctor Lyi who was nursing a tankard. Both were watching the news, turned away from him.
Silently he walked up and sat beside the Doctor and pulled out the red Lien card again. “His drinks
are on me, plus however long I’ve been here for.” Ozpin winced, his voice had taken on a dry rasp.
He dearly hoped he hadn’t damaged it at some point.

Pantone zipped around and beamed at him, “You’re up!” She blushed. “And you look MUCH
better.”

“Aye.” Ozpin said, trying to twist his voice around sharp Vacuo islands accent. He swallowed and
rubbed his throat, he was definitely going to have to practice.

The Doctor turned around to look him over. “How is your back and gut?”

Ozpin reached down and pulled his shirt up exposing the long scar, it was almost five centimeters
long, raised and red. “Not bothering me.” He tucked his shirt back in. “Back’s good, I cleared up the
scarring with my Aura, got it to a shiny silver.”

Lyi raised his brow. “Impressive.”

Ozpin looked over and remembered. “Would it be possible to get glasses? I’m near sighted and lost
mine at Vale.”

Lyi scoffed. “We’re the largest town this side of Sanus lad, you could get bloody contacts if it suited
you.”

Ozpin had never considered that before, but given his profession they might be a worthy investment.
He offered the card to Pantone again, blushing she took it and ran up his request. “Would you like a
lunch as well?” She asked.

Ozpin nodded. “Whatever you have lots of please.”

“Stew it is.” Pantone ran up the total and offered him the receipt he waved it off, extra paper was the
last thing he needed. She rushed off into the kitchen, with an extra bounce in her step.

“Thank you, for all your help.” Ozpin's voice rasped. “I’m sorry about trying to leave, my friends
just have a habit of being in the thick of things and one has silver eyes. I am very worried for her.”
“You think a silver eyes froze the Grimm?” The doctor asked sharply, he had heard the stories.

Ozpin nodded, tapped the varnished wood of the bar with a finger.

“Now I see why you are in such a rush, I haven’t heard of a silver eyes in years. Well you are in luck, I told our blacksmith to expect you, you can be on your way as soon as you’re ready. Oh and I even heard he got a shipment of the good metal in from Vale before it all went to hell. We have a little group of Huntsmen in training here, so don’t be surprised if you draw an audience.” Lyi took a deep drink.

Ozpin smirked at that, he had a plan he wanted to use, he guessed he’d just have to be a little careful putting into practice. “That’s fine, maybe they’ll learn something.”

Pantone came back with a large bowl of stew with a side of heavy brown bread. She put them before him and zipped back to the kitchen.

Doctor Lyi chuckled. “That one wants into your bed before you leave.”

Ozpin paused mid bite. “I have lovers waiting for me.”

“Are you exclusive?” Lyi asked.

“I could say no . . . but I won’t. Since I haven’t been able to contact them I wouldn’t know their stand on it especially since I am bound for Vacuo instead of returning straight to them.” The stew was heavenly, or he was just really hungry.

“Well if you’re able to and fancy, it would make her day before you leave, I’m tired of watching her pine after Huntsmen. She’s not bold enough to approach one for a roll in the hay in the day or two most stay.” Lyi sipped at his beer.

Ozpin focused on eating his stew to avoid answering as Pantone came back and started cleaning the bar. He used the bread to mop of the last few drops of stew as he finished. “Thank you again for your help,” he glanced over Pantone. “And I’ll think about what you’ve said.”

Lyi grumbled a goodbye and Ozpin headed off to find the blacksmith.

Which turned out to be very easy, he found a broad shouldered, pot bellied stag faunus man in a blacksmith’s apron who had been clearly waiting for him.

“So the infamous Obsidian Volren has awoken and been allowed out and about!” The man gave a deep rumbling laugh.

“Infamous?” Ozpin asked raising a brow.

The faunus bellowed with laughter. “Oh I was there it was glorious! Even as you dropped to the floor you punched that huntsman so hard he flew out into the hall smashed the rail and created a crater in the middle of the inn. It’s been the talk of the town for days, people have been calling you the sleeping volcano.”

Ozpin felt blush dust his gaunt cheeks. “Oops.”

The huge faunus got up, chuckled, “Let’s get you outfitted, you wanted to use the forge alone?” and led the way into his shop.

“Yes.” Ozpin pulled out his collapsed cane. “I need to remake the blade, but it’s, well I was always
taught that a huntsman’s weapon is a part of them. I’d like to remake it myself and alone.”

“Just a longsword then?” The blacksmith looked over the handle but didn’t move to touch it.

“Yes.” Ozpin said.

“I can respect a traditionalist, I cleaned the place up, take as long as you need.” The faunus turned to leave.

Ozpin pulled out a Lien card, offering it to him. “For the metal and time.”

The faunus took the card. “I’ll give you a huntsman’s’ discount, I’m not going to charge you full price while you’re still getting back on your feet.”

“Thank you.” Oz pulled off his coat and shirt, and set about stoking the forge.

Memories danced behind Oz’s eyes as he worked, he couldn’t help but wonder how many lifetimes he had been a smith for. He could hear his audience, young Huntsmen and Huntresses in training. Even the smith himself came around to watch, even if he was cowed into silence.

To say Ozpin was a grandmaster at a forge was an understatement, hundreds of years of practice and skill was worked into his very bones. His first thought was just to make a covering for his cane for Narsil had become his cane Anduril, but doing so felt to much like a lie. So again he broke his weapon and set the pieces to the forge. Songs in forgotten tongues crept out of him as he worked, again he would craft a sword only this time it would be able to double as his cane when he desired it too. Something in his soul said it was time to reforge his broken blade, a name lingering inside of him. Aerondight.

He wasn’t sure why Aerondight called to him. Narsil had been a blade for the king, broken and reforged into Anduril which roughly translated into ‘The Sword that was Broken’, it was his way of honoring Stride by never forgetting just how he got it.

Aerondight though, it stuck in his mind. It’s meaning flitting from around the edge of his memories. Ozpin wasn’t even sure what he was singing as he hammered the metal into a new form. He worked at dusk, for any truth smith new the importance of doing your finest work with a dimming sun. Forging gave him time to think, for he remembered so deeply how it do it. Even with the old memories they felt peaceful, playing out behind his eyes without hindering him.

The journey to Vacou; the separation from Ruby and Qrow, the young woman who had helped nurse him back to life. By the third day Aerondight was complete, it would collapse into a dagger. The blade was longer than his cane by about ten centimeters with two smooth leaf like segments add to the guard, one over cane’s knuckle guard another over the blade itself on the opposite side. He made sure to cover the gears of the cane and darken the colours of it to reflect the grey emblems of Qrow’s scythe. He covered the round pommel with rose like leaves of a dark red. The blade itself was a light grey again like Qrow’s weapon and Oz didn’t see any need to change the colouring. Under all this was the pure simple glory of Aerondight.

By the next day finishing his weapon Oz left the town, a backpack of supplies, all his Lien removed from his accounts and a new scroll. Sadly he found out that Patch was out of local range and with the CCT tower down long distance communication was down across Sanus. Copper eyes hidden behind
green contacts he left the village, heading towards Vacou and leaving behind a blissful Pantone.

Chapter End Notes

Ardy: So I will be releasing these as they get touched up. So sometimes that might be fast, other times eh no so much. Thank you too: darkvampirekisses, Nova_Belaqua, lillithschild for your comments.
Rain pelted inkly black feathers as they beat at a frantic place. The mountain was right where Qrow remembered it, the path had eroded away in the centuries since he had last been here. He landed at the sealed entrance and a few pokes with his beak found a thin patch in the ivy. He hoped through and transformed.

It was pitch black within and Qrow pulled a flashlight from his belt and flicked it on. The ground was just as uneven as he remembered, he walked a quickly as he dared into the ancient temple. Even the amphitheater appeared the same, he walked down the steps and shown his light upon the golden pool of fluid that remained still and calm. Qrow knelt balancing on the balls of his feet, he reached out and touched the gold liquid. It was cold, the glyphs surrounding it were dormant. Qrow sat on his behind with a flop as tears started to collect in his eyes.

Oz wasn’t here. He could feel it echoing around in his soul. Qrow pulled out Ruby’s rose, dull grey the green upon it all but gone, but Oz… wasn’t here. What did that mean? No. He couldn’t lose focus, Ruby was still asleep he had to get back to her.

As he stood his light flash upon the flagstones and he noticed that they were discolored. He knelt and studied them, though he and Oz were in no hurry to share it with anyone. The magic Oz had given him ran deep, flawless memory and it had enhanced his senses. For he could still see the blood that had been split the last time Oz had crawled out of the pool. Qrow followed the trail, it drew larger till reaching the ivy hole that Qrow had gone through.

Guilt turned in Qrow’s gut, just what was it like for Oz to be reborn? Had he found some way to avoid the process? Now was not the time to fall into those kinds of thoughts. He tucked his flashlight away and transformed leaving the cavern and returning to Patch.

When he got there Ruby was still asleep and Tai had finally gone to bed. Qrow stumbled away from the house as exhaustion and everything that had happened started to press down on him. He drank deeply from his flask and pulled out the rose as he walked, the rain pouring down. A petal fell away.

Qrow stumbled to a halt in the middle of a grassy clearing, falling to his knees and grabbing at the petal as it dissolved into soul dust. “No. No.” Qrow sobbed and finally let it crash over him. Yai lost an arm, Ruby was unconscious and Oz. Tears streaming down his face, he cradled the rose, but even as he touched it a petal fell off and dissolved in a shower of grey dust.

Qrow sobbed harder, clutching the rose to his chest and falling forward. He screamed, the rain drowning out the sound. “This wasn’t how it was supposed to go!”

He couldn’t bring himself to care when his clothes were soaked through, when his eyes were red and puffy, when his nose ran. He wailed out for Oz, he blamed himself for not looking sooner for the man, for not going back for him. He failed to find Oz cane, the Relic was who knows where, SHE might even have it for all he knew.

He grabbed at his Aura and shoved it through the rose, pleading with the other half of it to send something back. He gave and gave, till he was too exhausted to give anymore, till he felt hollow and empty, till all he had left was his pain. He opened his hands to look at the rose, it was crumpled around the edges and didn’t reform, his emblems had darkened to a near black with all the energy he had poured into it. But the rose itself only greyed even further and lost another petal.
“No, no, NO!” Qrow grabbed at the falling petal and it dissolved under his fingers. Qrow dropped the rose into the grass and punched the ground with both hands, over and over, till the grass was destroyed and his hands were caked in mud, sobbing, tears flowing freely. It was his fault it was always his fault, if only he had gone back! If only he had gone to the tower sooner! They had just figured themselves out, only for everything to be rippled away. To have Oz... ripped away.

His heart was breaking and there was nothing that could be done, he coughed and sniffed, how was he going to tell Ruby? Oz was a part of them, Oz completed them and he was fading away.

“Qrow?” Taiyang asked softly, he had followed him out when he saw that Qrow wasn’t going to go to bed. The display of emotion from Qrow had him stunned, this was worse than Summer. Then Qrow had turned to drinking and fights, not drinking, going out into a thunderstorm, disappearing then returning and screaming at the sky. He saw Ruby’s rose on the ground, he could feel Qrow’s Aura on it, saw another petal wilt away.

Qrow didn’t hear Tai, he cough and sobbed all the harder, what was he going to do? Ozpin had always been the one with a plan, the one with direction, he didn’t know what to do. Qrow scooped up the rose again and brought it back to his heart. He wailed anew rising but up turning his face to the sky and he screamed as his heart broke. Rain like little needles driving into his body, through his clothes, he was cold he shivered but didn’t care. Now Oz was gone and there was no telling when they’d see him again.

Taiyang walked over, and knelt beside Qrow, his umbrella covering them both. “Qrow?” He asked again softly.

Qrow sobbed looking up to his friend, his eyes red and puffy, the rose clutched tenderly in his hands. “He’s lost Tai.”

Tai didn’t need to ask who, he wrapped his free arm around his old friend and pulled him to his chest. He felt Qrow hick and cough, felt his shirt grow wet, Tai kissed the top of Qrow’s head. “Come on, let’s go home and get you cleaned up.”

He pulled Qrow to his feet, and they made their way slowly back to the house. Qrow’s flask forgotten in the grass.

Tai cleaned Qrow up without a word, washed off the mud, got the man out of his soaking clothes and tucked him into bed. Qrow’s grip never once wavering on the rose, as he fell into a sleep of pure exhaustion.

Tai stopped by Ruby’s room and softly opened the door, the moonlight lite his sleeping daughter. He smiled softly and walked in, pulled back the covers and picked her up. Cradling her to his chest he walked back to Qrow, he drew back the quilt and put her down beside him.

Neither one woke, but they both turned to each other, Ruby’s arm slipped around his middle, she tucked her face into his chest and let out a little sigh. Qrow curled around her, his arms coming round her and a leg over hers. His hand relaxed around the rose and it slipped from his fingers to rest on the pillow.

Tai tucked them back in and took a moment to watched them both, smiled and left, closing the door softly behind him.
Ruby’s eyes hurt when she woke up, but she was warm and she felt safe, it took her a minute to realize she was in bed with Qrow. Which was a bit odd, given… Pyrrha she remembered and tears welled up in her eyes. She took a deep breath finally noticing her surroundings, she was home, but Pyrrha, Penny…

Qrow awoke to the sound of tears and Ruby shaking softly in his arms. “Hey, hey.” He pulled her tighter to his chest and held her as she cried for her friends. “It’s okay, I got you, I got you.”

Ruby threw her arms around his neck and cried into his chest, he continued to whisper reassurances to her. She cried till she was too tired to keep it up and hiccuped softly.

Qrow grabbed a tissue and she blew her nose and wiped her eyes. She looked up to him, his eyes just as red as hers and he looked bone tired. She reached out and touched his lips, their roughness familiar and calming. “What happened?” She asked as Qrow kissed her finger and closed his eyes bowing his head, without a word he reached over and brought her rose to sit between them.

Ruby let out a hiccuping wail, cupping the grey rose between her hands, Qrow’s emblems had returned to their usual red but the rest of the rose remained grey. “He, he.” She coughed as she started to cry again.

Qrow pulled her back to him his own tears starting to flow anew. “I’m sorry.”

“But I don’t understand, he was supposed to come back.” She sobbed harder clutching the rose tight.

The red eyed man bit his lip and curled up tight around her, shaking silently with his own tears. “I’m sorry.” He managed to force the words out. “I looked but I couldn’t…”

It was a long while before either of them was in any fit state to speak again. Ruby leaned up and kissed the stubble of his jaw. “What happened? I only remember Pyrrha and my head really hurting.”

Qrow relaxed his grip very slightly and tucked his face to her head. “Your silver eyes awoke, you froze the dragon, Cinder looked to be dead. I didn’t check, I just grabbed you and took you back to the ships. I looked for Oz but… nothing, not even a body, not his cane, nothing.” He squeezed her and his eyes shut.

Ruby took that in silently, any joy she might have felt about her eyes finally activating vanished in the light of everything else that had happened. She hugged him tighter, her soul ached… traumatized by what had been done to Ozpin. She couldn’t even imagine what Qrow was feeling, he had known Oz for much longer, loved him for a very long time.

Taiyang knocked softly on the door, opening it slowly, the scene that greeted him quietly killed him. “There’s breakfast, if you two want any.” He spoke very softly.

Qrow nodded and Tai closed the door with a gentle click, the pair held each other for several moments longer before Qrow asked. “Are you hungry?”

“I’m too tired to be hungry.” Ruby mumbled into his chest.

That was something Qrow understood completely, it also meant she was probably so far past hungry that her body had given up on telling her it. He sat up slowly pulling her up with him. “We should go get something to eat, it’s already been three days for you.”

“I don’-.” Ruby started to say with a shake of her head.
Qrow pressed a finger to her lips, “Food Ruby.” he then took her hand and pulled her gently out of bed with him.

Neither bothered to change from their pajamas as they headed down stairs, Tai was quietly working in the kitchen. The smell of pancakes filling their noses and made their stomachs growl.

Yang was already there poking at a pancake that had been pre cut, Ruby raced over and hugged her. She didn’t say a word just buried her face in her sister’s golden locks and held her. “Hey Ruby.” Yang said softly a smile pulling at her lips as she returned the embrace.

While Ruby was busy Qrow went over to Taiyang and watched the other man work for a moment. “Thank you.” He whispered.

Taiyang paused in his cooking and looked over to the withering man, he stepped over and pulled Qrow down by the back of his neck, bringing their foreheads together.

Yang poked Ruby in the ribs and nodded over to their Dad, Ruby drew away and looked over. Her heart leapt and she smiled as Yang whispered. “Finally.”

When Raven left, it had been Qrow to hold Tai together till Summer came into the picture. When Summer died it had been Qrow that pulled Tai from the pit he fell into, the two had always been best of friends, more so even after Raven. However when Ruby admitted her feelings for Qrow went beyond what she had been told they should be, it had caused a rift between Qrow and Tai. Where there once had been affectionate gestures, a hug there, a kiss to the brow. Instead where stony silences and almost glares, this was the first time in years when Qrow and Tai had shared a moment like this.

“Get the juice out Xiao would ya, you look like you need to replace a lot of fluids.” Tai released him and turned back to the stove plating up the pancakes.

Qrow found himself smiling and doing as he was told, he grabbed cups for the four of them while he was at it.

They ate in silence for a while, but it was the calm silence that came from finally all being together again. Eventually Ruby asked. “So where did everyone go?”

“Weiss’s father came and took her back to Atlas and Blake just ran.” Yang bit her lip, thinking about Blake running hurt more then losing her arm.

“Jaune went back to his family, Ren and Nora went with him, with winter closing in everyone is getting ready.” Tai said then finished his food. “With Vale gone people are falling back on more traditional means of preparation, so all hands on deck. Qrow if you’re up for it, take Ruby and see if you can’t get us a stag, the ice box needs filling. Yang you’re going to help me sort through some strawberries we need to get canning if we want fruit and vegetables over winter.”

“Yes Dad.” Both girls said in unison, grateful for the distraction from the conversation.

Qrow pursed his lips as it hit him, no Vale, no CCT, trade was gonna take a serious hit this year. There’d be no oranges from Mistral, no premade goods, food or otherwise, they’d have to rely on their stores. What was it like in town?

“Stop Qrow, I can hear you worrying from here.” Tai looked over to his friend as Qrow glared into his plate.

Trade wouldn’t stop, but prices would go up, as would demand when other people realized this.
Losing Vale would have catastrophic economic consequences, they were a kingdom without a capital.

“Qrow stop, I’ve got it in hand.” Tai reached over and snapped his fingers by Qrow’s ear.

Qrow jerked out of his musings. “Sorry.”

“Don’t worry about it, I’ve already been down that road and put a few calls in. When you’re done with the stag, Ruby and I will switch, I want to rebuild that barn you broke. After that Lily said she had a goat she could part with for the winter. Then we’ll have all of our basics covered, I’ll even let you smoke some of the deer.” Tai said, he’d been working on this between worrying about the three members of his family.

“JERKY!” Ruby said beaming, she had decided long ago that Qrow’s jerky was the best.

Qrow chuckled and got up. “Seems I have to make jerky now. I’m gonna get changed, can’t bag us a stag in my pajamas.”

Just like that everyone began to move, Yang helped Tai with the dishes and Ruby went and got dressed as well. Picking her usual corset but with the thick black pants instead of her skirt, winter was pressing in on them fast and the weather was starting to cool.

She met Qrow by the front door he also having chosen thicker clothes as well as boots and a thick black cloak. He had the hunting rifle slung over his shoulder and his bangs down over his forehead. Ruby decided she liked the look, he so rarely wore anything outside of his normal gear, but then there were perks to being home.

After grabbing Crescent Rose and Harbinger, they headed out quickly weaving their way deeper into the forest they both knew like the backs of their hands.

Patch was small as islands went, most of its people kept to the shore and used fish as the base of their well being. Not the Xiao Longs, they were about as far away from civilization as you could get. Taiyang got enough of people and noise working as a professor, he wanted his living place as quiet as possible.

Ruby and Qrow were both at home in the woods, Ruby was still wary of crowds and Qrow, was well Qrow, he and people did not get along. Either because of his Semblance or because of his attitude. He handed the rifle off to Ruby and leaped up into the air shifting into his crow shape to save them some time.

Ruby wished she could fly as she watched him take to the sky, her smile faded as she remember that morning. She hugged herself tightly, tears pricking at her eyes. “I miss you Oz.” She said and squeezed her eyes shut, now was not the time to get distracted. The silver eyed’ teen picked up the pace silently dodging and weaving through the trees following Qrow.

She kept up her pace till she heard a familiar raspy, “CAW!” then slowed down and bent lowering herself to the ground, giving the rifle a once over as she went. Sure enough just over fifty meters away came a stag and three other deer all pregnant. Ruby braced the rifle against her shoulder and lined up her shot, her dad said to always go for the stag, the deer would be fine without him and by this time of year his job was already done.

The rifle went off with a loud BANG and the stag dropped, the deer bolted into a run rapidly disappearing.

Qrow flew down beside her and transformed as she set the rifle back over her shoulder. “Nice shot.”
He said as they moved toward their source of protein for the next month or two.

Ruby’s shot had hit it perfectly behind the eyes, the blood was minimal, with a grunt and a flicker of Aura Qrow grabbed two of its legs in each hand and heaved it onto his back and over his shoulders. Ruby blushed and bit her bottom lip at Qrow’s display of strength.

He chuckled at her and rolled his eyes. “Come on tiny, you can walk and ogle at the same time.”

Ruby laughed, and fell in step beside him. “I was NOT ogling you.”

“You keep telling yourself that, but I know the truth.” Qrow said with a smirk, the banter helped soothe the ache in his heart. Oz was lost, but he still had Ruby, they were together and they’d both work to be there for each other.

She blushed but didn’t deny it. “What can I say, I like it when you show off.”

“I don’t know if using Aura counts.” Qrow said.

“You only used it to pick it up, now you’re not and you’re not even stooping.”

Qrow nodded she did have a point there, he didn’t need Aura to carry a few hundred pounds of stag, it just made it easier. When they got back they went around to the back of the house where Tai had a large table waiting for them complete with knifes. Qrow heaved the stag from his back to the table and Ruby zipped off to gather firewood for the smoking barrel.

By the time she got back, with a large basket of logs and branches, Qrow already had the stag skinned and was working his way through the cuts. They worked in silence again, Ruby got the barrel ready and the fire going, after making sure the lid was still airtight. They put several large cuts in to smoke and packaged the rest for the ice box or to be marinated for jerky.

Qrow set the hide out over a log, he and Ruby would flesh it after taking the meat inside. They could hear Tai and Yang in the kitchen working to soft music, neither seemed overly chatty. Yang was mashing strawberries while Tai canned them, Tai light up when they came in arms full of bags.

“Awesome.” He took a bag of steaks from Qrow. “The rest can go in the ice box.”

“Sure thing Tai.” Qrow said happy to see Tai happy.

The icebox was more of an aside to the pantry, set into the ground and filled with actual ice, when you lived in the middle of nowhere counting on having electricity was very unwise. So while, they had a fridge and freezer, they also had an old fashioned pantry and ice box. Ruby noticed how her Dad been filling it already, there were dried herbs hanging from the ceiling and large mason jar upon mason jar of fruits and vegetables already either canned or picked. Ruby turned to one jar while Qrow packed the venison away. “Ooo! Sauerkraut with blueberries!”

Qrow scoffed with a chuckle and said with no small amount of sarcasm. “Yay! Pickled cabbage.”

“Hey, don’t diss the vitamin B,C and K!” Ruby said putting the jar back.

“Still tastes awful.” Qrow said picking up a jar filled with raspberries in some liquid he had yet to guess.

“True.” Ruby said conceding to that fact. “But it’s still good for you.”

“Gods save me from you trying to get me to eat healthy.” Qrow unscrewed the lid of the raspberry
jar and took a sniff. “Ahh, now this is more like it.” He lifted the jar to his lips and took a sip, after all this would have to last him all winter. He purred and visibly relaxed. “Your Dad makes the best raspberry vodka.”

“QROW PUT MY VODKA BACK!!!” Taiyang hollered from the kitchen.

“Yes Tai Tai!!” Qrow yelled back and took another small sip before putting the lid back on the jar back.

Ruby giggled, and grabbed his hand dragging him away from the booze. But it was too late, he had seen the jars of peaches, strawberries and oranges beside the raspberries. “Come on, we still have to get the rest and clean up.”

“That’s right Ruby, keep your bird away from my booze.” Tia said screwing the lid on a jar as they walked by.

“I’ll try.” Ruby called over her shoulder.

They ended up taking four more trips to get all the venison into the icebox and Ruby got ready to work on the skin while Qrow disposed of the remains.

Ruby started fleshing the hide, her small thin knife going over it with practiced ease. Qrow came back after washing his hands and produced a knife of his own. It was ornate but strong, with a floral design on the handle that Ruby instantly recognized.

Qrow caught her stare and explained. “It’s a gift from Oz, from back when we hunted together. He loved doing this and was determined to make me love it too.” He picked up the shoulder opposite to Ruby and started removing the little bits of meat and fat from the skin.

“Why did he like it so much?” Ruby asked looking back down to what she was doing.

“He liked to make things, usually we didn’t bother to catch anything bigger than a rabbit for dinner. He’d even brain and stretch it himself, then make something out of it, the man was a master with a needle. Once he made me a rabbit skin hat.” Qrow chuckled smiling fondly at the memory. “I wore that thing till a Grimm ate it, then I killed the Grimm. I remember being so sad when the hat didn’t come back.” He blinked back a few tears. “Oz made me a new one with gloves to match, apparently my distraught expression stuck with him.”

Ruby smiled softly at him and shifted her leg so her knee brushed against his. “Was this before or after you to started, you know, being together?”

“Before, though in hindsight it wasn’t long before. Huh, I’m slow.” He hadn’t thought of Ozpin’s gifts as courting gifts before, but now when he thought back on it... “Ohhh, damn.”

Ruby giggled. “And people say I’ve oblivious or native.”

“Hey! I was young! And just getting used to the idea of not being cock blocked by my sister! And you are oblivious.” Qrow grumbled.

“And now I know where I got that from.” Ruby said with a cheeky smile.

Qrow mock glared at her. “So long as you promise to not take after your Dad, we’ll be good.”

“What did he do?” Ruby asked.
“I think he made it his not so secret mission to sleep with the whole team.” Qrow muttered so Tai wouldn’t hear them through the window.

“EWW!! NO WAY!!” Ruby couldn’t imagine sleeping with Blake or heaven forbid Yang, ew ew ew. Weiss on the other hand, blush dusted Ruby’s cheeks. That idea had merit. “Wait.” A realization struck Ruby upside the head and her gaze snapped over to him. “Did he succeed?”

Blush dusted Qrow’s cheeks, that said all Ruby needed to know.

Her jaw dropped, “No way!”

“Ruby~, I was like eighteen, he already had Summer and Raven drooling over him, but nooo he just had to have the set.” Qrow’s cheeks brightened, “And eternal bragging rights.” he grumbled.

Ruby laughed, never in a million years had she imagined she’d see Qrow blush like this. “Oh my gods. I’m trying not to picture that.” She pressed her free hand to her head. “I have to ask Dad about that, I just have to know now.”

“Don’t you dare! It took me years to get him to stop call me xiao niao, I don’t need you reminding him of where that name came from!” He stripped the skin a little bit more vigorously than necessary.

“What’s wrong with him calling you little bird?” Ruby asked.

“It means other things too Ruby.” Qrow growled.

Ruby giggled and started listing them on her fingers. “To piss, to tease, delicate, graceful, which one did he use?”

“Depended his mood. I think it started as delicate than bird, then piss when I annoyed him.” Qrow found himself smiling it was hard to stay moody with her.

“He called you little piss!” Ruby shouted.

“Language!” Was called from the kitchen were Tai and Yang were clearly listening. “If you’re reminiscing tell her about the time you wore a skirt to class!”

“NEVER!” Qrow yelled back.

They heard a pair of deep laughs and Qrow yelled without thinking. “You Little Dragon can bite my ass! I am never telling that story!”

“My little dragon up your ass!” Tai countered.

There was a more howling laughter and a crash indicating that Yang had fallen down. Ruby swiftly followed suit falling off the log and clutching her stomach as tears collected in her eyes from her laughter. “Well… that answers one of my questions!” She could barely talk for laughing.

Qrow had to fight a smirk, he missed bantering with Tai, even if he was the literal butt end of the joke. “I fucking walked in that one.”

Ruby calmed herself down and joined him on the log getting back to work. “Yes you did.” She said with a nod, working a bit harder to make up for the distraction.

The laughter eventually died down from the kitchen and everyone settled back to work. Ruby and Qrow made quick work of fleshing the pelt and Qrow set about boiling the water and brains for braining, while Ruby took some sandpaper to it.
By the time she was done roughing the pelt the mix was done, he came back and they started working the liquid into the skin. After they were done they set it out to dry and put the reminder of the mix to be applied after this coat had dried.

After that they headed in and found lunch waiting for them, as soon as Yang laid eyes on her uncle she snickered.

Qrow glared at her and picked a ham sandwich off the waiting plate, and perched on a stool.

Ruby followed suit with a, “Thanks Dad!” before devouring the sandwich.

Yang and Tai had cleared the kitchen, but there was still another flat of strawberries that needed tending too. As well as several empty trays, Yang snagged a sandwich and sat down beside Ruby. “Have fun out in the woods?”

“Yes we did.” Ruby said lifting her chin. “Qrow found a stag within twenty minutes, we didn’t even have to go far.”

“And you got to watch Qrow carry it back.” Yang said with a smile, talking with Ruby helped. Yang could see the pain that her sister felt, but the smile she put on made putting her own loss out of her mind a bit easier.

“I did, it was fun.” Ruby with a cheeky smile.

Yang giggled and worked on her sandwich, it was a bit hard with her left hand but she was getting better at it.

Tai passed around cups of milk, picking up a sandwich. “Are you two done?”

Ruby looked over to Yang, then glanced at Qrow who smirked. “Yeah we are done.”

The family settled down to eat, while they did Tai spoke up. “After you two have the strawberries drying, come out and help us. Yes Yang I mean you.” Tai added when she opened her mouth to protest.

Qrow watched Yang for a moment, he might not have lost an arm but he had a pretty good idea of what was going through her head. He sighed, the best thing for Yang was time and family.

Yang slowed and glared at her food, she didn’t see what good she’d be outside.

Qrow and Tai walked out to look for some suitable tree to remake the little barn, Qrow had blown it up once in a drunken stupor and Tai had never found the time to fix it. They found themselves walking back through the clearing Tai had found Qrow in last night and Qrow found his flask accidentally stepping on it.

The red eyed man lurched to a stop and picked up the well used flask, he hadn’t even realized that he had lost it yet. He tipped it upside down pouring the water out of it and brushed off the dirt.

Tai watched as Qrow seemed entranced by the forgotten item, he walked over and put a hand on Qrow’s shoulder.
Qrow didn’t look up from the flask, it had been his constant companion since Summer died. His thumbs brushed over the dirty metal and he bit his lip. He was home now, with Ruby and no one to call him away from her, he had Tai and Yang. This could be the time to try and rebuild those bonds he had damaged over the years, without being drunk all the time and doing stupid harmful shit.

He turned to Tai and grabbed the man’s free hand and put his flask in it. “Keep it.” Qrow said not looking up.

Qrow missed the look of utter joy and pride on Tai’s face as the other man stashed the flask away in his coat. Tai squeezed Qrow’s shoulder then turned away, putting his hands on his hips in a very Yang gesture. “Alright, so what do you think? Do we go bigger and put the extra time into cutting it? Or do we go smaller and make more trips?”

“What changed?” Qrow asked not moving from his place looking up to Tai now.

Tai turned back and tilted his head questioning.

“Why are you suddenly so…” Qrow glanced away running a hand through his hair.

“Why did I pull my head out of my ass?” Tai asked walking back over to Qrow. “Ruby, Yang and you, I almost lost all of you at Beacon. Had Ruby’s eyes not activated Cinder would have killed her, had Blake not grabbed Yang, she would also be gone. And you, I’ve long since gotten used to seeing you knock on death’s door with how much you drank. But even then you, you would joined Ozpin, if not for Ruby. Don’t think I’ve forgotten what you did when you were a stupid teenager blaming yourself for every little bit of misfortune that fell on our team.” Tai sighed and Qrow winced, that incident had not been one of his finer moments. “The point being, is that my whole family could have died, yes I was mad at you when Ruby picked you. Even though you did nothing to encourage her. Not the most responsible thing for me to have done, I know, but she’s my little girl. And you, are my best friend.”

“You acted like any father would have.” Qrow said softly.

Tai shook his head, “That’s not the point Qrow, I allowed it but I sure as hell didn’t support it. It has always been Ruby’s choice, and I should have accepted that rather than condemning you for it.” he sighed. “Last night I put her in with you, and neither of you woke up but you both moved for each other. I guess it finally sank in that, maybe I was in the wrong for how I acted. I insulted you and I insulted Ruby, so I resolved to make this right, not acting like an ass being one part of that.” He pulled out Qrow’s flask and tossed it up and down a few times. “Now this, I’d have to be blind and deaf, to not see you trying.” He put it back in his pocket.

Qrow tried to process that, after all this time he had gotten used to the cold shoulder from Tai. It was rather strange for Tai to be talking about this. “So where does that leave us? And Ruby?”

Tai looked the red eyed man down staring him down, keeping and holding eye contact. “Rebuilding I guess, we made a real mess after Summer. As for Ruby,” He sighed. “I don’t want to hear or see a thing, but I’ll leave the rest between you and Ruby. She’s old enough to make her own decisions.”

“Thank you Tai.” Qrow said softly.

Tai waved him off. “It was a long time coming, so small or big.”

“Big, between Ruby and myself we have plenty of sharp cutting tools to make short work of something larger.” Qrow said just imagining the fun they would have.

Tai laughed. “Right then.”
Yang and Ruby, giggled as they watched their dad and Qrow drag a tree they had picked into the backyard. It alone would be more than enough to rebuild a barn and anything left over would be stored for the winter.

Ruby grabbed Crescent Rose and Harbinger. “You coming out Yang?”

“Na, I think I’ll stay inside.” Yang said reaching over and holding the stump of her arm.

“Yang~. Come on! It will be fun.” Ruby pleaded.

“Ruby,” Yang glared at her sister.

“You can still help.” Ruby said, making big puppy dog eyes.

Yang sighed and let Ruby drag her outside, Tai’s smile upon seeing Yang made letting Ruby drag her out all worthwhile.

Rather than cutting it up like normal people, Qrow and Ruby took their weapons to it as Tai juggled the logs. They had the tree sliced and diced within minutes, then they spent the rest of the day putting up a new barn, it was small only good for a goat or two, with a loft for hay but then they didn’t need more.

“Do you think Yang will be okay?” Ruby asked sitting on the edge of Qrow’s bed, moonlight the light in the room.

Qrow pulled the towel from around his neck, he had just gotten back from a shower, with another towel slung low around his hips. “Yang’s a strong kid, this won’t stop her, just maybe delay her for a while.” He opened his dresser and pulled out a pair of sweatpants that doubled as his sleep wear.

Ruby watched him closely, he’d be acting a little bit off whenever he looked at her since he and Tai got back. “Are you okay?” She asked as he pulled the pants on and discarded the second towel, with perfect timing on both actions.

Qrow closed the drawer with a soft thud, and pressed his palms to the top leaning on it. Ruby watched the muscles of his back tense as he said, “Tai and I talked today.” He looked to his weapon laying across the dresser.

“Okay?” Ruby softly asked.

“He, well apologized for how he had been acting for the last couple years.” He swallowed thickly trying to decide what to say. “And said that you are old enough to make your own decisions. That Beacon was a wake up call for him and he wants to make amends.” He paused waiting for it to sink in.

“I don’t get it, why are you so tense?” Ruby cocked her head confused.

Qrow pushed himself away from the dresser and started to pace. “I… I’m not.” He trailed off. “It’s complicated, he has always trusted me on some level with you but having him change his outward
“Qrow what’s really wrong? I’m happy you and Dad are getting along again. Why aren’t you?”

“It’s not that.” Qrow said. “I’m glad that Tai is happier with me, us, whatever, this.” He gestured between the two of them. “It’s just, I.” Qrow bit down on his lip bottom lip silencing himself. “Look can nothing change because of this?”

He’s afraid of something. Ruby could see it in how he fretted, how tense his shoulders were. She got up and took his hands as he walked by her. “If that makes you happy.”

“Thank you.” Qrow said dipping his head and closing his eyes. He delicately stroked over the back of her hands, she was just so small and fragile. That ugly fear of breaking her filled his mind again, though it was never far from his thoughts.

Ruby leaned up on her toes and kissed him chastely. “Love you.” Ruby said softly sharing a breath with him.

“Love you.” Qrow in the same whispering tone.

Ruby opened her eyes and looked at the pillows, her rose still laying where they had left it this morning. She blinked once, twice, “Qrow, is it just me, or is the rose better than it was this morning.”

Qrow looked over the rose and Ruby crawled out of his lap to grab it, there were new petals growing from the stem. Though it was still grey, and the crumpled edges has returned to their normal flowing state. She sat cradling the rose in her palms, “Do you think, maybe…” she looked quickly between Qrow and the rose.

“He’s healing.” The relief that poured through Qrow was indescribable, he moved over and cupped her hands touching the rose with his thumbs.

Ruby smiled widely tears gathering in her eyes, she called up her Aura, Qrow following suit and they set their Aura’s entwined through the rose with all their love and hope. After a minute they stopped letting the gifted Aura die out. “Will you go after him?” Ruby asked softly, she hated the idea of him leaving but she’d endure so he could bring Oz home.

Qrow shook his head. “I’ve no way to find him Ruby, She has eyes everywhere just the act of looking would give us away. Ozpin always has a plan, he’ll find us as soon as he is able.”

Ruby nodded and put the rose on the bed side table and the pair slipped beneath the covers of the bed. Hope and love blooming in their hearts and radiating through their souls.
Vacuo New Err Acquaintances

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Even for Ozpin, moving east took time, the pace he set was a near constant Aura enhanced run, butchering any Grimm that got in his way. Occasionally he’d catch up to other refugees from Vale, he’d resupply with them and clear their way, but he refused their many offers to travel with them or with any other Huntmens. It was simply because they would slow him down, at a walking pace from Vale to Mistal was about eight to nine months long, minus the boat trip. Vacuo was significantly farther away, he had to get there make up a false identity and then find a way back across the world. He was cutting that time severely by running with his Aura, but he didn't dare do that on the return. The more time he spent apart from Ruby and Qrow, the more opportunities Salem would have.

As he moved east one a night, like every night, the warm Auras of Qrow and Ruby washed over him. He could always wash a smile onto his face, The knowledge that they knew he was okay and they were safe enough that they felt they could gift Aura. It drove him forward even as it took his further apart from them. Most days he wished to turn around and race for Patch, but he knew that his current course would be wiser in the long run.

The constant running and fighting were doing wonders for rebuilding his strength. It also gave him time to refine a new fighting style as he hadn’t used a sword in a very long time. His scars faded to silver as he used his nights to pour Aura into them, to hide them. He often went without a fire at night, shivering in the darker hours.

There had been one incident, when he first left the village that had sparked something inside him. Oz had just gathered the necessary items to build a fire, sparking it up hadn’t triggered it but the moment he took time to reflect, to think things had changed. The fire he had set blazing only moments ago sat before him, its flames snuck out at his legs, wrapping burning wisps of fire around his limb. Oz panicked, raising his hands towards the fire, warding it away unable to pull his leg from its grasp as a cackling laugh echoed from the flames. A mouth seemingly opened in the centre of it, teeth made of flame and glass shards smiled wide and open towards him. Ensnared in a trap he thrashed about, screaming to be released as more flames flickered over his body, curling around limbs. The laughter became more sinister as its burning wisps seared through his skin melting skin and bones, fusing itself with Ozpin’s body. Then it became to pull, inch by inch dragging the burning man back towards its unholy mouth. Oz squirmed, trying to pull away to escape, Cinder’s laughter bounced around his ears, Such arrogance, as his body drew closer to the jaws of death. Pain bloomed in his side, the shard he had removed slowly sinking back into his waist, the pain agonizing. Glass he had removed buried itself into his flesh, he could feel it inch its way slowly through the skin and touch bone. The sound deafening, blood running in rivers all over his body. Burning, burning, he was burning. “QROW!”

A roar pulled him out of the memories, the nightmares. An Ursa lunging towards him, claws extended. Oz didn’t think, didn’t plan, his eyes widened then his body was moving again. In a dance his every being knew, bringing the sword up as he jumped to the side, the blade dragging along the softer unprotected neck. The roll put him further from the fire and the lost of heat was both terrifying and snapping. The Grimm’s head lolled before it too rolled away before it and it’s body gradually turned to dust again. Oz felt over his body, the coiling flame limbs were nowhere to be seen, his body still broken and scarred as it was didn’t have the melting flesh his nightmare had conjured. He was begrudgingly grateful to the monster, for snapping him out of the memory. Since then he had
avoided fire at all costs, he knew he was just dodging a crippling problem but he didn’t have time to deal with it. He needed to keep running, that had been his driving thought for weeks and he could afford nothing to slow him down right now.

The sands of Vacuo forced him to slow, running in sand for long periods of time was rather difficult even for the most seasoned sand dwellers. The vast majority the people of Vacuo were nomadic in lifestyle as the kingdom had only one major city that had grown up around Shade. The academy itself was more inland while the city spread outward the inner ocean, as it had one of Remnants largest seaports. Ozpin wordlessly joined a caravan heading to the city, if the people looked at him strangely he didn’t notice and kept his eyes ahead and his hands on his valuables.

His boots wore thin, coat started to tatter and his hair which was as black as the bleakest night stuck up in every direction. The scruffy short beard that grew from neglect and hygiene started itching, annoying him to no end. Some kind traveling soul sold him their spare razor but he only bothered to shave when it started to annoy him.

Shade was located in the centre of Vacuo, the school built from a stacked pyramid and rather differently from Beacon was that it was more of a fortress pretending to be a school. The CCT tower was located on the grounds and not a part of the school itself. The city was disorganized and tightly packed, most houses were made out of mud and plaster and looked like a stiff wind could blow them down. Little pig, little pig, let me come in. Oz snickered silently.

Dust was the priciest and most common item traded in Vacuo as it was too far far removed from the rest of the world for anything else. Most products came in by sea ship from Vale or air ship from Atlas. That said because of this the people of Vacuo were second to none when it came to more, traditional uses of Dust. Ozpin thumbed his Lien, he had many ideas for how best to make use of it, but first he needed food and a shower. He moved with the crowds toward the school keeping one hand on his Lien, Shade was full of thieves and Oz wished to stay clear of attention for a while longer yet. All the better establishments and merchant would be found closer to the school as the school was one of the biggest driving forces behind Vacuo’s economy.

He picked out a large inn, and slipped inside, the stone floor clinked under his boots as he gave the patrons a once over. Many were huntmen, the lower class bandits or the higher grade of sand pirates, there didn’t look to be an honest person in sight and they were a pretty even mix of faunus and human. Ozpin hoped he would be able to conduct his business without having to introduce someone to his boot, but he rather doubted it.

The bar was rather full with only one or two empty seats, all of the other seats were filled as it was just turning to dusk and most had just gotten off work. To one side he saw a nude tiger faunus woman dancing to entertain some of the locals. He averted his eyes as he picked the empty bar stool and perched on it, he wasn’t Qrow, he couldn't relax in situations like this.

The barkeep, a large portly man with black hair and small eyes. Didn’t even ask what he wanted just put a large tankard of grog before him and held his hand out for a Lien card.

Oz pulled out his smallest value card and said. “A room for the night as well.”

The barkeep took the card ran up his request and then pulled a key from below the counter. It said seven on the attached worn leather tag.

“Thank you.” Ozpin said and took the key and a sip of the grog and he winced, the good thing about grog is that it filled you up and there was enough alcohol to be safe to drink. The downside was that it smelled and tasted an awful lot like piss. If Ozpin had to guess this grog was a mix of water and beer rather than rum.
The man beside him, a tall dark skinned fellow with two sabers on his hips and a beaded beard threw his arm over Ozpin’s shoulders and spoke in a silky voice that couldn’t conceal his smile. “You sound funny, you one of those refugees from Vale?”

Ozpin almost hacked, the pirate because Oz had no doubt he was one, smelled riper than a week’s worth of moldy compost. Ozpin took another longer drink of the grog and twisted his voice. “Aye.”

The pirate let out a barking laugh. “Thought so, you’re too pale to be from here.”

Ozpin thought he had cultivated a rather nice tan in the all the running he had been doing, evidently not enough to fit in.

The pirate continued. “Well you should just go back to Vale, we don’t need anymore of your kind here.”

Oz took another drink, he wasn’t really sure what to do in this situation. One wrong move and it could escalate, he didn’t think the innkeep would refund him his room. Ozpin felt the man’s Aura brush up against his, and…

He spun and grabbed the money faunus by the tail that had been trying to slip into his pocket, while grabbing the man by the back of the head and slamming him face first into the bar.

Oz hissed out. “I don’t give a damn what your problem with Vale is, but try that again and I’ll remove your tail.” He squeezed the offending appendage to make his point.

“JACK!” Several chairs around the bar were knocked over as the faunus’s crew leaped to their feet, weapons out to defend their captain.

Jack laughed, and poked Ozpin in the stomach with his pistol. “Which do you think is faster lad? Your arm or my finger?”

Ozpin let go of Jack stepping around so the staircase was at his back, he pulled his sword out for under his coat and extended it.

Jack picked up Oz’s drink and finished it as he walked over his crew who were moving up behind him. “Since you stopped my oh so perfect attempt at picking your pocket. Turn them out lad.” He pointed his pistol lazily at Ozpin.

Oz took the faunus in more fully, from the silk white shirt, leather jerkin, wide brown pants tucked into leather boots. A heavy sword belt over his chest with two sabers and another pistol on his left side. The faunus’ hair was brown done up in dreadlocks, with a red scarf and a tri cone leather hat. The man was cocky, arrogant, and looked more then a bit drunk, though that might be faked.

“Cat got your tongue lad?” The pirate cocked his pistol, his gazed raked over Ozpin. “Nice sword, think I’ll take that too.”

Ozpin shifted rolling a shoulder back as he shifted into his preferred fencing form. “You want it, come and get it.”

As Jack fired so did the rest of his crew, eight Ozpin counted neatly deflecting their bullets and launching forward, driving his left fist into Jack’s face.

The pirate went soaring back colliding with several other patrons and a table. A man and woman rushed forward to cover the fallen pirate, both fought with two sabers. Ozpin gauged by the speed at which they flew at him they were both trained huntsmen.
The woman leapt up running at him with a shout, cleaving down at him, Ozpin blocked the blade and kicked out twice at lighting speed, the first hit her second sword sending it flying from her hand the second was straight to her torso spending her flying back to join her captain.

“Lizzy!” The man shouted his eyes going wide as Ozpin’s casual dismissal of his apparent partner.

While the man was distracted, Ozpin spun kicking straight into the man’s chin sending him flying straight up through the ceiling out into the street.

Jack had just managed to pull himself out of the wreckage with a stumbling wobble was now staring wide eyed at Oz.

“Are you quite done?” Ozpin asked, bringing himself casually back into ready position.

Jack’s crew had their pistols trained on him but it was clear that they weren’t fighters of the same caliber as their boss and the other two.

Jack stumbled out of the wretch grabbing his hat and smiled showing off a mouthful of golden teeth. “Stand down,” He waved to his crew “this one’s not worth the trouble.”

Ozpin grit his teeth but scabbard his sword, he could eat tomorrow and turned taking the steps behind him two at a time. He found his room easily enough but the door stuck and he had to shoulder it open.

Inside was a single long bed, a table, basin and a pitcher of water and a chamber pot, thankfully it smelled clean. “Charming.” Oz muttered closing the door behind him with almost as much difficulty as it took to open. He pulled off his backpack and set it at the end of the bed, when he sat down it creaked like it had been used and abused.

Suddenly feeling rather paranoid he got up and lifted the mattress up, nope, no bed bugs, at least there was that. Sitting back down he pulled off his boots and rubbed his feet, he had lost what softness he had grown used to at Beacon. Running for weeks on end would do that to anyone, with a groan he flopped back onto the lumpy bed. He’d look for better accommodations tomorrow that was for sure, he ran hand over his worn face. Job One: Get new gear, two: Break into Shade and create a new ID and Hunters license for himself, three: Get to Mistral.

He shuddered to think of the amount of Lien he was going to be burning tomorrow, getting into Shade would be easy after that, getting to Mistral, well a ship would be a good starting point.

He rubbed his temples with a rough hand and tried to get some sleep, tomorrow, tomorrow he’d figure everything out.

Morning came much too soon with tired groans and much eye rubbing, he started it by shaving and heading down for breakfast, his bag over his shoulder. He didn’t bother going to the innkeep for breakfast instead headed back out into Vacuo’s streets, dew clung to the morning air, though it would be gone in the space of half an hour. He moved toward Shade, the closer he got to the school the more he would find shops for Huntsmen. Breakfast was a handful of nuts, dates and a bottle of mudders milk, the alcoholic drink would get him to lunch on its own. He avoided any stall that was cooking meats, reminded of his learned lesson from the incident with his first attempt at making a fire on the road. Even now when he walked as far away from the cooking meat as possible he felt a cold sweat form on his back and neck, his hands shaking slightly that he decided to shove them into pockets as if warding off a chill. Oz kept repeating his plans in his head as he walked past the foul smelling stall, his eyes latched onto the street ahead.
Before long the streets started to wake up, shops doors were swung opened and the air was filled with the scents of spices and herbs. Ozpin found himself in a dusty square filled to the brim with stalls, some selling fruits, others fine fabrics, jewelry, even weapon upgrades. What grabbed Ozpin’s attention those was a small group of young huntsmen, laughing and joking as they pushed their way into a side shop.

He followed them silently weaving through the crowds to the shop over it hung a fine weathered sign.

*Velvet Vilors Dust Tattoo Parlor*

Oz raised a brow, last he heard and to be fair it was sometime ago there were only a handful of Huntsmen using Dust tattoo’s, it was a costly and time consuming tool.

He rubbed his arm feeling the raised scarred skin. *It couldn’t hurt to look.* Making up his mind he stepped up into the alcove and opened the door.

The first thing that hit his nose was the smell, cinnamon and peaches, with an undercurrent of disinfectant. The door opened into a large space, on one side were several hookah pipes surrounded by cushions. Books of tattoos opened under the pipes, thankfully the boys that he had seen enter were not there now.

On the other side of the room was what could have been mistaken for a massage table, but he could tell it was adjustable so it could be either laid down on or sat on in a more chair like function. Beside it was a table with bowls all lined up in a row with several different times of needles under them and a small light wooden hammer.

Oz walked over to the front table and found a list of dust uses.

**Passive Dust:**

Orange (Lava/Heat): Causes whatever object the user holds when charging to heat up. The heat is powerful enough to make metal glow red hot. In the case of weapons, increases severity of wounds through burning when the user cuts an opponent with a blade. In some cases, the heated metal is strong enough to melt and cut through steel objects. In layman's terms, its a welding torch effect on one's weapons. This Dust appears to have no effect when it is released.

Blue (Ice): Lower's the user's body temperature when charging, and creates a snowball in the user's palm when released. Though useful for relief in hot weather, it is unpractical for battle and therefore neglected.

Purple (Gravity): Reduces gravity around the user, making them run faster, jump higher and become more agile in general. Dust has no effect when released, but a lot of tattoos (at least 4 charges) must be made since this Dust is very weak.

- Higher grade costs extra.

Cyan (Water): Useful for shields

**Active Dust:**
Red (Fire): Can be used to create a shield in a circular barrier.

Yellow (Lightning): Increases speed of the user.

White (Impact): No effect when charging, but if released at the moment the user's fist contacts with a target, creates a sudden burst of kinetic energy, increasing the force of the blow. The Dust also protects user's fist from the blow so the user is unharmed, but the target is flattened with the force of a sledgehammer.

The interior commentary of the list was rather funny and very informative from a user standpoint, Ozpin flipped through a few pages more. Then opened up another book of designs, once used the tattoos would disappear but in the meantime…

“For the last time! No Lien no tattoos! Now get out, it looks like I might have a real customer!” VV stormed out of the back room, with a sword showing the teens out the door.

Oz looked up to find that Violet was a short rabbit faunus with long white ears like a desert hare. She wore a sarong and a T shirt with her own tattoos covering her arms, she set the sword by the door after kicking the teens from her shop and turned to Oz. “Sorry about that Sir, can I help you?”

Ozpin and flicked back a few pages to a group of designs he liked. “How are you with covering up scars?”

VV walked over, she was tiny compared to Oz though that was rather normal for him. “Pretty decent, I’ve done some small stuff but you know as soon as you use the Dust you have to get the tattoos redone?”

Ozpin nodded, “I don’t plan on using them regularly in battle.” he shifted awkwardly suddenly shy. “I more need them for… coverage.”

VV saw the dull look that flashed through his eyes for a moment and nodded. “I understand, care to show me what I am working with?”

Oz hesitated for a moment but then pulled off his coat, set it on the desk followed by his shirt, he turned his back to her and braced himself.

Violet let out a long whistle and reached out, she couldn’t reach his neck but she trailed her hand down his spine. “How far do they go?”

“My ankles.” Ozpin said, he couldn’t help but twitch at her touch.

“And you want them all covered?” VV asked, this would be a lot of Dust, a lot of ink, she was already running the numbers in her head, not to mention it would take days if not longer to complete.

“Yes. I have some shrapnel scars I would like covered as well.” Ozpin said as her hand trailed over to the long raised silver line from the piece of Amber’s machine that had impaled him. He turned around showing her the other half of it, he clenched his fists at her stunned expression.

She touched the long scar on his stomach. “I can’t put Dust into this, but I can just ink it if you like.”

“That is acceptable.” Oz said he couldn’t help but jerk away from her touch as she traced over his hip to another scar.

“What types of Dust do you want?” She asked stepping away to look him up and down, already
imagining how he would look in her inks.

“Active fire, gravity and impact.” Ozpin said, shifting his weight onto a back foot and drawing himself up to his full height.

Violet nodded her head, “You’d be pretty terrifying with those.” it was only now really starting to sink in just how big Oz was, combine that with Impact and Gravity, the man would be unstoppable.

“I believe they would compliment my combat style.” Ozpin said, running a hand through the stubble on his head. “Can you tattoo heads as well? The book said nothing on the chest and torso.”

Vv nodded. “I can, the bone of your skull protects your brain, it’s just not really usable for anyone actively using the Dust as they can’t apply it themselves. You’d have to shave your head though.”

“That’s fine, it’s barely grown back in as it is.” Ozpin shrugged, he missed his silver hair he was just fine with getting rid of the black for a little while longer.

Violent winced at the implication of that statement. “Do you have a design in mind?”

Oz flipped the book back to the pages he marked, they were full body tattoos from neck to ankle intended for someone who planned on using them in combat. Simple flowing lines, interwoven for maximum skin coverage while still being tribal and tasteful, rather than being covered head to toe in ink.

Vv approved, she’d make slight adjustments of course but the base design would complement his slender but towering frame. She nodded her head tapping a finger against her chin. “Good choice. You have any modifications you’d like to make?”

Oz shook his head. “You have a much better eye for this then I, just make sure to cover the burns as completely as possible.”

“Would you like to start now?” Vv asked. “And how will you be paying?”

Ozpin pulled out a golden Lien card and had to fight down a chuckle when Vv’s brow shot upward. He handed it to her, “It was six hundred an hour? I am going to assume that includes Dust cost? I want the high quality Dust as well. How many hours?”

Violet took the card, and went to her till, she as a little surprised when the funds were drawn from the card without a hitch. What kind of person carried around this kind of money in his pocket? Especially in a place with for thieves then honest folk. “At least ten.”

“Then we’ll start with ten.” Ozpin picked up his shirt and coat.

“Oh no, let me.” Vv took both from Oz’s hand and opened a locker behind the counter putting both in. After she walked out from behind the counter and led Oz to the table he had seen on the way in. “Shoes off, depending your pain tolerance we might get to your legs today. How many charges worth of each type would you like, you have seventeen available with this design.”

“Equal of impact and gravity on my arms, gravity on my head, one of fire on each leg with the other being gravity, impact and gravity equally on my back.” Ozpin said leaning over to take off his boots.

“You really just want the fire for shielding?” Vv asked, pulling out a clean white cloth and pouring some cleaning alcohol into a bowl. “Do you need to shower first? I have one upstairs for clients.” She looked him over again.
“I don’t wish to ever be burned again,” Ozpin ran a hand over his back. “And that would probably be wise.”

“Head on up, while I get your ink ready, first door on the right.” Violent said leading the way back to the back and showing him upstairs while she went to collect the ink and dust. “Just wrap yourself in a towel when you’re done!” She called out after him.

Oz kept his shower short, but with how much this was costing he guessed water was part of the bill. He went back downstairs dusty pants in hand, and set them over a chair, he found Violent mixing dust and ink over a small burner. “Please lay down on your front.”

Ozpin compiled, the leather of the table was very cool and it was a nice feeling compared to the perpetually dust filled life of Vacuo. His feet hanged off the end and there was a hole that his face fit nicely into, it was padded with two small white towels.

“How is your pain tolerance?” Vv asked, filling her broadest set of needles with the black gravity ink.

“I’ve been told it’s quite impressive.” Oz let his Aura down before she felt the need to ask.

“Ha.” Vv chuckled and wiped down his back with the disinfectant. “We’ll see.” Then set the needles to his skin picked up a small wooden hammer and started the very long processes of blotting and inking with the combined dust and tattoo ink.

Oz grit his teeth for a moment but when V started humming he relaxed and the tension fell away from his body. The needles piercing his skin started to feel oddly relaxing, he could feel the blood welling up from the marks but for some strange reason it didn’t bother him.

After half an hour he asked. “What is your Semblance?”

Violet paused in her work and her tune. “I’m Empathic, so long as a person can hear me I can affect feelings.”

“You’re taking to my song very well and yes.” V watched a flare of green dance over Oz’s back before fading away again, she cleaned up the blood and started humming again. “Plus for some people a little bit of pain can be relaxing in the right setting.”

“This is very enjoyable.” Oz muttered, it almost made him sleepy, it was just the prick of his skin that kept him awake.

Violet only smiled and shook her head focusing on her work. They took a break for lunch, the faunus being the oh so perfect host and to let Oz heal, the rate at which amazed Violet. She was amazed again, when he asked if they could keep going, make no mistake having ink forced under your skin hurt. In the end they spent the next three days in this pattern, she gave him the address of a much better inn. He got his head shaved and the last tattoo done was the gravity ink design that accented the features of his face making him look even more sharp than normal. By the time it was over Oz was very happy with the results, they hid the features that people would recognize as Ozpin and the scars whose origins gave him nightmares from. As he stared in the mirror he couldn’t help but wonder if even Qrow would be able to see his old self in him.
Thank you too:6172616e656169737472617368 and darkvampirekisses for your comments.
Weiss looked at the picture of Beacon her heart aching. That stupid boy had left but now she stood alone. She closed her eyes only really have listening to the inane chatter of the party around her. One voice stood out from the rest.

“But really, does it come as any surprise, what happened to Vale?”

Weiss’s gaze snapped over to the woman as she continued talking. An obvious trophy wife with far more money than brain cells, her voice grated on Weiss’s nerves like a squawking bird.

“It was a long time coming if you ask me.”

“Honey…” The woman’s wife said putting his hand on her shoulder, trying to shush her, but she shakes it off with a laugh. “What? You said the same thing last night. If they're so arrogant to think they can get by without proper kingdom defense, then I say good riddance.”

Weiss thought about all the people who had died, Penny, Pyrrha … Ozpin first and foremost came to her mind. Weiss couldn’t help it she snapped. “Shut up!” At the woman.

The room fell silent as everyone looked to her. “Weiss?” Jacques glared at her.

Weiss gestured angrily at the room. “You don't have a clue! None of you do!”

“Excuse me?” The woman said.

“You're all just standing around talking about nothing! Worrying about your hair, your money, your stupid problems that don't mean anything!” Weiss clenched her fists, people had died at Beacon and these people didn’t show that any respect or even compassion.

Jacques walked over to her quickly and grabbed her wrist. “Weiss, that's enough.”

“You're embarrassing the family!”

“I said let go!” Weiss broke her father’s grasp with a harsh tug, but lost her balance and fell to the floor in the process. A glyph suddenly manifested beside her and she stared at in shock as the white Boarbatusk huffed and charged toward the woman.

A shot rang out through the room as James shot the summoning and put his gun away.

“Arrest her! What are you waiting for? She’s insane, she could be locked up.”

James walked over to Weiss and knelt offering his hand. “She's the only one making sense around here.” Weiss smiled up at him and took it, letting him pull her to her feet. “Walk with me Miss Schnee?”

“Of course General.” Weiss wove her arm around his and focused on holding her chin up high as they left the room.
James walked them well and truly away from the party making sure no one would run into them before guiding her into an eve and asking in a hushed voice. “Are you alright Weiss?” A hand went to her face stroking her cheek with a thumb while his other arm wrapped around her waist.

Weiss closed her eyes and leaned into the touch, it had been far too long since they had a private moment. She reached out and wrapped her arms around his middle, giving him a firm hug. “I will be.”

James kissed her head and held her tight. “Don’t pay that woman any mind Weiss.”

“I won’t, I was just so angry that she made light of what happened. So many people died, my friends, civilians. Yang lost her arm and Ruby … we lost Ozpin.” Weiss felt tears gathering in her eyes, she tried to make them stop but she couldn’t. “And no one here cares! They don’t care that people died, that so many lost their homes.”

James tightened his hold. “I know and I understand. Qrow hasn’t been in touch but Ozpin is a tough one Weiss. He’ll be back. The people in that room don’t know what it’s like to stare down a Grimm. What she said and what they believe is wrong, but don’t condemn them for it. They are as our society has made them. We both used to be like that, but people we love taught us better.”

Weiss drew away a little and James cleared her tears away. “Don’t lose hope Weiss. Vale will recover and you’ll see your friends again.”

The petite woman let out a despairing laugh. “How? My father probably won’t even let me attend Atlas. I’m not even allowed to roam the estate without an escort lately. People ‘he’ has chosen to keep and eye on me and keep me in line. It will only be worse after tonight.”

James tightened his grip on her, an unconscious reaction. He licked his lips thinking quickly. “He has no right to do that, you are an adult… if you wish it. I can get you out of here.”

Weiss looked up at him, her mind already going through how that would work. “Please, and now would be the best time. Everyone will be to busy gossiping.”

“Allright.” James said already thinking about where he could move his car to away from the staff. “You go pack, I’ll move my car to the back.” He moved to pull away but Weiss stopped him reaching up to his jaw. James stopped taking the kiss she offered, he felt her hands tighten, pulling his shirt then he broke away. “Quickly now.”

Weiss nodded and James poked his head out of the eve then set off at a quick walk for the nearest exit. Weiss all but ran to her room, grabbing her suitcases out from under her bed and started packing all of her essentials.

“Weiss?”

Weiss spun and saw Klein in the doorway, he looked between her and the suitcases. She hadn’t thought what escaping would do to those she cared about in his house. Klein would be greatly missed but she had to get out under her father’s thumb before he closed the gilded cage door. Weiss bit her lip and said. “James- General Ironwood has offered me refuge and I’m taking it Klein. I need to get out of here before father . . .”

Understanding dawned over her butler’s features and he gave a sharp nod. “Right then. Let’s get you out of here before your father catches wind.” He zipped over and started to help her pack.

Between them they had her ready to go in minutes and Klein took her hand and guided her through the halls avoiding everyone. They came out by the back of the estate and found James waiting for
them looking worriedly at his Scrolls. His eyes visibly lit as they appeared.

“Thank you Klien.” Weiss said as James took her suitcases and put them in the trunk.

“Stay safe.” He said and looked over to James. “She’s my snowflake and I’ll not have anyone hurting her. Take care of her.”

“Always.” James opened the passenger door and Weiss got in.

Klein watched them go and knew that James would keep her safe. He wondered if one day, he’d stop smuggling the Schnee girls out of their own house. The short butler put on a smile and returned to the party.

Weiss picked her way into James’s flat, he seemed very alike Oz and preferred to be on the top floor of a building. It was huge and expansive but the pale white and blue reminded her of home. Windows were frequent but of the double panned verity that would keep the heat in. The floor was wooden but covered with rugs. She found she liked it, it was very open like she was used too but less lavish. “This is nice.” Weiss said as she walked into a large if largely empty living room.

“I’m glad you like it.” James closing the door behind them.

“It reminds me of Ozpin’s place just bigger.”

James gestured for her to explore deeper into the house. “I will admit he’s had a rather large influence on my life. I grew to enjoy much of what people would call his ‘style’, being from Atlas I couldn’t have it as open as I would like but I make do.”

They moved into a library with bookcases that touched the ceiling filled to the brim, heavy red and green rugs. A auburn leather couch, arm chair and large coffee table dominated the middle of the space. What caught Weiss’s attention however was the piano pushed to one side. “You never mentioned that you play!” She couldn’t help her enthusiasm, there was almost a skip in her steps as her fingers sought out the keys.

“Because I don’t.” James walked over a mix, guilt and anxiety turning over in his stomach. Weiss looked up to him confused and he elaborated. “It was part of my therapy, for fine motor skills and learning how my neural band worked.” He pulled off the glove covering his metal hand and started to play in a very stilted motion.

Weiss watched his brow furrow as he tried to travel down the keys. There was a harsh jarring sound of two keys being hit at once and James sighed. “Still can’t get it.”

Weiss reached out and traced over a metal knuckle. “I can understand that frustration, I leaned my scales for singing with a piano.”

“Me too.” James said.

Weiss looked up. “You sing as well? I’m beginning to see just how much I lucked out with you.”

James pulled out the bench and sat starting to play a little tune with his human hand. The execution was near flawless. “Well you did. As for your questions, after my accident I went to Beacon, I just
couldn't stand being treated like a broken…” James sighed. “I just needed a change of location. Back then Oz taught the combat classes, I guess he saw that I wasn't all home. Anyway he and Qrow, well they rather adopted me. When Oz learned that an instrument was part of my therapy he took over that aspect.”

Weiss watched him smile involuntarily as he spoke. “He took something I had started to really hate and made it fun. He didn't make me repeat the same cords over and over, but taught me songs and rewrote or adapted them to work with my limitations. He even taught Qrow to sing and play, so I wasn't on my own.” James finished his little tune. “Beacon was some of the best years of my life.” He took a deep breath and clenched his first. “Part of me is a little happy you put that woman in her place tonight.”

Weiss sat beside him and hugged his arm. “Well the next time someone bad mouths our home, you can punch them and I’ll reel you in.”

James laughed. “For some reason I doubt that would go down well.”

“Fine, I'll sick Yang on them instead.” Weiss said with a cheeky smile.

“Good Gods no, I'd never hear the end of it!” He leaned over and kissed her head chastely. “Not to say it's not a very appealing idea.”

Weiss played softly on the higher keys as they sat in silence for a minute while James gathered up his courage. “I have a guest room Weiss would you prefer that, or to sleep with me? We didn't have a lot of time to work out where we stood with each other at Beacon.”

Weiss worried her bottom lip as she thought about it, she knew that Ruby had been sleeping with Qrow without having sex and Weiss thought she would enjoy the intimacy of that. “If you mean just sleeping, I think I'd like that. I got used to listening to my friends sleep, the silence of being alone is . . . unsettling. But I'm not sure we're at that point where I'd be comfortable with sex.” She blushed.

“Just sleeping, and I agree with you on that second point.” He looked out to the night. “That said we should retire, I have to work in the morning.”

“Alright, besides I think I've come down from the adrenaline and I'm starting to get tired.” Weiss halted her soft little melody.

James stood and offered his hand, Weiss blushed but took it as she stood. The tall man brought it to his lips and pressed a kiss to it before letting go. Weiss couldn't help but giggle as he grabbed her cases and lead the way into the next room.

Which turned out to be the master bedroom, with a en-suite bathroom. There was a closet and two dressers, one larger and one smaller. James set her cases on the latter and said. “You can make use of the washroom first.”

After Weiss collected her nightgown and retreated to the washroom, James also stripped down putting on loose slacks and a T-shirt. Though both were more for her comfort then his. Weiss came out and they switched. She traced over the dark blue bedding and slid under the duvet. It was such a huge bed and it was so strange to think she’d be sharing with someone.

In the little time they had at Beacon they had managed a few very private dates. For the most part they had been talking through text as it was harder for both of them to get caught with. Dates usually started with food and ended up with kisses on the couch. They weren’t strangers anymore but it still felt odd to be in James’ home. Weiss looked up at the ceiling and sighed, not like she would be here
for long. As soon as was possible she wanted to be out of Atlas and back with her team.

Whoever had planned for Beacon and Vales fall was still out there and Weiss knew that Ruby
wouldn't be content to stay in Patch while the group responsible for Beacon roamed free. In fact if
anything she had come to know of her partner and team leader it was that if the fight didn't find her
she would find it. Where it would lead her she didn't know but she hoped communications would
come back online soon.

James returned and closed the curtains before returning to empty side of the bed. “Goodnight Weiss.”
He said softly.

“Goodnight James.” Weiss whispered and listened as his breathing evened out and soon found
herself lulled to sleep as well.

Come morning Weiss awoke to find herself alone, however she quickly spotted the note on the
pillow beside her.

:Your welcome to anything in the kitchen. I’ll be back at around six, text me if you need anything.: 

Weiss yawned and got up, the house was cool but to a comfortable level and the thick carpets under
her feet warred off any chill. She wandered through the library and entrance hall finding a living
room and kitchen. There was a television and out of curiosity she switched it on and was just in time
for the morning news.

“In a stunning turn of events, Weiss Schnee has gone missing from her family manor house
overnight. Our reports say that there were no witnesses to her disappearance.”

Weiss pursed her lips and sat on the sofa, this was going to be interesting.

“In a rushed press conference this morning, police and press alike asked questions of family
members and manor staff for any details that could possibly lead to the location of the young
heiress.”

The video cut to her father standing on the steps of their manor with Whitley and Kline.

Jacques spoke smoothly. “We are all astonished at the disappearance of my daughter. As the heir
of The Schnee Dust Company, it is imperative we find her. She is only a young girl after all, and we
have many enemies that would take any opportunity they to target my family.”

A reporter asked. “Are you worried that harm may come to Miss Schnee?”

Whitley spoke up from beside his father. “To be a Schnee, you must be strong-willed. My sister is
no exception. If anyone has managed to kidnap her, I highly doubt it would be very long before she
breaks free.”

“When was the Heiress discovered to be missing?” A reporter asked.

Jacques gestured for Kline to speak. “One of our maids this morning before breakfast. We are all
very worried for Miss Schnee, and the staff have wasted no time in searching for clues to her
possible wear-a-bouts. When young Miss Schnee does come home, we will welcome her back
warmly.”

“What are your plans to locate the Heiress and bring her home?”

Jacques smiled his sharkish smile. “I have already sorted things out with the local police and
discussed with the General the possibilities of dispatching some Hunters to find my daughter. I intend
to have her back home before too much time has passed.”

The video went back to the host. “When we asked General Ironwood for his statement following
the press conference at Schnee Manor, he assured us he was doing everything he could to locate the
missing Schnee daughter. In the meantime, we ask you, dear citizens of Atlas, that if you see Miss
Schnee please contact local authorities, that Weiss Schnee may be found and returned home. Jacques
Schnee and the Schnee Dust Company have posted a reward totaling ten hundred thousand Lien for
any evidence leading to the location of his daughter.”

Weiss scoffed, of course her father would want her back. He had always done is best to keep her
since Winter had managed to escape him. She got up and stormed out of the room to the last one
beyond it, it was largely empty however the walls were covered in mirrors. The petite woman
grinned, a training room. Well she would not be bored waiting for James to return.

James rubbed his temples, it had been a long exhausting day. Jacques had blow up any chance of
getting Weiss out of Atlas quietly and the reporters had been hounding him as he was the last one to
have seen Weiss. He toed off his boots and turned the click of heels coming from his training room.
He strode through his flat and watched Weiss from the eve of the door. A smile pulled at his lips,
even in combat she was graceful and a pleasure to watch. Eventually he called out. “Keeping
yourself entertained I see.”

Weiss yelped and spun to look at him and blushed. “Um, yes. I wasn’t sure what else to do. I didn’t
want to upset anything.”

James pushed himself off the wall. “Weiss, this… will have to be your home for a while. You’re
welcome to anything within it.”

“Will have to be?” Weiss asked lowering her sword.

“With Jacques’s melding getting you out of Atlas has become next to impossible. Even getting you
to Taiyang in Patch would be difficult, or maybe even Mistral. Knowing Qrow that is where he will
be headed come the thaw. I’m sorry.” James said.

Weiss shook her head. “I saw the news report, I’m not at all surprised and it would be surprising if
that was not my father's plan all along. It’s alright James, I am sure some opportunity will arise.”

“Thank you for understanding.” James looked her up and down then asked. “Would you like pizza
for dinner? I have a few frozen ones in the inevitable case where I don’t feel like making anything.”

“Pizza sounds lovely.”

After dinner they returned to the library. Weiss had taken up the piano in no time flat while James
was sketching with his book in his lap. A frown set into his features. Weiss watched him out of the
corner of her eye, wishing he would come play with her. Eventually she asked. “What are you
drawing?”
“A corset.”

“Why?” Weiss asked pausing her in music.

James blushed. “Well before my accident I used to draw all the time. After it… well it took a while to pick it up again. Anyway at Beacon Ozpin said that I should draw more, he always liked my designs. He said he’d give me pictures of Ruby painted if I drew for him again.”

Weiss giggled. “Oh I’d like those pictures too, she was so adorable as a vixen.”

James chuckled. “Ohh she a vixen in every sense of that word, talk about a way for Ozpin to be dirty while being clean at the same time.”

Weiss’s smile fell away. “But Oz is gone now.”

“He’ll be back.” James said while sketching some lacing. “He’s immortal Weiss, it’s only a matter of time and I’d rather not disappoint him.”

“Immortal?” Weiss’s jaw dropped. “… Does Ruby know?”

“Yes, I think she knew before she was sleeping with him. Qrow’s got a nice eternal youth going for him.” James sighed. “Ozpin never taught me how he did that though.”

“What do you know why?”

“Probably because I’m such a public figure and while we were close. It was always easy to see that Qrow was the one that Ozpin really loved.” James set the pencil down and flipped back many pages to an earlier picture. James thumbed the edge of the page and smiled fondly. “I don’t mind though.”

Weiss got up and looked over to the picture. “Ohh my word.” Blush flooded her cheeks and she clapped a hand over her mouth.

James chuckled. “Yeah they were quite the pair.”

“I can’t believe they let you draw that.” Weiss’s eyes flicked over to the page then she pulled them away.

“You should see Oz’s picture books. For someone with such a long memory he does love putting memories on paper.” James closed the book so Weiss would look back over. “You know for someone so willing to play with Ruby you are very easy to fluster.”

Weiss sat on the arm of his chair. “That was different!”

“I suppose so. Do you just not like seeing two men be intimate with each other?” James leaned into his chair as he asked.

“It’s not that, that picture is just so… personal. intimate. Then yes I’ve never seen two men outside of Ruby’s comics or Blakes books.” The blush on her cheeks intensified. “And that picture was something they chose to share with you, but we have no idea if they would be okay with me seeing it.”

“Ozpin and Qrow would be fine with it. If they had any problems with others seeing them they wouldn’t allow for pictures. Look at it like this Weiss, those two have performed in sex clubs around the world. They like being seen. Furthermore they trust me and my judgment and you have already been brought into this. You were the second Ozpin suggested that you and Ruby have your kissing
contest at his flat.” James reached out and stroked over the back of her hand.

“But that was different then anything they’d do in a club.”

“Intimacy comes in many forms. You are right, and that is something they keep to themselves, but I wouldn’t have let you see it if I thought it would upset them.” James said.

Weiss looked down at the book, then moved to sit in his lap while picking it up. She opened to the page again and let herself look at it. Really take in the details. “They just look like their ‘making love’ rather then just playing around. Like I did with Ruby.”

“That would be because they were, they could keep that kind of thing up for hours. Though it didn’t take me that long to draw it. They would make dates, where it would just be them for the whole day and plan everything they wanted to do in that day. From what they would eat to how they wanted to have sex. Sometimes they invited me, sometimes not. I remember feeling very privileged when they allowed me to watch them be together.” James said.

Weiss closed the book and looked up at him. “So you only watched them?”

“At first. Honestly when I met them I would have sworn blue that I was straight. But as my education grew, so did my interests.”

“So you don’t identify as straight anymore?” Weiss asked, her own feelings regarding Ruby were still confusing her.

“Well, I definitely lean that way but if the man is truly remarkable, if I find him attractive… which has happened beyond Qrow and Oz. I will not fight said feelings. To be clear I guess you could say I am bisexual leaning straight.” James said trying to think of clearer ways to explain it.

“Okay so what’s Oz?” Weiss asked trying to get a wider view on the topic.

“Pansexual, so pansexual I bet he’d do a faun or a hermaphrodite or heck a centaur if it was physically possible.” James said chuckling.

Weiss giggled at that as well, though she was pretty sure the last would be pretty impossible. Or at least really difficult, but she could see that in Ozpin mannerism now that she knew. He flirted so easily with both sexes. “And Qrow?”

“Bisexual like me, but much more even in his interests for women and men. Say if we had two people exactly the same save for their genders. While I’ll always pick a woman first, he will probably go eeni meeni miini moh to pick which one to take to bed.” James said.

“And Ruby?” Weiss asked.

At that question James hummed for a long minute. “Were I to guess. I bet right now she’s probably bi curious if she really sat down and thought about it. My first impression of her was that she was straight, but she seemed to really enjoy playing with you. It was very plain to see it aroused her, Ozpin’s actions were only making use of the arousal already there. Long term I’d be surprised if she doesn’t decide she’s either pansexual or bisexual. Though I don’t think I can guess which way or ways she lean. What about you? As I’m guessing your questions are because you are trying to figure out where you currently stand.”

Weiss played with his tie for a long minute. “Well up till Ruby I didn’t really even think to much about girls.” She blushed. “I’ll admit my head was rather full of you.”
James chuckled and stroked over her thigh as she continued. “But after I couldn’t help but see Ruby more sexually, I mean she was really cute all painted up. But she was also sexy, she was so happy and confident. I really liked that. Which got me thinking about Yang and Pyrrha, even Nora a little bit. They are all really confident people and I think I find that sexy.” Weiss bit her lip. “And I don’t mind that their girls, it’s kinda hot that they are. I don’t find their breasts attractive or anything… yet but I like the air that they hold themselves with. So what does that make me?”

James shrugged. “Whatever you want to be. If it’s a technical answer you’re looking for. I’d guess you’re bi curious like Ruby right now, I’d throw Questioning in there too but you like men. You know that for sure?”

“Yes.” Weiss wove his tie around her hand.

“Then it’s bi curious.” James said smiling as Weiss shifting in his lap to straddle him.

“Well thank you for your help with figuring that out.” Weiss shifted up so their lips were only centimeters apart. “I think you should get a treat for all your help.”

James purred and reached up threading his human hand through her hair. “Well if it pleases my lady.”

Weiss giggled and they shared many long kisses till it was time to retire for the night.

Weiss and James settled into a pattern. Weiss would spend the day entertaining herself, the internet proved very useful on that front as she learned to cook and bake. While brushing up on her cleaning skills, she helped out around the flat for a few reasons. One it was something to do with her time and without her fathers money Weiss had very limited funds of her own, James was covering all of her living expenses. It wasn’t something they talked about, not when he bought her hair dye and left Lien in her wallet so she could freely buy groceries or clothes for herself. This had guilt writhing in her guts, so Weiss made sure she could offer something as rent. Housekeeping was just the most obvious thing, little things like keeping the place clean and dusted. Or having a meal ready when James came home. The General made it clear that he appreciate her efforts and her financial situation went on as one of those things they didn’t talk about.

Nights were spent in the library for the most part, or sometimes in the training room to give Weiss someone to practice with. Most of the time James would read and Weiss would play the piano. Other times the sketching book came out and they would talk about sex in it’s many many forms. They weren’t having sex but Weiss found it very helpful to have someone to just casually talk to about the subject. Over time his and her side of the bed faded away and they most often ended up a tangle of limbs in the middle. While at first it did cause some blushes, it quickly became normal and something they both looked forward too.

Tonight however it was different Weiss was playing a little tune and James was just watching her. She looked over to him. “Come play with me?”

“I’d rather not.” James said smoothly.

“Why not?” Weiss asked.

“I’d have to play one handed, I’d rather not through your tune off.” The tall man said tracing over the
edge of his book.

Weiss frowned but turned back to her music, letting her fingers dance over the keys. “I could play something easier.”

“No Weiss. I lack the ability.”

Weiss switched to a more difficult song and deliberately left several chords open. She heard James sighed and stand a moment later he sat beside her and joined her on the keys with both hands. The piece was by Bolero and extremely difficulty to play alone. James found himself smiling as they played together, he missed notes on occasion as his mechanical hand lacked the flexibility. Still when Weiss looked up to him and smiled it made the mistakes worth it.

Then the motors in his hand seized and pain lashed up through his nerves. He hissed and grabbed his hand folding the fingers into a fist. Weiss’s hands instantly went to his. “Are you okay?”

“I’m fine, this happens from time to time.” James grit his teeth.

“Would you like me to get your tool kit?” Weiss asked.

“No, it’s fine. It will pass.” James let out a long breath and forced his fingers to relax.

Weiss petted over his hands. “Is there really nothing that can be done? I know… that your prosthesis frustrate you. I saw that arm you designed for Yang, forgive me for saying it James but it was of much higher quality than your own.”

James swallowed thickly. “You’re not the first to say my prosthesis are getting old. Truth be told I could get them upgraded but…”

“But?” Weiss asked softly.

James closed his eyes and dipped his head. “I’m afraid Weiss.” He felt her reach up and stroke over his jaw. “There is so much that could go wrong and I hate, the ‘supported living’ and physiotherapy. I hate feeling useless. I can’t go through that again.”

“But if it improves your quality of living, would it not be worth it?” Weiss asked. “You could draw again and play. I know your current abilities with both frustrate you.”

“You don’t understand, once was horrible, twice and this time with no Ozpin to make it bearable. No Beacon to retreat too…” James shuddered violently.

“Then retreat to me. I’ll help you.” Weiss leaned up and kissed his cheek.

“Weiss your a guest, you shouldn’t have too help me like that.” James said.

“James, I live in your home and eat your food. If anything I think it’s completely fair to help care for you when you need it.” Weiss said taking his hands in hers.

“No.”

“Please just think about it. For me?”

James opened his eyes and really looked at her, gazed into that lovely pale blue and sighed deeply.

“For you.”
Weiss was surprised when a knock sounded on the door. Cautiously she walked over with feather light steps and peeked through the peak hole the instant later she ripped the door open. “Winter!” She jumped up and wrapped her arms around her sisters neck.

Winter caught her and hugged her tight. “Hello little sister.” She hugged Weiss tightly then set her down. “You gave Father quite the slip.”

Weiss brushed a bang back and blushed. “Well I was already familiar with James and at the party when he offered me a way out…”

Winter strode into the flat, “Oh how familiar?” she lifted a brow.

Weiss gulped she knew that look and tried to fight the blush down. She wove her hands together and wrung them. “Oh you know, he was at Beacon and we kinda ended up spending the Masquerade Ball together…”

“Weiss-.”

“It’s not what you think. He just, um…” Weiss bit her lip.

“Please tell me you aren’t sleeping with him.” Winter pinched her nose, she could already feeling the headache coming on.

“I’m not…” Weiss looked away and said with a wince. “Yet.”

“I think you should start this tale from the beginning Weiss.” Winter said and the two sisters headed into the living room.

After half an hour, tea and cookies Weiss had filled Winter in on everything that had happened at Beacon and everything since.

“Well at least he’s not using you.” Winter said and had to admit that James had been the perfect gentleman to her little sister.

“No, he’s really been very kind and understanding.” Weiss said. “Um Winter, how did you know where I was?”

“I only got home a few days ago and General Ironwood told me what happened. I’m a little surprised you’ve managed to stay hidden for so long. I mean it’s been months Weiss.” Winter said.

“Well I dye my hair when I need to go out and until James finds a way for me to leave I try to keep my outings to a minimum.” Weiss said.

“Still you must be lonely.”

“Only a bit. James comes home every night and I keep myself busy during the day… will you come visit?” The smaller woman asked hopefully.

“When I can. The General is actually teaching me to help manage Atlas. He is slowly making things ready for his leave.” Winter said.

“He’s taking time off?” Weiss said. “He hasn’t said anything to me.”
“Well the rumor is he’s going in for surgery to upgrade his prosthesis. Maybe he just hasn’t found the right time to tell you. As you’re going to be on your own for a while when it does happen.” Winter said watching her sister carefully.

At first Weiss was hurt that James hadn’t said anything to her. Yet she knew how sensitive he was with the topic so it didn’t really surprise her. Her heart warmed as joy filled her, that he was going to get the upgrades! Her words had reached him... even if it took a while. “I’m glad he’s going through with it.”

Winter was satisfied with the emotions that flickered over her sister. “Then when the time comes you can come with me to drop him off.”

Winter and Weiss talked till James came home. Weiss took a bit much enjoyment in impressing Winter with her cooking and the talk was pleasant if a little bit formal on Winters side.

By the end of the month Weiss was holding her sisters hand tight. Her hair dyed a dark red, fighting tears out of her eyes, fear turning her stomach into knots. As James gave her one last long look before disappearing behind the doors that would lead to his operation.

Chapter End Notes

Ardy: Nothing really to report here. Thank you too: lillithschild and darkvampirekisses for your comments.
Oz wrinkled his nose at the stench that filled the shop he was in, places like this had been rendered all but obsolete just a few months ago. Now they were filled to the brim with refugees, Oz tried to ignore the people that looked up to him, that whispered under their breaths. They thought he couldn’t hear them, but he could, they wondered why he was here, if he was from Vale, where had he been at the Fall? He rubbed at the back of a hand, the scars had been covered but it still felt like people stared. One might think he was in a refugee camp, but that was not the case, he was standing in line, waiting for a booth to write a letter.

This was no camp or inn, this was a post office, filled with displaced people from Vale frantically writing to loved ones. Vale was too large a city for its population to just fade into the rest of the kingdom and Vacuo was the easiest kingdom to get to. Ships to Atlas or Mistral weren’t equipped to deal with the sudden outpouring of people. Even Vales own towns could only take so many and most weren’t equipped to fight off the hoards of Grimm that followed distraught refugees so onward they were sent.

It stabbed at Ozpin to see his people so scattered, but there was nothing he could do. He needed the Lein in his pockets and people could find it strange for some stranger to pass out money. He’d passed many people on his way to Vacuo, but seeing them here settled and distraught was very different. Which brought him to the reason of his visit to the post office, the nightly gifts of Aura from Ruby and Qrow did wonders for easing him. He had been pondering how to make contact with his loves while getting his tattoos with Violet, he’d have to be so very careful with his letter but he needed to talk to them. The rose only went one way, the holders could only send energy through it, not receive or take energy from it. He shook his head, he would have never guessed when he made the rose for Ruby that it would become so useful.

A person left a stall letter clutched like gold to their chest and Ozpin moved to take their place. The chair was too small and the paper cheap, but the pen much to his amusement was green, his green. He’d have to be so careful, with that in mind he set the pen to page.

Ozpin didn’t sign it, instead he drew a little rose, folded up the paper and tucked it into an envelope sealing it with a thumbs size of wax. As soon as he got up another citizen of Vale rushed to take his place, at the office he wrote the destination of the letter and paid the postage. He glanced at the huntsmen his letter was passed off too, one upside to the fall of the CCT’s was that the postal business returned with a boom and offered many jobs to huntsmen.

He made his way back out into the street and held up a hand to shield his eyes. The sun was high overhead and the street stank with sweat, the line for the desks extended outside as people sat under the eave of the shop desperate for the shade.

Oz’s black clothes were sweltering and worn thin. Running with his Aura, that alone had been dangerous but he hoped Salem hadn’t noticed a tread in the destruction of her Grimm. It had also wretched his clothes, well in combination with the sand. He turned from the line and headed back towards Shade, today he would hunt down new gear and set up an account for his Lein. He felt like he was tempting fate carrying all of it on his person. Finding the armoury square was easy, it was a simple task of following the huntsmen inward.

The plaza he could was large and spacious, with a empty ring in the middle for ‘testing’, weapon and
dust vendors were set up without any reason around the circle. Around the outside of them were armour shops, clothiers and proper smiths, all the shops were open to the plaza and the noise was deafening.

Ozpin wove his way through the shouting crowds of people, some got out of his way but most ignored him as he worked his way to a clothier. Clothes were hung on racks lining the walls as well as on displays, special dust woven garments were kept high behind the counter. He picked his way over to the mens section and looked through the trousers. All the weaves were heavy to withstand the abuse the average huntsmen’s put their clothes through and made for the climate and location of which is was made in. Thankfully there were many in his size but he paused when it came to picking colours, he missed his green. It had been his consistent brand for many lifetimes now and his favorite colour. He shook his head and picked out two pairs of a beige and another in black. Folding them over his arm he went over to the dress shirts, his first instinct was to get something that covered as much of his skin as possible.

The wind chose that moment to pick up and remind him of how unpleasant it was in the sunshine. He against picked out two cream dress shirts and another one a dark green, but framed in grey, all sleeveless, it reminded him of Qrow and he couldn’t leave it there. He picked two loose light ivory sun-shirts, and went to the counter to make his purchases, there he asked the clerk. “Where can I get custom Dust woven clothing?”

The clerk took his items and started to ring him up saying. “There is a shop out on the north road.”

“Thank you.” Oz said and pulled his backpack from his shoulders, he had long since used all his supplies so there was plenty of room for his new clothes. After paying he went to a nearby armour and found a pair of heavy black boots that came up to his knees, heavily laden-ed with grey armour plates. He was not used to the weight of them, but he felt a bit better for having them and they would do a much better job of keeping the sand out. He also bought a heavy leather belt with a proper holster for his sword, he was used to wearing a belt and he still noticed the missing weight of one.

As he stepped out into the street the hairs on the back of his head stood up and he glanced around. It was impossible to pick out anyone face in the crowd of constant moving people but he had the feeling he was being watched. Ozpin pursed his lips and stepped back into the flow of the crowds, making his way north. Unconsciously flexing and releasing his right hand in an effort to keep from tensing up. He found his way the Dust Clothiers’ and put in his request swiftly, paying half up front.

He ducked into a side street as he moved towards Shade and wove deeper till he found an unlocked abandoned house to change in. Now in clean garb and looking much more professional he moved onto Shades campus.

There was a trick to infiltration, one had to have access codes, which he thankfully did. Two walk like you own the place, which was an art he had perfect for centuries.

The students lingering around thankfully stayed out of his way and he walked deeper into the golden halls of Shade. Many walls were carved with imagines of battles with Grimm and he made it to the server room without incident. Punching in the access code, the heavy door opened with a click, it was thankfully empty and Oz made his way over to the master computer.

He pulled out his scroll and took a quick picture of himself after making sure he didn’t look like he a dusty rat. He then plugged it in and set about creating a dossier for ‘Obsidian Volren’. In rapid fire he filled out a where he was from, when he graduated, took a couple missions that Qrow had never claimed for one reason or another and added them to his resume. His fingers flew over the keys as he created his new identity, he had to be fast the guard would be back soon and while his access codes were still good. He did NOT want to have to explain why he was here, he made a note to have a few
words with the headmaster of Shade when they met next, to change the codes more often.

Exactly seven minutes after he broke in he was finished and back in the hall and two minutes later he passed the guard. Getting a new licence and ID after that was easy, the man manning the counter was new and didn’t bat an eye at Oz’s request and he soon had a few ID and license printed off to match the copies on his Scroll.

The last thing he need to do set himself up was head to the bank, ID in hand it was easy to set up an account. While many employers would pay in cash, many others preferred direct deposits. Ozpin had no illusions, his savings would last him a while longer but he would need to find work. He still had no idea how he was going to get to Mistral, it would take the better part of a year and a half to run there. Qrow and Ruby wouldn’t leave Patch till spring so that gave him about eleven months before they would get there. There was no way he could get there in time on his own power, he’d need to figure out transport and that would burn through his Lein faster than Dust.

He had heard that James had closed Atlas borders, so that took Atlas freighters with it. So it would likely have to be by boat he found his way west, which presented a whole host of its own problems. As he swept through the streets thinking rapidly about what he would do now that he had the foundations down the prickling sensation from earlier returned to the back of his neck.

“What now?” He growled and dived down another alley, he then stopped and waited. The sensation remained, he called out with a raspy growl. “Come out, I grow tired of this game.” He was moderately surprised when the monkey faunus from the other day, Jack jumped down from the roof of a house, blocking Ozpin’s exit from the alley.

Jack stepped toward him counting off on his fingers. “Breaking and entry, forgery, throwing more Lein around then even I’ve seen in months. More interestingly a letter to Patch, and a utter rebuilding of yourself. If I didn’t know better, I’d say you are trying to hide from someone.” Jack smirked, he knew he had the tall huntsman backed into a corner. “The question now is, who are you? And how much are you worth?”

Oz clenched a fist and growled. “What is it to you?”

Jack laughed and leaned back in a almost drunk manner. “I’m the pirate that needs to pay his crew, but you see I have a little problem. Lizzy, Will and myself are the only huntsmen of my crew and the only ones who are halfway decent in a fight should the Grimm decide to have us for supper and they are getting bigger and nastier. So while I’d like to take my crew back to the ocean, I can’t protect them. Which brings me to you, you beat the three of us in under ten seconds, I could find use for a huntsman like yourself. So you can come work for me, or I can tell the authorities that you broke into Shade.”

Oz scoffed and approached Jack, towering over the other man. “One, the authorities wouldn’t give a damn, two I won’t work for a pirate!” He snarled that last word.

“True, but I have a feeling it’s not the authorities you are afraid of. But I doubt you’d want the attention they’d bring, it’d make finding work a whole lot harder.” Jack said with a smirk, he clearly wasn’t afraid of Ozpin.

Oz straightened and backed off, Jack had him by the balls with that one. He crossed his arms and shifted to his back foot, glaring at the tanned man. “I won’t steal.”

Jack fixed his coat. “Then just fight the Grimm for me and turn a blind eye to the rest.”

“I have a question for you.” Ozpin said tapping his fingers on his arm.
“Oh?” The faunus asked.

“What’s stopping me from just snapping your neck now?” Oz asked with faked casualness.

“Lizzy and Will know everything I do, I don’t think ‘Obsidian Volren’s’ first major acts outside of search and destroy in last several years will be murder.” Jack made quotation marks in the air around the name and paused, hatchet wasn’t going to work here, so he tried honey. “What if I make you a deal? What do you want Obsidian?”

Damn him. Oz thought, he sure as well couldn’t let Jack just walk away with what he knew and this was too good to pass up. “Passage to Mistral.”

Jack’s brows shot upward, that was no small thing, not now, but it could work, pickings got rather slim around Vacuo this time of year and with Atlas shutting down Schnee Dust just lost a of value. He smiled and offered his hand. “I can do that. Do we have a deal? No thieving just Grimm and passage to Mistral.”

Ozpin hesitated but shook the other man's hand. “When do we leave?”

“You have a cloak to pick up in a few days, do you not?” Jack said with a smirk.

Oz grit his teeth, he was still trying to figure out how he had missed the faunus for so long. “Aye.”

“Then in four days, we’ll ship out. I miss my ship and my crew will be happy to have a heading again.” Jack turned on his heel and strutted away calling over his shoulder. “I’ll find you when it’s time to go.”

“Fine.” Oz called out after him with a sinking feeling in his belly, he had a feeling he would come to regret this. Working for a pirate did not sit well for him, but it was a stroke of the most magnificent luck, he couldn’t turn it down. By ship he’d be able to make it in time, maybe get there before Qrow and Ruby if he was lucky.

He rubbed a hand over his face, he needed hot chocolate, or cold hot chocolate. Just thinking about the deal he had made, it turned his stomach and he needed to calm down. Setting out he found his way back to the Inn Vv had shown him too, after buying another mudders milk he walked up to his room. Oz missed his office, his Beacon, he missed the quiet that he was so used too. Vacuo was loud all the time and it stank, this was not the place for him. He popped the cap of the bottle and took a long pull, the thick heavy drink did little to help his stomach but the slow release of alcohol did burn off some of his more frazzled thoughts.

Oz knew he had played right into Jacks’ hands and he didn’t like the idea of someone knowing that he was not Obsidian. It gave Jack far too much power over him, he’d been in such a rush to get the paperwork over and done with he had sacrificed some stealth. That brought Oz around to another question, how had Jack managed to tail him for the whole day? Even with the crowds, Oz knew his sense were as sharp as ever, he should have noticed Jack.

He took another pull from the bottle and ran a hand over the stubble growing back over his head. Oz looked down at the heavy brown bottle, Gods he felt like Qrow. He turned his hand over and looked at it, his callous were thicker, sand was stuck in the creases of his palm and his hands had turned to a dark tan. Sure the fingers and thumb were the same, the lines the same but it didn’t feel like his hand anymore.

Oz shook his head and took another longer pull of the alcoholic drink, not even wincing when it landed in a mostly empty stomach. The slight burn was pleasant around his mouth and throat. Oz
then looked into the mirror tucked into the corner of the room. A thin tattooed face looked back at him, his clothes hung off his thin body and his eyes were green. Just who the hell was he? Again he drank, he should have just told Jack to get stuffed, at least then he’d be able to look at himself in the mirror. He finished his drink and got up again, he needed something more and something stronger to work through what the hell he was going to do about Jack.

As he got up he startled at the figure in black leaning against the wall. Even now the missing eye in his counterpart’s form made him uneasy. Oz’s hand drifted up to his own eye, he suddenly remembered how the point of the dagger had looked as he plucked it out. “What are you doing here?”

“This is someplace I’ve never been. And I’ve been quiet letting you enjoy your girl for months now.” Garrett said with a shrug.

Oz bared his teeth. “Well where were you when I was burning and had more blood outside of my body then in it?”

“You chose to burn.” Garrett said tilting his head to the side study Oz. “And I owe you nothing Ozpin, I will never answer to you.”

Ozpin raised his left hand now covered in tattoos. “Neither do they apparently since I was pretty much alone in that fight. It would have been kind to hear a familiar voice when I was running flat out for a couple months.”

“They only care when it relates to them and as for hearing my voice, it would have done you no good. Proved a distraction maybe but besides that your body and mind were still in too much shock for me to intervene. I could have gotten you killed.” Garrett said the corner of his thin lips pulled up. “Which would have made everything you put yourself through for not. Your choice is interesting.”

“I can’t be as weak as a… child in a kingdom infested with Grimm. They’d probably find and kill me again before I would be strong enough to fight back.” The passion and anger in Ozpin died and he hugged himself. The cold of the repeated memories crawling over his skin. He didn’t want to go through that again, alone to heave himself from that pool. He found himself reaching for the bottle again, to make sure it really was empty.

“You really that pathetic? That shite dulls the mind and body, both things you need right now.” As a professional thief, Garrett had never really imbibed.

“Not right now I don’t. I don’t even know why you are choosing now to show up, go back to whatever corner of my mind you usually linger in.” Ozpin grumbled.

“Na, I’ve never been to Vacuo. The whole point of removing so many of the other personalities was to give myself more wiggle room. I want to see things, experience the world and you are my avatar to that.

Ozpin chuckled under his breath. “What better place for a thief to explore then the biggest shit storm city, filled to the brim with more thieves then honest folk. I’m suppose to be keeping a low profile, you would certainly be noticed.”

“Aren’t you curious as to how that pirate had the jump on you? That would have never happened to me.” Garrett said cocking his head to one side, his eye rolled into the other socket.

“Prideful much?” Ozpin asked.

“I was the best thief in the world. I’ve stolen from Gods and immortals alike. Given your heh
contract, I think it would be wise for you to show more interest in my abilities.” Garrett said. “All, I’m asking for is the chance to drive now and again. To feel. To touch and taste the world. Hells my mental fortitude might give you a much needed edge in holding yourself together. Mister afraid of simple fire.” Garrett smirked and Oz hated it.

Ozpin shivered and looked away, why did that sound so good though? Garrett was right the problem was with him, not the other entity. Oz stood up again and snapped. “Go away.” He strode from the room and down the stairs. He wove through the bodies of people and to the bar, he pulled out a Lien card and said. “Open a tab.”

The rum was decent and by his forth mug Oz was pleasantly buzzed. Garrett materialized beside him, reaching out and tracing over the lip of the cup. “You know this will do nothing to make me go away.” Ozpin finished the mug and stood the barkeeper gave his still mostly full Lien card back. He strode from the bar and out into the dusk light

“Sod off Garrett.” Oz mumbled under his breath, last thing he needed was for people to think he was talking to himself. Most of the stores had closed up for the night now even as the last rays of sunlight lit up the street, casting shadows all around him. So annoyed with the dead thief and his cynical pointed comments he didn’t pick up the three pairs of footsteps that followed his own stumbling ones. For a guy who made his living with silence and stealth he is awfully chatty today. As Oz walked past one of the shops, it’s door swung open wafting a stench of cooked meats. Before he even realised what he was doing Oz had turned towards the smell his eyes latching onto hearth in the middle of the room. It was roaring, the fire blazing from out of the stone and its flames leapt at him like a launching ball of fire. Oz froze in his tracks lifting both hands to shield him from the nightmare flames when another more rougher hand grabbed and swung the tall man into the alleyway closest to the building.

Oz couldn’t think, his mind consumed with images of flames, his body burning, charred flesh blackening and dripping from his bones. He wasn’t even aware when a clenched fist slammed into his cheek and two other pairs of hands gripped his arms, holding him against the stone building. Who was screaming, was it him? Where was he? Oz’s heart raced, slamming up and down in his chest, like it was trying to burst from behind his ribs. NO! Get away from me! Leave me alone. The fire!

Garrett felt Oz struggling in his mind, the group of three thugs held his fast while they rifled through his pockets like scavengers. He couldn’t let this happen, as soon as he felt Oz flinch back from the hands, trying to dislodge them Garrett pulled Oz’s consciousness back and behind him. No one stole from ‘him’.

Grey eyes snapped open and he lashed out with a tight strike, crushing a man’s windpipe.

“What the fuck?!”

Garrett grabbed the hand that grabbed at his shirt and twisted it back… the arm snapped at the elbow cleanly breaking. Oops. Garrett thought as he knelt and retrieved the Lien. I’m not used to being this strong. He grabbed both bodies and tossed them over his shoulders carrying them deeper into the alley. This was very familiar, though again Oz’s strength and height were different and would take some getting used to. He found a dumpster quickly and dumped both bodies in and dusted himself down. A little bit of Aura and no one would be any the wiser of the scuffle.

Garrett could feel Oz retreating within him, taking the shelter and hiding. Garrett gazed at the fire that had started this whole mess. What a coward, I’ve seen things that would turn him inside out. Heh literally. Garrett looked down at his hands, bigger though just as nimble has his had been. At least there was that. His eyes roamed through the street, crates to small to hide behind. Alleys twisting and turning between the buildings. What to do, what to do? Ozpin won’t stay content to hide forever. The
smell of burning meat was so good, maybe eating would be a good start?

He strode into the shop, a rack of meat roasting in the middle of the room. Garrett’s mouth watered, when was the last time he had truly eaten? Grey eyes roamed through the room, men and women scattered through the shop. Hands not far from their wallets he noticed with a wiry smile. It was strange seeing all the different clothing, sure he had been seeing the world through Ozpin’s eyes for sometime now. However it was a difficult thing for him to manage, when Oz was peaceful it was damn near impossible to look out. Thankfully the new memories tore him up, it made feeling so much easier.

Garrett pulled a small amount of Lien from his pocket and walked silently up to the till. “A portion of your finest.” He said smoothly.

“Right away sir.” Garrett leaned against the counter again observing the people. His fingers itched to ply their trade, but alas no. If he had been able to see out, so would Oz and Oz would remember everything he did. Best play this little sojourn safe. His meal arrived and he took it to a corner booth, where he could put his back to the wall as he ate. The meat was sweet and juicy, fat dripped down his chin and he whipped it off with a thumb then licked it. *Ohh so worth all the work to get to this point.* The flavours danced upon his tongue as he slowed his consumption, savoring every bite. Discreetly of course.

By the time he was finished the sun had set sending Vacuo into darkness. Garrett departed the shop and slipped into the street, his steps silent so that not even the sand crunching under his boots was noticeable. The dark closed in around him and he loved it, his keens eyes still saw everything. Little changes he had worked into Ozpin’s rebirth body, changes Oz probably hadn’t even noticed. Garrett however wasn’t going to settle for a substandard new form or sink to Gamalls level and steal the skins of others. He’d just have to get used to the height, not very fitting for a thief but he had a feeling he’d not be able to reclaim that life style again. The world had moved on from lock-picks and shadow walkers.

Didn’t mean that it still didn’t feel good though. Moving unseen through the busy streets, was so comforting. He was The Keeper after all, and it was no easy thing to see a Keeper. Especially one that did not wish to be seen. Garrett side stepped into an alley as he approached Shade, he was curious to know more of these Huntsmen. Pyramids were places of death, why put a school in one? He watched students and teachers come and go for a few minutes before leaving the alley. There was no moon in the sky, he traversed the courtyard without being seen. He knew it did not matter, but it was a point of pride.

The air was cooler within the academy, the large open hall had many pillars holding it up. He moved behind them as he watched taking in the murals and gold that adored them. Garrett quickly noticed that most of the doorways lead down. *So most of the school is underground … interesting.* A whisper reached his ear, one he was all to familiar with.

*“Having fun little man?”*

Garrett stopped moving and concealed himself in an alcove. *“What do you want?”*

*“Our Paw is here, so distant from us that little demon stole it. Silenced it, we can not hear it anymore. Bring it back to us. Let us hear it again.”* The hissing voice echoed around his skull.

*“Could you be more vague?”* Garrett inquired.

*“Little thief, we need to give you nothing more.”*
The voice departed and Garrett rolled his eyes, gods it was strange having two and looked down to his left hand. The key glyph brand was now visible, he closed his eyes and set his palm against the cool stone. He drew a diamond with two further lines extending from each end and a dot into the middle. As it disappeared he heard a new whisper, mute and pitiful compared to the ever patronizing voice of The Eye.

Garrett drew away from the cold stone and listened, the voice called him down. Ozpin had no memories of The Paw, so whoever had placed it here had done it without his knowledge or consent. Yet wanted it hidden and protected… interesting. Garrett mused. He heard a professor and slipped into another shadow, the professor stopped at the end of the hall and the lights went out. I guess it’s time for the children to go to bed.

He pulled away from the wall again, following that whisper in his mind. Deeper and deeper into the school, to cellars with dust covered clutter. The whisper grew louder till he came to the middle of an empty room. Garrett knelt and pressed on the cold stone, he could feel The Paw. The glyph upon the back of his hand glowed and the stone under it turned to dust, relieving a black trap door. He brushed away the dust and pulled on the door, locked of course but another touch from the glyphs rusted it away.

Garrett pulled it up but saw only pitch black under it. He broke a piece of trap door away and dropped it into the the whole, one two three. Clunk, he barely heard it but there it was. Well that was no great distance. He jumped into the hole.

Garrett tumbled to a stop, as he landed, the first thing he felt was moss under his feet. The scent was of decay and earth, little green glow lights filled the expanse. His heart ached, it was just like Viktoria’s grove. Only as he listened he heard no one, no sisilades nor priests, not animal life. He rose the whispering was all around him now.

It was all so familiar, his feet carried him down a path he had walked dozen’s of times to visit the dryad. When he came to her tree, the mummified paw lay cradled in it’s branches.

“My good thief.”

Garrett spun and sucked in a breath. “Viktoria.” The word was the barest of whispers.

The dryad strode into the light, nude as always, green skin of bark long dark green hair, her eyes were that glowing red he knew so well. Garrett took a step away. “This is a lie, I watched you die.”

Viktoria smiled. “I am not the only dead one here my thief. Yet here we are again, wearing new skins. The Wheel bess turned favourably for us, Berath always did show you favour.” She tilted her head slowly like a curious wolf. “Though I approve of your new skin. It beess, very pleasing.”

“I don’t understand. How are you here.” Garrett said as his lover of yore approached him, her bare body lite by the fireflies above them.

“The Paw. It remembered me, remade my skin to keep it company. Treated with Berath to return my soul. Not so dead anymore.” She reached out and touched him, tracing those smooth bark fingers down his shirt. “I’ve missed you my good thief.”

This is too good to be real. Garrett thought and reached up, tentatively touching her wooden cheek.
Warm and soft, just like he remembered, she was almost as tall as him. Garrett gave in and Viktoria met him halfway. The kiss was the barest meeting of lips, like they were afraid if they touched each other too much the illusion would break. Only it was no illusion and it did not break. A two twin tears fell from Garrett’s eyes he reached up and cupped her head pressing another kiss to her oaken lips.

Viktoria drew away, but remained in his arms. “I can not leave here. We are severed from the others, Vacuo is where I must remain.”

Pain stabbed through him, couldn’t have her while they both lived. Now he was dead and she was bound here. Even given this second chance they still couldn’t be together. Ozpin would wake and seek out his own lovers. Garrett dipped his head down and rested his forehead against hers. “The Eye wants to reconnect The Paw to it. Then maybe we will have time before Ozpin awakes.”

Viktoria smiled and stepped away. “Then make haste my thief, I wish to learn you again.” She paused then asked. “Has the Eye lost all of the other Sentients? We thought we were the only one.”

“Yes.” Hissed through the clearing making both breathing creatures jump.

“That is worrisome.” The dryad said taking Garrett’s hand and leading him up to the ancient oaken tree. She touched the little claw like branches holding the Paw and they moved as if they had a mind of their own. Delicately she cradled the delicate mummified Paw in her hands and offered it to Garrett.

Bracing himself he reached out his left hand glowing white as he wrapped his hands around the Paw and pressed it to his heart. Hissing whispers filled his mind, a canopy of sound, he felt the magic pull through him. The whispers tapered off but he could feel the Glyphs humming around him now. In this grove then had made for themselves, it felt warm in a way it hadn’t before. Garrett opened his eye and returned the Paw to it’s home. “They can’t remember how they were severed.”

Viktoria frowned. “The power that would require…”

“I don’t want to think about it.” Garrett said, turning back to her.

Viktoria smiled then reached to him, this time undoing the buttons of his shirt. “Then let us worry no more over the future my thief. Let us have the now and mayhap.” She pressed a hand to her stomach above her womb. “give me something to remember you by. We never had a chance before curse those Hammers.”

Desire rushed through Garrett, he did not care that she was made of wood. It was soft wood, akin to flesh, when he kissed her she was warm. His clothes were shed, when he touched her his desire only grew. She pulled him down to a soft mossy bed… there was no further need for words.

The sun broke over the horizon as Garrett sat atop of Shade. He watched it’s beauty embrace Vacuo and felt a stirring in his mind. He let control go and Ozpin assumed it again, he looked over to find Garrett now sitting beside him still watching the sun. He remembered everything Garrett had done, his body was warm and glowing… if very tired. He watched Garrett for a long moment, but made no move to force the other entity away and turned his gaze back to the sun.
Kry: Thank you too:darkvampirekisses, Faith and lillithschild for your comments.
Ardy: *cracks knuckles* Now time to start putting in a proper magic system with actual rules!
Tai and Yang sat on the sofa watching as Qrow and Ruby went back and forth, training swords of various styles lined up against the far wall. Flower was all well and nice but Ruby wanted to experiment with more swords.

Swish, crack, wisk, crack!

“Argh nope!” Ruby glared at the rapier in her hand and swished it around. “It’s too light! And it feels weird to only use one hand!”

Tai tapped his finger against his chin in thought, he’d been watching them. Qrow was using a claymore while Ruby had tried her hand with a standard longsword and had not liked it, she wanted to try a rapier after remembering how elegant Weiss looked with it, but NOPE, it was not for her. “Give her something bigger Qrow, she’s got the muscle, let her use it.”

Qrow looked down to his training blade, the heavy broad claymore, with a shrug and lift of his brow he swung it around and offered the hilt to her. He thought it was so very cute when she bit her lip and was very tempted to do that himself.

The silver eyed teen took the sword and it did feel better. It felt more like Crescent Rose the weight similar and though it was just a training sword she mirrored Qrow’s stance as another scythe wielder it seemed a good place to start. She found she could move it around with one arm like him.

Tai was a little bit disturbed by how alike Ruby became to Qrow in that moment, her stance shifted one hip dropping back in time with her foot. Then she smiled and Tai shivered, Ruby with a sword would be a terrifying sight. With a scythe you had fair warning she was gonna hit you hard and scythes were very limited in their strikes, they required lots of momentum to attack. With a sword the warning period of a strike would be shortened, she’d be faster and powerful. Gods, Qrow had a reputation, Tai had a feeling Ruby would take after him, become a force to be reckoned with.

Qrow took the rapier and traded it for a hand and a half bastard sword, it was a bit thin for his tastes but it was something he’d learned with. The idea was for Ruby to learn different styles of fighting both in her favor and for against her, to defend against. He moved to his usually stance, “Ready?” he asked turning to her.

Ruby nodded, set her lip and exploded forth, bring both hands onto the hilt, it felt better to use both.

Yang glanced over to her dad, he was leaning over with his elbows on his knees hands folded under his chin, she could see his eyes dance around studying the pair. Ruby had shown off at the Vytal tournament but this was different.

That is one of Ozpin’s moves. Tai thought watching as Ruby, switched the direction of the swing mid way to strike with the dull of the blade. She jumped back twisting her body to the side, while spin the blade in one hand to block Qrow’s swing, And that is Qrow. Ruby dropped to ground under another of Qrow’s swings leaping up to drive her knee into the other man’s chest. That’s new. Ruby stepped on Qrow’s chest with her other foot as he staggered and vaulted off him, twisting herself to land on her feet towards him.
Ruby grabbed the blade with both hands and launched herself forward again, the pair’s weapons met with a responding crash. Ruby looked up to Qrow, grinning with a twisted smirk that mirrored the one he had used to bait Winter.

Qrow found himself grinning back down at her, the claymore wasn’t quite right for her, it was a little too long but given a few more years... Her swordplay also needed work, he could see her pulling heavily from what she had seen him and Oz do while her instincts sprinkled in stuff that was her own. With a smirk he sent three quick, jarring attacks heavy and fast, he could see Ruby struggling to get the claymore into position, moving fast enough to block, the third strike forced the big blade from her hands and clattering to the floor between them.

“Oww.” Ruby said with a groan, it felt like her bones were vibrating with how hard and fast he had struck out. She had liked the claymore, it has resonated with her, even if a bit hard to move around.

Qrow spun the bastard sword around and offered the hilt to her, using his toe to flick the claymore back up into his other hand.

Ruby took the sword and weighed it, it was heavier than the longsword but not as heavy as the claymore. “It’s too light.” She said looking up to him again.

“Length might be better though, keep in mind we can make the flat of the blade wider as well.” Qrow said flipping the claymore around to ready and stepping back moving into ready position.

As they began again Tai could see instantly that the bastard sword was a better match for Ruby. It still let her use two hands, but was just short enough that its length didn’t hinder her. She did look like she wanted a longer hilt, her lips turning down into a frown whenever her palm came to the pommel.

Qrow called them to a stop much more quickly than before saying. “I think you found your sword.”

Ruby looked down at the wooden stick in her hand, it wasn’t perfect but it was a start. “I might make a few tweaks.” She said with a smile and a shrug of her shoulders, tossing it from one hand to the other.

“I think it suits you.” Tai said getting up. “Why don’t you two hit the drawing board before your brains explode with ideas?”

“Sounds like a plan Tai.” Qrow headed off towards the study, Ruby saluted her Dad and made eye contact with Yang. Her sister had gone oddly quiet again, holding her arm.

“No that won’t work, it won’t balance right.” Qrow said taking the pencil from Ruby and making a change. His other hand was wrapped around her waist as she sat on his lap, her back to his front.

“I want to be able to fire it though!” Ruby pointed at the sniper parts of the weapon.

“The barrel is already collapsible, so we add a few more segments. We could even add a hinge, so you’d be able to lower the blade for a cleaner shot.” Qrow grabbed another piece of paper and started sketching for her.
“Like Harbinger?” Ruby asked, the clinking thing the man’s scythe did had always struck her as cool. Then again, she had always been fascinated with Qrow’s weapon. She rested her hand on his left, which he had wrapped comfortably around her waist, Ruby was petting his thumb with hers.

“Mmhmm,” Qrow confirmed, the tip of his tongue sticking out from the corner of his mouth as he drew.

Ruby giggled looking up at him, then reached up to trace a finger through his stubble. Qrow hummed appreciatively but remained focused on his drawing. Crescent Rose was a tricky weapon to modify, once he was done they’d go through it bit by bit and work out what other changes needed to be made. Ruby could design it herself, but she wasn’t good enough to not have to redesign it from scratch. So Qrow decided to help, getting to hold her on his lap while he worked was just a nice bonus.

As he drew, Ruby slid her finger down over his neck, tracing with just the tip. She shifted a little bit so she could rest her cheek on his shoulder. Sneakily she started to work on the buttons of his shirt, he let her get half way before rumbling out a warning. “Ruby.” The young adult giggled and pressed a kiss to his neck.

Qrow set the pencil down and picked her up, spinning her around and putting her on the desk. “I thought you wanted to redesign Crescent Rose?”

“I do, but you’re just so cute when you are concentrating.” Ruby said parting her legs and putting her hand between them leaning forward, with a mischievous smirk.

The red eyed man rose a brow at her and leaned back into the chair with a huff. “I am not cute.” Ruby nodded vigorously. “Yes you are.”

“Am not.”

“Are to.”

“Am not.” Qrow growled, starting to lean forward to stare her down.

“Are to~.” Ruby drew out the o and smiled, silver eyes gleaming.

Qrow glared at her and snapped his jaw shut, refusing to get drawn further into this. He watched her lean back and giggle, he licked his lips, she looked very kissable in that moment. Well she always looked kissable, but especially so perched on his desk, blueprints all around her. Giggling, smiling, so bright and lovely, he opted to give into temptation.

He stood swiftly, his hand finding its way into her hair and his lips to hers. He heard the surprised meep, she let out but she quickly recovered, her hands moving up to hold his shoulders, an anchor in the storm of emotions he usual caused. He moved his left hand to the small of her back, holding her up as their lips melded. The raven haired man was careful, never deepening the kiss for that was a slippery slope he wasn’t ready for. Though he made a mental note for far far in the future, that he needed to have her on his desk, it was the perfect height.

It was over all too soon for Ruby’s liking, his kisses excited her, restrained as they were. She found herself missing Oz’s kisses, they were never restrained and they reduced her to a puddle of happy goo.

She could feel her skin flush and her panties grow damp from the feel of his soft lips alone. As he drew away she let out a little whimper, lips chasing after him in a short breath till he sat back down. She leaned back with a pout before an evil little smirk briefly made its way onto her face. Ruby
wiggled her hips, watching his gaze dart down for a moment before flying back up to her eyes. She smiled at that, she had decided to wear a skirt today, clearly that was working in her favour now.

Qrow swallowed thickly when he saw that she had caught him peeking, oh this was bad, he tried to redirect her. “Weapons don’t design themselves.”

Ruby pouted and swung her legs slightly. “We’ve got all winter and even then we have till we get to Haven, it’s not like it’s a big rush.”

He watched the way she pouted at him, her lips looking lovely, desperate for his attention. All he had to do was step up and... Nope not going there, Qrow shook his head trying clear his lust addled thoughts. He glanced at her and saw that little smile that was forming, she knew what she was doing, her not so subtle suggestion that they do other things. *Damn, Oz was right about her being a vixen.* Qrow thought as he glanced away from her, trying to clear his dirty thoughts. He was holding himself together by sheer dumb luck, he didn’t want to risk falling into the memory. He looked back up to her eyes, thinking of a way to distract her. “About that. How do you want to go to Haven, just the two of us? Or do you want to get ahold of your friends and all go together?”

Ruby frowned, he was being so stubborn, she rested her hands behind her leaning on them and wiggled her butt to the edge off the table. “I’d like to have Jaune, Ren, and Nora come with us. They are going to try for Haven too, it would make the most sense to go together.”

*Salem.* The word leaped into Qrow’s mind without warning as he grabbed Ruby and pulled her astride his lap faster than she could blink.

“Qrow?” She asked with concern, she had seen something dark flashed behind his eyes and could now feel him tense under her.

“She will hunt you, it’s only a matter of time.” He held her thighs, dipping his head to rest his forehead against hers. She could hear the fear laced in his voice, the knowing tone that Salem would be coming for her the minute she stepped out of their safety bubble. Ruby wrapped her arms loosely around his neck, ah so that was it. He was worried about Salem, worried about her safety. “You are still coming with us.”

Qrow squeezed his eyes shut. “I’m bad luck Ruby. It will hurt your friends and if something happens to them... then bounces back onto you.”

“Shhh.” Ruby raised her hands to his face, guiding him gently away from her so she could kiss him, just a soft simple meeting of lips, a reassurance. “It will be okay.”

“I don’t want to put you at risk.” Qrow said drawing away and blinking rapidly, he really couldn’t bare the thought of her getting hurt, of being the one to hurt her.

“I’ll be at more of a risk if you stay away.” The silver eyed woman spoke soothingly, her hands remaining on his face.

“Your friends-.”

“Are Huntsmen and Huntress, they can handle themselves, and we need all the help and protection we can get. I don’t see them minding if you tag along.” Ruby said stroking his cheeks with her thumbs.

“Till they figure out what my Semblance is.” Qrow said bitterly, he’d be blamed for everything bad that ever happened. He could already feel history repeating itself, there were many reasons he worked alone.
“What do you think we should do then?” Ruby asked, cocking her head to one side.

Stay in Patch, stay out of Salem’s sight and mind, or find someplace even more remote and hide out another war there. “And no, we can’t run away and hide.”

He sighed, frustrated that she knew his thoughts so well. “I could shadow you, I’ll keep the Grimm off your team’s back and stay far enough away that my Semblance won’t affect them. I’ll still be there to protect you, but far enough to keep you and your friends safe from my Semblance.” It was the best compromise he could think of. Though he still liked, and preferred, the getting her as far away from trouble as possible plan, he knew the thought wouldn’t have even occurred to her. He’d fallen in love with a Silver Eyed Warrior. Running away wasn’t an option, Ruby Rose did not run from trouble, an endearing but tiresome quality. So, he’d have to find ways to stick with her, to keep her safe, to keep Salem and her pawns away from the silver eyed teen.

Ruby frowned at the suggestion of his plan, she did not like the idea of Qrow hiding from her friends one bit. Even worse, she wouldn’t be able to see him very often if they went through with this plan. She brushed her fingers down over his cheeks and rested her hands on his shoulders. He was watching her softly, she could see those soft red eyes trace over her features again and again, like he was trying to memorize her. A smile tugged at her lips as he watched her, but it quickly disappeared as she remembered their topic at hand. “I don’t like it. At all.” She said as a matter of fact.

“Do you have a better idea?” Qrow asked taking hold of her hips.

The silver eyed teen let out a tired sigh, no really didn’t have any better ideas. Rather than dwell on something that wouldn’t be important for months, she settled for another kiss before they got back to work.

Qrow sat on the porch bundle up in a blanket hot chocolate in his hands as he watched the first snow of winter fall. Ruby was sleeping, he had snuck out of bed when he saw the white flakes falling. It was a little tradition of his dating back to when he had been a child. Sneaking out of the tribe’s camp and away from his ‘sister’ to watch the snow fall. It was something he liked to do alone.

However it seemed he wasn’t the only one awake at this late hour. The door opened with a creak and Yang stepped out onto the deck. A hot chocolate in her remaining hand, she was layered up in her pajamas but Qrow opened his arms and invited her to snuggle with him all the same.

The blonde cuddled up curling against his side and tucking her feet up on the bench. She sipped her hot chocolate as they watched the snow fall in silence. Qrow chose not to speak, his relationship with Yang had always been a bit strained at best. He was the uncle that was never there or the drunkard. Sure when the shit had hit the fan he always appeared but otherwise… Qrow sighed softly, he had a lot of regret where Yang was concerned. She just reminded him of her mother and that was never a nice thing.

“How do you do it?” Yang asked softly not looking away from the snow.

“What?”

“I can’t get Adam out of my head.” Yang whispered.
“Ah.” Qrow said and tightened his arm around her. He knew what that felt like all too well, he could see the questions behind Ruby’s eyes. Why he was still keeping his distance, why he let her sleep with Oz yet kept himself away.

“I know you have the same problem. I’ve seen Ruby pull you out of the memories over and over but…” Tears gathered in the corners of her eyes. “I don’t have anyone.”

“Tai is always keeping an eye on you. Ruby’s here too and you’ve got me for what that’s worth.” Qrow said.

“I know, but it doesn’t help. I don’t feel like-.” Yang just stopped and cuddle up tighter to him. She found it strange if nice that he didn’t smell of alcohol.

“It will get better with time, it’s okay to not be okay you know. I’ve done a lot of things I’m not proud of. Those memories haunt me every day, you don’t have that same weight on your mind. You fought to protect a friend but you were outmatched. It happens to us all at some point of our lives.” Qrow reached up and touched her temple. “The real battle is always up here. It’s why you learn about all this in school, because with the job you’ve picked it’s… inevitable.” He sighed. “It’s where you go after that matters the most.”

“Oz was where you went. He helped you.”

Qrow winced. “Part of the work I did for Oz, changed me, he changed me with his magic. Made me a bit more than human and he took responsibility for that. It made the memories worse. So yeah he helped, in a way you could say he cleaned up his mess.”

“But you love him… loved him.” Yang corrected her statement, learning that Ozpin had magic and had changed Qrow didn’t surprise her in the least. Her uncle had always been full of odd quirks.

“He’s alive.” Qrow whispered, watching the light reflect off the snow.

Yang was silent at that for a long time. “So why are you here then? Why aren’t you and Ruby going after him?”

“Because it’s impossible to know where he has gone. We only know that somewhere out there he is alive.” Qrow finished his hot chocolate before it got cold.

The movement reminded Yang to drink hers as well. “Ruby really likes him, it was so nice seeing her unwind at school. You could always tell when she had spent the night with him, she glowed and smiled more. She hasn’t been doing that lately.”

“What are you getting at Yang?” Dread coiled in his stomach.

“Why aren’t you, you know sleeping with her? I know she wants it and is just waiting on you.” Yang finally looked up at Qrow.

Qrow shook his head. “I don’t want to talk about it.”

Yang opened her mouth to push him but then shut it again and rested her head on his chest. They watched the snow fall in silence, till the cold nipped at their toes and drove them back inside.
Ruby and Qrow quickly hit a rhythm to their days, one chaste kiss in the mornings and one at night, after sending Oz Aura. The rose steadily flourished in their hands, returning to all its former glory and but it stayed more in Qrow’s room now, less chance for someone to catch onto what it really was that way. Taiyang kept everyone busy, even Yang as autumn came to a close and winter started to set in.

Qrow started taking bounties again, only smaller ones close to home but he wanted to chip into the household. Signal had closed its doors for winter so Tai was out of work, but he wanted to stay home with his girls anyway. No one really dared leave Yang alone for extended periods of time. Not when the blonde girl went through stages of grievance that lasted days and consisted of her refusing to eat, drink or even speak. There hadn’t been so much somber silence in the log cabin Tai had built for his family for many many years.

A silver eyed young adult was sitting in the living room, curled up on the couch, waiting for Qrow to home with a book and hot chocolate. A fire crackled away in the hearth, the power had been out for days but that wasn’t that abnormal. Normally Ruby would at least be trying to sleep right now, but over the last few weeks she’d gotten used to sleeping with Qrow. Their bed felt too big and cold without him and tonight what kept her up was the blizzard that had settled over Patch like a globe of ice and gale winds.

Ruby thumbed a page of her favourite book, ‘The Hero and the Crown’ she was worried about Qrow, he was due back yesterday. She’d spent the entire day pacing back and forth through the house as it was too cold to go outside. She knew she was driving her dad a bit nuts, but he couldn’t call her on it as he used to do the same thing when they were out without him.

Crackle, crackle, pop went the fire and the front door opened with a jerk and bang, frozen winter air leapt at the opportunity to invade the Xiao-Long residence. The door was forced shut with a grunt and the bar all but slammed down across it. “Bloody freezing hell’s, gonna end up snow bond at this rate.”

Qrow stamped his heavy boots trying to get some of the snow off him, he sneezed and shivered violently. His fingers fumbled as he tried to get his gloves off, the snow was melting from the fire and making him even wetter.

Ruby was off the couch and helping in seconds, her nimble fingers making quick work of the knots and peeling the sodden gloves from Qrows hands. She grabbed both his hands in hers and tried not to be afraid at the reddened skin. “You’re frozen through.”

The heat from Ruby almost hurt, hot to cold, she let go of his hands and pulled up her shirt and put them on her belly with a little meep at the cold, as she reached up to work through the clasps and knots that held Qrow’s winter gear in place.

Qrow was distracted by the heat of her stomach, his fingers were slowly moving away from burning cold pain to just cold. She looked so cute with her tongue sticking out slightly to the side as she focused on the knot holding his heavy winter cloak in place. He really should be helping her but her stomach was so warm, it was taking all of his willpower not to pull her in closer.

“Got it!” Ruby said beaming and pulling the wet black fur cloak from his shoulders, she dislodged his hands when she hanged up the cloak.

The movement shocked Qrow back into awareness enough to help her get through his clothes. They carelessly yanked off soaking layer after layer, Qrow managed to get his boots off without stepping in the growing puddle under him.
Stripped down to his under armour Ruby pulled him over to the couch, “Are you okay?” she asked racing over to the kettle to reheat the water for hot chocolate. The chocolate would bring his blood sugar up and the heat would warm him from the inside out.

Qrow pulled off his heavy wool socks and pulled his feet up under him on the couch. “Yeah, just got held up by the storm.” He grabbed a fuzzy wool and cotton blanket from the back of the couch and wrapped himself up. He cupped his bright red ears and pulled out the letter he had picked up in town, while Ruby zipped about.

He gingerly took the cup of hot chocolate when Ruby offered it, the heat radiating through his cold fingers. Ruby sat beside him, fiddling with the edge of the blanket, she spotted the envelope.

“Go ahead.” He sipped the hot chocolate, it hurt his frozen lips, his under armour was starting to feel cold and clammy. He set the cup down and pulled off the shirt and after a moment's hesitation the pants as well. Ohhh that was better, he could actually feel the warmth from the blanket now.

Ruby bit her lip when he stripped the rest of the way but picked up the letter and popped off the wax seal. She started to read as Qrow wrapped himself back up tight and picked up his cup again. Tears collected in her eyes, she held the letter gently.

“Ruby?” Qrow asked.

Ruby started to read aloud.

“Dearest Beloveds

It pains me greatly to be parted from you both, but I am very glad you know that I am well. I would have never guessed the item we made for our youngest individual would prove so vital to us. I am so very sorry that I have not been able to make more personal contact with you. My flight was necessary, our foe will slow the pace of their mission with me out of sight and hopefully mind. I am sorry for the pain my departure caused. Not a day goes by that I do not wish to return to you both, many days I must talk myself out of doing so.

As to where I went, I flew eastward the sands of my current place are perfect for reforging the soul. Once I have completed my tasks here I will try for the place mentioned by the current season. It may be a while, but I dare not return to our home, appearing on your doorstep as I am now would look very odd. It would also likely give me away, given my history with you both.

I feel the need to mention that a woman took a fancy to me as she healed me, when I was better she requested more intimate contact. I know that neither of you have expressed a wish to be exclusive, at least for the time being but I feel that I just say, that I indulged her. She aided in my recovery greatly and a night of pleasure was the least I could do to say thank you.

Your nightly gifts are very comforting and I thank you for them, I only wish I could return the favour. Perhaps I will find something here to send to you, though any gift I find will be pale in comparison to your own.

I will always return to you.”
It was signed with a green rose, Ruby let out a long shuddering breath and wiped her eyes. “He’s okay, he’s gonna come find us.”

Qrow set his cup down and shifted the blanket around so it was just over his front then pulled Ruby onto his lap, wrapping her up in it as well.

She shivered as soon as she came into contact with his cold skin but she snuggled into him, happy to lend her body heat. She let Qrow take the precious letter from her trembling fingers.

The detective in Qrow came rushing to the forefront like a bloodhound with a scent. The paper was cheap, the ink equally so, he went through it slowly line by line. “He’s in Vacuo and building a new identity so SHE thinks that he’s dead. ‘I will try for the place mentioned by the current season’.” He raised the letter to his nose and sniffed, it was musty. “This is several weeks old at least, so the season would have been Fall. Cinder mentioned being from Mistral right?” He glanced down to Ruby who had shifted to straddle him going for maximum skin contact trying to warm him up.

“Yeah, she said it was ‘equally undesirable’ there.” She reached up and cupped his pink ears.

“So he’s stuck in Vacuo clearly remaking himself,” Qrow paused. “Damn, from Vacuo to Mistral, that’s gonna take him a while.”

Ruby ran her hands down his neck, his skin was steadily warming up, but he was still chilled. She was tempted to take off her shirt and snuggle up tight to his bare chest. “How long?”

“Well, it’s about nine from here to Mistral on foot including the boat trip, he’s got to double that distance then some.” Qrow slide his free hand under Ruby’s shirt and smirked at the little yelp she let out, his hand was still cold and she was so very warm.

Ruby frowned sadly. “So he’s gonna take a long time to get back to us.”

“Probably, Atlas has shut down so airships are out, the fastest way for him to get to Mistral would be by ship and that is at least ten months.” Qrow’s heart seized at the thought, that was a best case scenario guess, he couldn’t remember the last time he went so long without Oz.

“So we leave for Mistral come spring and maybe we’ll get there at around the same time?” Ruby asked, resting her cheek on Qrows clavicle.

Qrow set the letter down on the table before them and wrapped his arms around her. He had half a mind to teach her privately, between him and Tai they could cover everything Haven could and it kept Ruby out of Salem’s sight. He tucked his face to her hair and pulled her closer, breathing deeply her scent. His lips brushed her head, part of him wanted to find some quiet place in the middle of nowhere to hide her.

“Qrow. What’s wrong?” Ruby asked softly pulling back to look him in the eyes.

“I’m just worried, Mistral is like leaping into a Beowolfs’ mouth, at least here you are safe and out of sight. Going to Mistral to Haven, it will be like waving a big red flag saying ‘come and get me Salem’.” He tucked a stray lock of hair behind her ear.

“It will be okay, we can’t stand by and let her win, and Oz will be there, we won’t be alone.” Ruby kissed his wrist.

Qrow slid his hand round to weave his fingers into her hair. “I know, I just wish we didn’t have to
Ruby leaned forward and kissed him softly, her lips hovering over his. “It won’t be forever, we’ll win and then we’ll take Oz and disappear. Just like you said, from Vacuo, to Mistral, Atlas to Menagerie, we’ll go wherever we want, whenever we want.”

Qrow smiled and tilted his head and kissed her again. He meant to keep it chaste but with hope for the future blooming behind his breast, he darted his tongue out and tasted Ruby’s lip. He felt her jump a little and let out a surprised breath, his free hand slipped down to span her lower back. He heard her moan a softly and part her lips against his, teasing him as her hands came up to rest on his shoulders. Qrow didn’t dare back away and ruin the moment, he teased his tongue forth, dancing with hers.

Ruby was in heaven, she wanted this for so long but he so rarely allowed it and never since Oz left them. The weeks of little kisses, of teasing and suddenly this. Part of her wondered what changed that he was allowing this, the other part really didn’t care and was going to enjoy it for as long as possible. She thought that maybe he tasted like a forest after rain, if such a thing had a taste, he’d been dry for weeks so there was no burn of alcohol. His lips were chapped from the cold and his stubble occasionally scratched her chin.

Ruby rocked gently in his embrace rubbing her groin to his, she blushed as she felt the rather instantaneous response.

“Ruby.” Qrow growled drawing away from the kiss.

“Please, please.” She leaned in and caught his lips again before he could stop her, her hands coming up to weave into his wet hair. She moved from his lips to his neck, pulling his head back so she could plant open mouthed wet kisses to the slender column.

Qrow groaned, she was shutting down his brain before he could get a word in. “Ruby.” He let out a soft moan of her name as she licked down his neck. “Stop, we shouldn’t.” His eyes fluttered as she sucked on a crescent scar and his head fell back against the couch.

Ruby smiled, keeping up her kisses, she let go of his hair and trailed her hands down his chest too his…

Qrow grabbed her hands before she reach her destination, his grabbed her back and spun them so she was on her back on the couch seats with him between her legs. “Ruby.” Qrow said again finally grabbing enough of his wits to growl at her.

Ruby shivered at his voice, he had never sounded quite like that before. She looked at him the fire light sending shadows flicking over his face, his eyes were near black with a thin ring of his pale red she loved so much. She swallowed and licked her lips. “Please.”

Qrow looked down to her, her shirt had ridden up, her hair loose and fanning out on the cushion, silver eyes alight. She was old enough to call the shots here, but part of him still felt that they should stop this. That he was a dirty cradle robber, part of him didn’t care that he’d be the same today as a century or two from now. He wasn’t Ozpin, he didn’t have the mindset of a immortal yet, even if he had the body of one. Then there was Ruby herself, her strange Aura though it had been dormant whatever had lashed out hadn’t showed itself again.

Gods she was so beautiful, he shifted drawing back planting his hands on either side of her head. He closed his eyes trying to figure out what to do, how much control did he dare give her?
Ruby very carefully with a evil little smirk, rolled her shirt up and ducked out of it all without brushing his arms. She bit her lip and waited, the anticipation, the want, the lust, fire and the cool chill to the room all making her nipples perky and full.

Qrow opened his eyes and nearly did a double take at the smooth pale creamy skin that filled his vision. The hard small pink nipples that demanded his attention, her breasts were fuller than they had been on her birthday and the knowledge that he could worship them if he wanted made it all the more tempting. He looked up to her shining silver eyes, they were so warm, radiating with the trust she offered him so readily. He knew he could do whatever he wanted, he knew he could have all of her here and now, over and over, and she'd love every minute of it. She'd beg for more, plead to him till she was too exhausted to continue, she'd love it when he spilled his seed inside her and marked her as his own. Qrow reached out and brushed a finger down the side of her face, watched her bite her lip, felt her tremor and he knew just how much she wanted him, just a ghosting touch precluding to the moan he could draw so easily from her.

“Please Qrow.” Ruby spoke softly pleading without begging.

Qrow swallowed thickly, that fear of breaking her that had taken root so deeply in his mind twisted in his gut. He didn't trust himself to have her, his Semblance alone could ruin things but maybe he could release her from this tension that eternally rose between them. He loved her carefully from a distance, he loved her smile, the soft beautiful laugh she saved just for him. He loved her flaws, from her innocence to her naivety, to her social shyness, he loved every part of her. He had done without the physical since they decided to court. Sometimes he vented his frustration with Ozpin when they had been fracturing apart or taking other women to bed. Hollow empty couplings that only eased his body, incapable of soothing his soul, they could never give him what he really wanted. They never gave themselves to him as Ruby did in this moment, never loved him so completely, trusted him with their hearts. They didn't soothe him when he awoke screaming, they couldn't take the bottle away from him and he didn't love them for it. Ruby made him be the better man he wished he could always be, for her he'd give everything, he'd cut out his heart and give it to her if it made her smile. He'd give her everything he could ever be, he loved her, so very completely, only Ozpin had created this devotion so completely within him.

Ruby saw Qrow get lost in his mind, she leaned up and gently kissed him, a tiny lingering brush of lips. “My Qrow.” she whispered.

Her words jarred him from his internal reflection, he leaned down till she was laying back again, their lips melding together as they went. He wanted to be open to her, waited to give her everything, his hands flowed over her body travelling down her chest, over her breasts and stomach to her pajamas. So very gently he took hold of her pants and panties, drawing back pulling and removing the garments, stepping back setting the clothes on the table.

The fire burned low as Ruby watched him trying to figure out what was going through his head, after fighting with her shyness, she parted her legs and showed him her wet feminine folds. His silence confused her, but when he stripped off his underwear she got distracted, the light was too soft for her to see well, but she could see the lines of his body clearly. Her Qrow so ready for her, he took a step toward her and offered his hand.

She couldn't see his expression, in the soft orange fire light but she could feel something new between them. This would change something between them, she stood up silently and took his hand, placing her small one so daintily in his, larger, rough, nimble one. To her this felt like a step towards something, Qrow wasn't treating her like a child he needed to hide from. He was offering something and when his hand wrapped around hers and held it gently, she knew that this would define them, that they'd share something now and that it would be special.
Qrow picked up their forgotten blanket and walked to the hearth, with her beside him and laid out the blanket making sure it was perfect. He drew her down to sit before him, pausing in a moment of hesitation before taking her lips in another kiss, he poured his love into it. The love he couldn’t find words to express, it deepened, giving more and more to her, till she couldn’t keep up, till that moan he so longed to hear spilled from her lips. He guided her back so she could rest on the blanket and drew back from the kiss, her taste so delicate soft filling him.

Qrow dipped his head to the side and began kissing her pale moonlight coloured skin, from her cheek to her neck. Listened when Ruby sighed a soft happy sound, kiss after kiss, his tongue darting out to taste her every now and again.

Ruby's eyes fluttered as she let her mind drift, his kisses were so tender, her skin tingled under his lips, she was so aroused she could feel her leak from her core. It wasn’t the same as Ozpin but she liked it too. She loved the rasp of his beard, the flaw of his dry lips, the teasing wetness of his tongue when he gave into temptation and tasted her. If didn't feel like he was kissing her, it felt like he was worshiping her, that she was his goddess and that he only wanted her to find pleasure.

Down her sweet skin he moved, he kissed down the valley of her breasts, his lips hovering over a hard little nipple before, slipping his tongue forth and drawing it over the aching peak, he heard his woman gasp, then moan when he took the nipple into his mouth and started to suck softly. A moan crept up his own throat, she felt so perfect, he drew more of her breast into his mouth and sucked harder, moaning when her fingers wove into his hair.

His hair was still wet and Ruby would have worried had he not been doing wonderful things to her chest. She looked down to find his eyes closed, long lashes resting on his cheeks, he looked so… peaceful with his mouth to her breast. She watched as he withdrew, felt his teeth graze the perky peak, gave it one last kiss, then tilted his head and descended on the other, pressing feather light kisses to the orb of flesh before licking at her nipple and drawing it into his mouth. Ruby let out a shuddering moan, trembling as he sucked softly with a quiet moan of his own. She stroked his head, from temple to the back, drawing her fingers through his hair over and over, she felt him purr.

Qrow glanced up at her through hooded eyes and her expression eased him, she was smiling softly as she touch him, her touch felt wonderful beyond just the action. It was permission, acceptance, it showed that she liked him here at her breast, he wondered if she would let him use her breasts for a pillow. He loved listening to the soft thump thump of a heart to lull him to sleep.

Her hands remained in his hair touching stroking, as he reluctantly drew away from her breast and started to kiss down her belly, he felt it flutter and saw her bite her lip in anticipation and smirked ever so slightly. He shifted his weight, moving down, spreading her legs farther as he kissed the apex of her legs and looked up to her.

Permission, he was asking again for something he had for so long. Ruby stoked his temples again drawing her fingers down to his jaw drawing him to her, just hinting him closer and raising her hips slightly in the same action.

Qrow watched her as he brought his mouth to her sex, running the tip of his tongue through her labia, moaning at her sweet taste, roses and strawberries. He dived in for more, sweeping his tongue through her folds gathering the precious liquid on his tongue. She was better than the finest brandy, just the right balance between sweetness and her own feminine scent. He licked up to her clit and flicked with his tongue, she rewarded him with a soft keen, her hands tightening in his hair. He closed his mouth over the engorged hypersensitive pearl and sucked on it carefully, running his tongue over it and caressing it with the smooth underside of his tongue.

Ruby’s hands flew to her mouth as she screamed in a pleasured keening wail, her legs trembled as
Qrows rough hands came up to hold her thighs apart. She had no idea what he was doing only that it felt unlike anything she had ever felt before. The tension and pleasure swiftly rose to a crescendo within her, with his soft moan sending her over the edge with a clear cry as she grabbed the blanket.

Qrow moaned at the sight of her, head thrown back mouth open as she sang out for him, back arching presenting her breasts, her stomach clenched as her body came beneath him. What an image they made alight by soft gently firelight, shadows dancing over their body like petals. Strong sharp masculine lines and features, to soft, lush female curves, their shadows joined together upon the floor.

Qrow shifted his attention to the rose of her sex, catching the juices of release and drinking them down like the clearest water. He cleaned her with his nimble tongue not wasting a drop, listening to her moan softly, with one last kiss he moved back up and laid down on his side his back to the fire. So beautiful, he thought reaching out and petting her stomach in tiny strokes, enjoying the feel of her smooth skin.

Ruby slowly came back from her state of bliss, she looked up to him and again found his face hidden in shadows. “You-,” she started to say.

“I'm fine.” Qrow said, he didn't want anything from this, seeing her like this was reward enough for him.

Ruby shook her head, she wanted to please him as well, she turned to him, his hand sliding over her skin to rest on her hip. “Please let me touch you.” She pressed a kiss to his lips, reaching between them touching the head of his hard member to her palm.

Qrow groaned his grip tightened on her hip, he kissed her again slowly deepening it as her little hand explored him.

Ruby had to focus to keep from getting distracted by the kiss, she quickly learned he was too wide for one hand. She shivered and let out a little moan at the idea of him one day being inside of her, to stroke him she had to use her whole arm in this position. On a downward stroke she pushed back the foreskin with her thumb and forefinger, tightening her grip around the sensitive flesh revealed. Qrow jerked in her embrace breaking the kiss, saliva joining then for a moment as his rested forehead to hers, breaths growing steadily deeper and faster. Ruby took that as encouragement and tightened her grip again, stroking him in long sure movements, passing her palm over the bulbous head, her hands quickly growing wet with pre-cum. She looked up to find his eyes lidded but watching her, as she met his gaze, he pulled her closer, the tip of his member also touching her stomach but not restricting her movements.

The petite woman kept her strokes steady testing out a little twist of her wrist when she rose to touch the tip of him. She watched transfixed by him as he moaned softly drawing deep rapid breaths, his hand tightening almost painfully on her hip as he painted her belly with ejaculate, his hips diving into her hand as his orgasm washed over him. She continued to stroke him till his member stopped throbbing in her hand, she licked her lips at the idea of that happening within her.

Qrow came down slowly, pulling her closer, he enjoyed that more than all the one night stands with nameless women. Ruby tucked into his chest letting out a sleepy purr, he breathed deeply, taking in her scent and the feel of her pressed up nude against him.

They held each other in silence, the bliss of what they did and the feel of each other setting over them.

Qrow wanted to stay there, with the warm hearth at his back and his lovely Ruby snuggled to his
front, but Tai said he didn’t want to see or hear and he’d definitely see if they fell asleep here. “Ruby love, we need to relocate.”

Ruby groaned sleepily “I don’t want too.”

Qrow smirked. “Me neither but I don’t think Tai wants to see your lovely bare butt first thing in the morning.”

Ruby signed and drew away sitting up, she yawned and smiled down at him. “When we have a place of our own we are going to sleep before the hearth.”

The red eyed man found himself grinning at that, she thought about them having a home of their own and right at that moment he wanted to make all of her wishes come true. “Nothing would make me happier, more come on, let's get going before the hearth lulls us back asleep.”

Ruby nodded and gathered up her clothes, cleaning her hand on her shirt. Qrow put the blanket back over the couch after a quick check to make sure none of their fluids had gotten on it, gathered up his own clothes, and Oz’s letter and they headed up stairs as quietly as they could. Qrow felt a little like the boyfriend sneaking in, but he honestly didn't care, they made it to his room unobstructed.

Ruby put her pajamas on his dresser and he threw his into the hamper, as Ruby pulled back the rumpled covers and wordless invited him in with her. He came over to her laying down beside her and drawing the duvet over them, she snuggled into his chest as he slide an arm under the pillow and wrapped his free arm around her. This was different, but it was a very welcome change, skin to skin, Qrow glanced over to the rose and picked it up. Ruby reached up and cupped the base of it, Qrow moved his hand to do the same, cupping hers as well. They closed their eyes and kissed gently, summoning up Aura and the memory of being together. They poured every feeling, every taste, every emotion into the Rose, then deepened kiss and sent that through to their love that as well.

Qrow moaned as the energy from Ruby seeped into him as well, he turned it to flow through the rose, giving Oz double as to what he would be used too. They tried to keep the flow slow, to make love to Oz with their memories, they pressed tighter together giving a new feeling of skin on skin to mixed with the memory. They played out the memory to the end, the extensive use of Aura exhausting them they quickly fell asleep.

The wind still howled by the time the grey light of morning crept under the blinds, Qrow was the first to wake, it took him a minute to remember he was nude and so was Ruby. Thankfully there was no morning call from Tai anymore, since the storm started several days ago, Tai had started letting Ruby and Yang lay in. He looked down, Ruby was exactly as she had been when they came to bed, snuggled into his chest, duvet tucked up around her neck. He could feel her little hand pressed into his back pulling him closer even in her sleep. She was so beautiful, lips parted just so, a lock and red and black hair over her cheek. Qrow found himself smiling as he gazed lovely upon her, so very perfect in every way.

“What do you want to do today?” Ruby asked moving herself to share his pillow, pulling the duvet up with her.

Qrow smirked, “Stay in bed with my girl and show her all the things I can do with my tongue.” he slid his hand up her thigh to her back.
Ruby blushed but not one to be beaten at this game, she lifted her leg and threw it over his hip, his morning wood coming very close to her core. “As nice as that sounds, I think Dad would notice.”

Qrow jerked slightly at that brushing her core and she bit her lip, he pursed his lips and rolled her onto her back moving over her, careful to not rest his weight on her. He looked up to her, she was biting her lip again and somehow managed to part her legs so he had no choice but to settle between them. *Little vixen.* He thought fondly. “What am I going to do with you?” Ruby opened her mouth to give a few ideas that had come to mind in that moment but he leaned down and kissed her, stealing her words away. “Don’t answer that, the last thing I need is you giving me ideas.”

Ruby giggled at that, licking her lip and smiling. “I still like your first idea, I’m sure you could do some teaching without Dad being any wiser.”

“Zwei! What are you doing?” Came echoing up the stairs, the pair and looked to each other with dread.

“We didn’t miss anything did we?” Qrow asked leaping off of her and racing over to his drawer grabbing a pair of slacks.

“I don’t think so.” Ruby said moving with equal haste, she quickly checked her shirt, it did have his fluids dried on it but they were on the inside and not noticeable. Qrow fixed her hair as she pulled her pajama pants on and they were down the stairs seconds after Yang's' shout.

They found Zwei sniffing around the foot of the fireplace, Yang glaring down at him. “There is nothing there! I don’t know what you want!” Yang said exasperated she was hungry.

Zwei looked up to the pair and barked, racing over to greet them. Qrow knelt down and rubbed Zwei behind the ear whispering. “If you tell Tai, I will turn you into a big fluffy hat.”

The corgi titled his head and barked at Ruby, looking between the two with a mischievous knowing eyes. Ruby saw that look and reached down to pet him too, “Please just act normal Zwei.” she whispered.

Zwei whined cocked his head and let out a happy bark, he’d keep their secret.

Yang asked as she couldn’t hear what Ruby and Qrow said to the dog. “What are you three talking about?”

Ruby stepped away from Zwei and moved into the kitchen singing out. “Nothing!” Food would distract Yang, she gathered up oatmeal and filled a pot with water, taking both back to the living room.

Yang was sitting on the couch while Qrow, got the hearth going again, lighting the range as he worked. They only used it when the power went out but it was very handy to have the cast iron range.

Ruby put the pot on while Qrow managed the fire, she went and sat by Yang. Zwei jumped up on the sofa taking a moment to sniff Ruby’s shirt causing the teen to blush before walking over with a little too much bounce in his step to sit in Yang’s lap.

Tai came down the stairs with a yawn, taking in the scene below him. “Qrow? When did you get in?”

Qrow closed the door to the range with a click, shutting it tightly. “Late last night.” He walked over and sat on the couch beside Ruby, pulling her into his lap.
Tai walked around and opened the curtains, letting white light into the warming house. “How’s it in town?”

“Not much better than here, the power comes and goes, what crews there are don’t have Vale’s support so if the lines get damaged off the island…” Qrow shuddered at the thought.

“Which is likely given no one will be going out to look after them in this weather.” Tai looked outside, the snow was halfway up the window. It looked to have the makings of a very long cold winter out there.

“Rymrgand is definitely out walking. Hopefully a boring winter is all we’ll have to worry about.” Qrow said drawing circles on Ruby’s hip.

Tai checked the water, it was just starting to come to a boil, he eyeballed how much oats were needed and added them. “It definitely looks like that.”

Chapter End Notes

Ardy: Thank you too: lillithschild, Faith, darkvampirekisses, QueenofSpades19 and Sportsfangirl815 for your comments.
I tried to change this chapter as little as I could. I know it was a favorite for many people, I hope it's all as good as you remember.
The Naglfar, Ozpin’s brain stalled as he took in Jack’s ship, he had to admit it was well named. The massive war ship was going a pretty good job pretending to be a freighter, but the gun ports on the sides and almost leafy skeletal armour gave it away. This was no transport ship, this could probably shoot an Atlas warship from the sky.

Ozpin pulled his new white cloak around him, hiding his arms in the folds, it was cut to hug his shoulders with a large steel armed plate, holding it in place of his right shoulder. It was attached to his shoulder by another large steel clasp, the fabric was heavy and strong, enough so that even Oz would have trouble ripping it. Lastly it was embroidered with Dust, it was the one place where he’d let just a little of his old style shine through. He’d drawn for the seamstress, the flora pattern on his cane then asked for the embroidery to be an emerald green and ruby red. He had been a bit wary when he put in the request but had fallen in love with it the moment he saw the finished product. It was a little piece of who he was and for the strangest reason wearing it made him feel safer, more at ease.

Oz walked up the gangplank and onto the huge ship, the crew bustled around him loading cargo and shouting. He picked his way over to the stern, it seemed like the best place to get out of the way. He could feel the humm of the engines through his boots, he wondered just how much of the ship was below the water mark. Reaching out he ran his hand over the railing as he walked to the back. The ship was cold to the touch, which was a bit odd and Oz had the strangest feeling crawl up his back. If he didn’t know better, he’d say this ship had an Aura.

He glanced around and spotted Jack talking to a woman. Her hair was black as were her eyes, her skin was milk-pale. She wore a thick black cloak but Ozpin could see heavy black gauntletts covering her hands. As Oz watched he noticed her lips barely moved as she spoke. Something about her knocked around in his skull.

Garrett appeared beside him. “We should get off this ship. I think that is Berath.”

As if she could hear the soul she looked over to Ozpin and lifted an arm very slightly. The creak of her armour was thunderous in Ozpin’s ears. She snapped her fingers it was like the very earth had cracked up in Oz’s ears. He let out a shout and covered his ears, hunching over on himself.

Then it came, the ring of a bell on a cold wind. The ring came again and again, until the air was full with the sound of a thousand, thousand bells ringing all at once.

Garrett rose and clutched at his chest, no no I died she can’t still have me… Deep within him his soul he felt a resonance, a bell ringing in tune with all the others. Something within him bent, then broke and then they were borne away on a rippling tide, just another peal among the many.

The tide of bells receded. The two souls leveled themselves up onto their knees and dread coiled deep in Garrett’s old soul. Though Ozpin had never been here before.

“This is Berath’s realm.” Garrett said and Ozpin looked over.

He was used to seeing Garrett separate from himself, but now it seemed different. He wasn’t speaking in his mind but instead aloud as if they weren’t woven together.
One minute they are alone in this cold star lit abyss, then the next they are not. An indistinct figure stood before them, flickering between forms like a fire-cast shadow. A fixed, taunting grin. Bottomless black eyes, a yawning chasm of earth. The aspects of Berath - the Usher the Pallid Knight - shifted in and out of focus.

The shifting image of Berath settles on the aspect of the Pallid Knight. The woman Ozpin had seen upon the ship.

“Garrett.” Her voice is the discordant clangor of gongs struck out of time.

Garrett smiled sheepishly, pushing his hood back revealing thick black hair. “Hiya Berath long time no see.”

The Pallid Knight’s towering form did not move for a long moment. “You evaded my Wheel, you were sworn to become one of my Death Guard.”

The former thief held up his left hand. “Well my soul was ripped pretty unceremoniously from the cycle. You can thank the Glyphs for that and my new friend here.”

Berath’s sickly pale skin pulled tight across the bones of her face, as if the shell of this aspect could not quite fit the impossible creature that it contained. Her black eyes turned upon Ozpin.

The tall man shrunk under her gaze hunching in upon himself. The Goddess spoke again. “You too have evaded my Wheel, you soul grows old and strong. Bearing the weight of many lives, other souls yet reside within you still sleeping just waiting to be Awakened like my thief.” Her lips thinned. “That demon interfered in a process he had no right to even whisper of. I will have to pay him back for his melding.”

“Please don’t.” Ozpin said softly. “He has already… checked on me and my souls.”

“I am aware.”

Both men winced as the clamour of bells returned to her voice. “Garrett, tell me why I should not rip you from the mortal coil and force you to fulfill your oath?”

“Because someone ripped the Sentients apart. The Glyphs are thrown into discord, you know as well as I given time that will throw even your powers into disarray. The Wheel must turn and if the Sentients aren’t restored the very magic of the planet will start to warp and fail. I am the Keeper.” For once in his long existence, Garrett spoke not only the truth but with conviction.

The Pallid Knight’s lips turned up ever so slightly. “It is strange seeing you embrace your duty. Perhaps you have grown wiser with time… Very well remain among the living you shall. Ozpin.”

Ozpin forced himself to look up at the towering giant.

“This duty will fall to you as well. Through your curse your soul is bond to Garrett's and will remain so. But you will now bare my Chime. The Gods long since stopped birthing children into the mortal plane, but you will be one of mine. My herald till Garrett’s duty is fulfilled.”

“I don’t understand any of this. I always thought the Gods had left us, had I know you were still around I wouldn’t have made a contract with O’Dimm.” Ozpin said confusion creeping into his voice.

“We retreated into the Beyond as belief in us faded. Only Cernunn, Heron, Naga, Rymrgand, Artemis and I still stride your world, for we are visceral things that have not been forgotten.” Berath
said, she found she enjoyed this old strong soul. Speaking with him was pleasing.

“The explanation she is leaving out is that the Glyphs are the… voice of magic. The code if you would. It’s through them that the Wheel turns and souls are reborn, it is by them that the energy from soul’s worn away into essence can be used to create spells. The Glyphs are the language that shapes the fabric of the universe. Even the Gods need the Glyphs just as much as they need souls to exist.” Garrett explained. “The Glyphs have five objects in the world, that are called Sentients. They are the physical embodiment of different aspects of the Glyphs. Wellsprings of their power. The Eye, sees all and often creates unlife in what recides around it. Then there the Paw, it speaks to all the plant life in the world. The Chalice is artificial creation, as well as stone and other non living minerals. The Heart is life human and animal. Lastly the Crown is command over the minds of all. Together they normally form a sentient net of magic over the world, often making sure their magic isn’t misused.”

Ozpin’s memories twisted back to Viktoria’s grove. “But now that isn’t the case? Is it?”

“No.” The Pallid Knight said in a thunderous boom.

“I don’t know why they didn’t speak up earlier. Maybe it was because I was weaker within you, they didn’t see you as their chosen Keeper. But the Paw said when I restored it’s connection to The Eye, that they are all broken apart. That someone broke them apart.” Garrett reached up to his empty eye socket for a moment then frowned letting his hand drop.

“But if they’re as powerful as you say. How would that even be possible?” Ozpin asked.

“Your world has had many Gods, the Sentients are limited by the aspect they govern over. To sever sight from life, would be easy if you were a God of Entropy. Or by use of your Relics, Knowledge, Choice, Destruction, Creation. They are not equal to the Sentients but could be used against them.” Berath spoke, this time causing neither man to flinch.

“So we reconnect the Sentients and you’ll remove Garrett’s soul from mine?” Ozpin asked, he really liked that idea.

“Yes.” The clamour of bells resonated in the air.

“I like the sound of that.” Ozpin said looking over to his counterpart who glared at him.

“Then the deal is struck.” Berath waved her finger even at the slight movement her gauntlets screeched.

Ozpin grabbed his chest as a sharp pain filled it, he looked down and he could see through his chest and into his soul. The pain continued intruding deeper into his soul, he could see a small lump of darkness roiling within him. The darkness lingered there, but the pain abated entirely within the span of a few seconds.

“A chime. Do not fear Ozpin. It will not harm you unless you chose to cross me. I trust it will not come to that.” The Pallid Knight weathered a heavy dark look upon Garrett. “Do not think I had forgotten your chime, you will not escape my Wheel this time.” She lifted her hands her armour was a clamour of squeaking sound, then she clapped once.

Again Ozpin and Garrett were surrounded by the sound of bells but this time it faded quickly and when Ozpin opened his eyes he was leaning against the rail of the ship. A cold sweat dripped over his skin and as he looked around Berath was gone from the ship but after a moment Garrett appeared beside him. “Well that was unpleasant.”

“Please tell me you didn’t lie to her.” Ozpin said.
“Berath was my Goddess. I spent too much time cleaning up The Eye’s undead hordes for her not to be. I bore her chime in life and was supposed to become one of her Death Guard in death. Only your fucked up reincarnation cycle ripped that from me.” Garrett said, he could feel the weight of the chime in their soul now. It was almost comforting.

“So she’s the one person you won’t lie too.” Oz pushed himself upright.

“Yes.”

Jack came up beside Ozpin and waved his hand. “Begone Awakened Soul.”

Ozpin was shocked when Garrett vanished. “How did you?”

The faunus smiled. “Naga mentioned you bore a Awakened Soul. Apparently Berath has already filled her in. You’ll find on this ship… well the strange will become normal soon enough, if it hasn’t already.”

“I just talked to a Goddess.” Ozpin said trying to wrap his mind around that little fact and leaned against the railing looking out over Vacuo.

“Get used to it.” Jack said and leaned on the rail beside Oz, he sighed deeply and said. “Beautiful isn’t it?”

“In a way.” Ozpin said now noticing the rail under his hand was cold, far colder than it should have been. Yet, the wood under his hand felt almost alive, he could feel the spark of a soul within it.

Jack watched the much larger man out of the corner of his eye, the cloak suited him and he looked more relaxed than any other time Jack had seen him. Casually he said. “She just doesn’t know you yet, she’d pretty picky about who she lets on board. I usually have to ask first.”

Oz turned very slightly to his new captain. “I feel Aura.”

That got Jacks’ attention, he gave this speech to every member of his crew the first time they came onto his ship. This was the first time someone had felt his babys’ Aura. “There is a story about my ship, would you like to hear it?”

The taller man nodded and removed his hand from the ship, it was starting to freeze, he tucked it back under the folds of his cloak. “I like stories.” Oz said turning to give Jack his full attention.

“The legend goes that the Naglfar has always sailed the seas between life and death. That no matter how many times it is destroyed it will always come back and is crewed by the dead.” Jack said and reached up to rub his chest.

“You don’t look dead.” Oz said, he stretched out his Aura and set it over Jack. The man felt alive, his Aura was mischievous and playful.

Jack felt Oz’s Aura and had to work to keep from raising his brow, it took a lot of effort to extend one’s Aura, this Obsidian did it without batting an eye. He felt the Aura withdraw and guessed that Obsi was trying to tell if he was alive. “Do that again.” Jack said and reached his Aura down into his ship.

Oz shivered violently, the felt Aura twist and turn around him and cautiously reached out with his Aura. His eyes widened as he felt Jack, he was part of the ship, his Aura went from yellow to black. Jack showed him his right hand, a black spot in his palm. Oz stepped away from Jack, but the faunus empowered by the ship reached out and grabbed Oz’s arm with his right.
Oz let out a scream as the ship smashed through his protections like they were nothing. He looked up and saw Jack dead and rotten, a skeletal husk that was undoubtedly the man. When Jack spoke, Oz could see the back of the man’s neck through his jaw. “Do you believe in ghost stories?”

Ozpin felt a spark of rage bubble up in his chest, he twisted his arm and grabbed the other man’s skeletal forearm and cut loose. Emerald green flames leaped up around them both as he growled up. “What do you think?”

Jack had never felt an Aura like this before, it wasn’t as strong as him and his ship, but it was greater than anything he’d felt before. To his undead soul, this man before him was a blazing flame of life, it almost made him want to keep him. To mark him as he had done with Gibbs, Will, and Lizzy, tie him to the ship. They stared black eyes to blazing green, and Jack let out a sigh, shutting down his Aura and returning to normal. As Oz did the same Jack spoke. “I think you and I have a great deal more in common than meets the eye. You’re even Berath’s new Herald to boot.”

Oz had to begrudgingly admit that was likely true, he drew his arm back under his cloak it was frostburned where Jack and grabbed it, he could see he had burned the other man as well. They were opposites, cold and heart, ice and fire, death and life and they somehow had to coexist till they got to Mistral.

Jack looked down to his blistered arm and frowned a flicker of black Aura mended it. Then backup to Oz, for all the proud stance of the man he almost seemed like he was afraid of something. “Someday, you’re going to tell me who you really are.”

Oz growled and shook his head. “Don’t hold your breath.”

Jack laughed, “I don’t need to breathe, so I can hold my breath for a very long time. Once we are underway Gibbs will show you around.” he pushed himself off the rail and headed over to the deck.

Oz watched him go then carefully drew his arm out from behind his cloak, the skin was still red and cracked with ice. Frowning he channeled some Aura into it, he grabbed his forearm by the elbow with a hiss as the wound throbbed. He watched amazed as the frostburn resisted his Aura, he had to pour several times the amount of Aura he should have had to heal it. Oz’s respect for the man skyrocketed, if he could make a wound resist Aura, then he was very dangerous indeed. Oz hand his other hand over the new skin, great another scar that was the last thing he needed. At least Jack’s touched hadn’t disrupted the Dust under his skin, he wrapped himself back up in his cloak and braced himself then the ship started to move with a lurch. Now he wondered how much of this ship was magic and how much was real.

Oz shook his head, he missed Qrow and Ruby, he thought they both would have loved this. He sent another letter yesterday, telling them about what happened, he only hoped they got it before he was passed Patch. It would likely be his only chance to see Qrow in a year, Ruby would not be able to come, but he had faith his avian friend would be able to find him.

A shorter man with the biggest white sideburns that Oz had ever seen, disturbed him from his musings. He offered his left hand weathered as it was, Oz took it after a moment and they shared a single handshake. “Welcome to the crew.” The man said with a rasp.

Oz inclined his head. “I’m Obsidian, nice to meet you.”

“Just Gibbs, come on captain wants me to show you around.”

While Oz had seen the outside of the ship, he didn’t appreciate just how big it was till Gibbs had
dragged him from top to bottom. Explaining how the guns worked, engines, all information Ozpin probably won’t need as he was just going to be working as a Huntsman, but useful to know all the same. Gibbs showed him to a cabin that was barely big enough for the man, but then after walking below decks, Oz was getting used to stooping over. After leaving his backpack in the cabin they headed back to the decks and Gibbs left Oz to his own devices.

Ozpin found himself back at the front of the ship again, watching the ocean out before him. It was his job to be on the lookout for Grimm, so it seemed a sensible thing to do. He only noticed the forth time it happened, that he kept looking towards Patch and was scanning the air as much as the ocean.

The black haired man shook his head, Qrow probably won’t even get his letter for weeks. He was being ridiculous, he rubbed his chest with a hand, Gods he missed them. Their nightly gifts kept him going, but he ached to hold them. He felt another Aura’s coming up the stairs behind him and dropped his hand, tucking it back beneath the cloak.

A reasonably tall, strong woman with wavy dark blonde hair and sun kissed skin walked over and leaned on the rail beside Oz. A tall man with black hair and sharp features, came up behind her, wrapped his arms around her middle and pressed a kiss to her neck where the collar of her loose white tunic was pressed down by her sword belt.

Ozpin tried to ignore them, he knew they were the two other Huntsmen from the bar. Will and Lizzy, he quietly wondered why none of the crew he had met yet had colour names. Maybe there was some story there, Jack was clearly a creature of very old magic, maybe that had something to do with it.

“You know,” The woman started in a soft kind voice. “There are no Grimm this close to Vacuo.”

He did, Vacuo had ships always patrolling to keep them away, he just didn’t know what to do with himself. Though taking himself away from the two lovers was sounding more and more like a good idea. He sighed deeply and responded as the woman was clearly waiting for an answer. “I know, but I have not sailed in a very long time, I am taking a moment to enjoy it.” Oz didn’t noticed when he looked away he looked towards Patch.

Lizzy hummed in agreement. “It is, a very welcome change from Vacuo, Jack said you are bound for Mistral?”

Oz nodded, listening to the sea around them and drawing his cloak tighter around him, he didn’t want to risk touching the ship with bare skin.

Elizabeth found him to be a very strange man, Jack had told her and will about what he had done. She stared at him from the corner of her eye, trying to imagine him without the tattoos and frowned. For some reason she had a very difficult time picturing him smiling, he was also resisting her Semblance most men would have answered her by now. “Do you miss Vale?” She asked putting a little bit more of her Semblance behind the question.

“It’s home.” Ozpin said, his kingdom, his city, his school, his people, his Qrow and Ruby, they were his home. Wherever they were his home, he didn’t need a place, if only he could have them.

Again he brushed off her Semblance, though she could feel his emotions leak off of him. He was so controlled, Lizzy was more them a bit impressed, but she could still feel a heart ache so deep radiating from him it almost made her cry. “Then why are you going to Mistral?” The pain that stabbed at her almost caused her to double over, Will tightened his embrace so she didn’t give herself away.
“My significant others will be there come next fall and I can not meet them sooner.” Ozpin said wrapping his arms around his chest.

Both Lizzy and Will were shocked by that, he had to wait a year to see his lovers again? Well that explained the utter misery and pain that leaked from him, neither could imagine going that long without the other. Lizzy spoke up again, trying to soothe Oz with her Semblance. “I’m sorry, I can’t imagine what that is like.”

Ozpin dropped his arms and counted to stare towards Patch, the ache was less acute now. “I am used to the distance, they’ll be alright and I’ll see them again.”

“Where are they now?”

“Patch, it is their home, come spring they will head for Mistral.” Oz bit his lip in a very Qrow like gesture before catching himself and releasing it.

“It’s a shame Jack won’t stop in Vales waters, he has always said they feel strange to him and Naga. Like there was more magic in the air or something, though I’ve never felt anything.” Lizzy said turning her right palm so she could see her black spot.

“Jack’s more in tune with Naga then we are Lizzy, you know we are just extensions of him. We only get what we do from Naga through him.” Will mumbled into her ear.

Oz took that in silently, so the magic came first from the ship not from Jack. He looked down to the black rail, he was most definitely going to be touching this ship a little as possible. Garrett’s and Beraths words rung in his ears, was this ‘Naga’ feeling the Sentient?

“Did Naga bite you?” Lizzy asked noticing where he was looking.

“Bite me?” Oz asked quirking a brow and finally looking over to the pair.

“Naga or the Naglfar, she sometimes doesn’t like new people. Jack had to argue with her for two days to let her allow you on board.” Lizzy explained.

Just how much magic was in this ship? Oz wondered and said. “It, she feels cold to the touch.”

Lizzy smiled when he corrected himself from calling the ship an ‘it’ she didn’t like that. Maybe there was hope for this one yet. “That’s pretty normal for a new member, though you did burn her captain so I would be extra nice to her for a few weeks. I think she’ll warm up to you if you’re careful.”

“Literally or figuratively?” Oz asked with a quirk of his lips.

Lizzy laughed. “Both! I definitely think she’ll like you, you should come and listen to me when I sing to her next time. She likes to share in human experiences, she says it makes her feel more connected to us.”

Okay, Ozpin was officially curious, Lizzy could feel it when the pain dulled and the wonder replaced it. “I’d like that, it sounds very interesting.”

“You really should introduce yourself, and be truthful she doesn’t like it when people lie.” Lizzy reached over and took his hand in hers, Oz let her put it on the cold wooden rail. “Just think at her, she’ll hear. Its best to talk but something tells me you don’t want to be overheard.”

Oz could almost feel the wood grow colder under his hand as he hesitated. Very carefully he
reached out with a whisper of Aura. Hello, I’m Ozpin, I’ve been many people but I am the King of Vale and not the King. I guess I am now a ‘Herald’ of Berath and The Keeper. I am many in one with myself holding all the others in check, I was the headmaster of Beacon. But my home is gone and my Kingdom in ruins, thank you for letting me aboard. I will do my best to keep you safe from Grimm.

The wood warmed under his hand to the point where it was actually pleasant to touch. He felt a whisper of Aura enter him and a female voice sounded in his mind, impossible in its beauty soft gentle, each word weighed. Welcome Ozpin and worry not, I will keep your secrets, I keep many secrets even from my captain. I can feel the others in you, you have lived many most interesting lives. I’ve never met another like you and I hope we can grow to be good friends. Berath already speaks warmly of you. I feel we will work together well, Keeper and chosen of Berath. Her sphere and mine are joined in my ways, it is only natural for us to work together. The voice faded and Ozpin removed his hand from the rail when it cooled marginally, he guessed that was her way of saying that they weren’t friends yet.

“That looked like it went well.” Lizzy said, she could feel that the tall man was finally soothed. Naga had that effect on people, most of the time.

“She said that she hoped we could grow to be good friends.” Oz said looking back out to the ocean, closer with every moment he’d be closer to them. He smiled so very slightly, he’d try to look at it like that, he might even get to see Qrow before Mistral if he was very lucky.

Lizzy smiled and leaned into Will. “That’s a start.”

Oz looked over to them. “I’ve a question.”

“Shoot.” Lizzy said.

“Your names are Lizzy and Will?”

“Elizabeth and William.” She corrected with a smile on her face, she knew this question very well.

Oz rubbed the back of his head. “Why aren’t you named after colours?”

The pair laughed softly and will muttered “Every-time.” Lizzy smile at her lover and said. “We’re older then we look, so is Jack. Many of the people upon this ship bare very old souls, you’re not even the only one here with an Awakened Soul.”

“Ah.” Ozpin said looked back out to the ocean, that told him a rather lot all at once. He might not like the profession of these people, but maybe they really did have more in common than he originally thought. Then there was that term again ‘Awakened Soul’, it was starting to become very clear that he didn’t know as much about souls as he thought he did.

Lizzy and Will shared a look, no one had ever accepted that so easily before. They’d seen this Obsidian and Jack duke it out with just their Aura, so they knew he was strong but neither of them recognized the green of his Aura. So just who was he? He must have told Naga the truth or she wouldn’t have said she’d like to be his friend. They both decided to ask the live ship later, there was clearly more to this huntsman then a refugee from Vale down on his luck.
The stars shined softly overhead as Oz lay on the deck of the ship, it was late enough that the crew had retired, though he was pretty sure Gibbs was at the helm. Oz was outside because his cabin was small, stuffy and he couldn’t sleep. More-even he was enjoying this strange stillness, he couldn’t remember the last time where all he had to do was be still.

Months of running, miserable weeks in Vacuo, now he had nothing to do and it was so very odd. He looked up to the stars, they were steadily getting more and more familiar, meaning they were getting closer and closer to Vale. He closed his eyes and sighed deeply, he had the hood of his cloak up so his head didn’t touch the ship and his hands across his chest. To be frank it was much nicer out here then below decks, he had half a mind just to sleep out here. The other more sensible and paranoid part said there was no way he was letting his guard down around these pirates.

Red Aura flicked to life around him and he let out a soft moan, Ruby and Qrow they had been intimate, Oz’s closed his eyes and he could taste Ruby on his lips. Feel her skin under his hands… Oz’s eyes snapped open as he remember where he was. Mindful not to touch the ship with bare skin he closed his eyes, as red danced and flickered over his skin. He bit his lip, he could feel them against him. Ruby tasted divine, her skin was flawless, her body was arched under him lit by light of hearthfire. Her breasts were growing nicely, his tongue ran over a perky peak.

Ozpin let out a moan, her breast was in his mouth her skin was so smooth under his tongue. He could feel the little bumps of her areola, the perky nipple he drew it into his mouth and sucked gently. Another moan slipped from Oz’s lips as he felt both of his lovers enjoyment. He drew more of her breast into his mouth and purred when her hands were in his hair. Lost in the memories he felt himself move to her other breast, kissing and licking then taking it into his mouth. She let out a shuddering moan under him, he could feel her tremble, her hands were in his hair, petting touching, he let out a soft moan, it felt so good. He looked up and he could see her, her expression was so kind and soft. She wanted him, he could tell, in the back of Ozpin’s mind he knew this was for Qrow but in that moment with their Aura’s caressing him, their memories offered so perfectly to him.

He kissed down her belly, he could feel the muscles flutter under his lips, his mouth watered as he moved down to her sex. He could even smell her, Oz wanted nothing more than to dive down and taste her, but Qrow looked up to her. The look from Ruby, her fingers on his jaw, the raise of her hips . . . Oh Gods, Oz thought and bit his lip harder to not show any reaction to the offered memories playing out for him. Her taste, she was sweet and tangy, her fluids that perfect point between watery and thicker to caught on the tongue.

Oz’s tongue mimicking Qrow’s actions as the memory played out for him. He grabbed her thighs, oohh the feel of her flesh under his hands, she was screaming, he grabbed a handful of his cloak and kneaded, he needed to direct this somewhere. Her voice was music, it made him throb, he closed his mouth of her clit and sucked, she was arching under him.

The sight, not his memory but he was never going to forget this. He could feel her orgasm sweep through him but the memory did not end, Qrow moved over her and laid down beside her. She was so lovely, young, Oz could still see that in her but so lovely. They were talking in the memory but he couldn’t hear the words they weren’t focused on. Oz MOANED, Ruby’s hand was on him.

Ozpin fought the urge to touch himself, Qrow was rocking his hips to her feathering touch. Qrow came and Oz arched his back, Oz just barely manage to control himself to ensure he’d come dry. He let out a soft moan as the memory and Aura faded, leaving him sated and happy. Ozpin picked himself up and moved to lean on the rail with a hip. It really was a beautiful night and now he had another beautiful memory to remember whenever he wished.

He smiled thinking on what Ruby had done, finally got Qrow to let some of his guard down to be
with her. Little Vixen, he thought fondly, he was happy for them and not just because of the post orgasmic bliss. He had been worried about Qrow, he still was but less so now that Ruby had found a way under his walls. Oz hoped they got his second letter soon, maybe he’d get to see Qrow soon.

He heard the door to the lower desks open and closed, listened as soft steps patter along the deck to stand beside him. The woman that stood beside him, she was on the smaller side but with large full breasts and hips, skin dark like milk chocolate, long curly black hair that reached her waist. She wore a thin black silk shirt as well as skirt of the same make, her eyes were large and almond shaped, nose small and round, lips on the wider and fuller side of what he preferred. She was rather lovely, he couldn’t help but notice that her shirt hung off her breasts, but she was no Ruby and thus didn’t interest him. “I haven’t seen you before.” Oz turned to look at her, shifting so he was turned to her.

The woman smiled. “I’m Naga.”

Oz raised a brow. “It was my understanding that Naga was the ship.”

“I’m that too,” She tilted her head back and smiled at him. “it’s a rather long story.”

“You sound like you want to tell me it.” Oz was trying to figure it out, Naga the Naglfar was the ship, not a woman and yet, there was a woman standing beside him to claimed to be the ship.

The woman laughed a inhuman musical sound. “Maybe I want to steal you.” She tilted her head and smiled. “You are a most interesting person.”

“I think you’d find that rather difficult, you’re not my type.” Ozpin shifted his weight back casually putting a little more distance between them.

“You’re type seems to be those with pale skin and dark hair.” Naga said with a knowing smile.

Oz growled. “Stay out of my head. One Goddess was more than enough.”

“Berath is no fun, her and her kind are limited to the Beyond.” Naga giggled and reached out tracing a long finger down his torso, lingering on his belt. “Where would the fun in that be, don’t forget just who’s mercy you are at Ozpin. Or should I call you King?”

Oz chuckled his fists fighting the urge to rip her cold hands off him, he remembered when he and Jack had duked it out. This was the source of the Aura that had supported Jack, he didn’t like his odds against it on his own. “Ozpin is fine.”

Naga smiled, “I like new people, new experiences, something tells me you’d be a very enjoyable new experience.” she traced her finger of his belt buckle.

“You’re a ship.” Don’t be aggressive, don’t touch her, just endure. Ozpin repeated the matera in his head.

“I was a woman first, I was the Queen of the high seas long before you became a King.” She drew fingers back up his chest, pressing just hard enough to feel the tight muscles hiding beneath.

Oz grit his teeth and growled. “So what are you now?”

“Ohh, I like a man who can growl properly.” She tapped at the topmost button at the middle of his pectorals. “But to answer your question, I am the ferrier of those who died at sea, I am still the Goddess of the ocean, my sphere now also extends over the dead. Well in a sense, as I mentioned before Berath and I work together. I am but another face to the In-Between that she lords over.” She licked her lips. “You ooze such wonderful life, I’ve never seen your equal.”
“Nalfgar, hmm.” Oz racked his brain for a fairy tale she fit into. “You’re the Goddess who was cursed. You rose after the younger brother created Grimm, and declared yourself Queen of the oceans. Told them to keep their feud out of the oceans.”

“The younger brother did not like that, but alone he could not best me, so he cursed me instead. To forever roam Remnant bound in spirit as a wraith, I decided to guide the dead after those other two made humanity. Then Cernun and Hurn decided to have their little game and made the faunus, well the ocean welcomes all. Any who die on my ocean are mine to keep and guide, this ship ferries the dead. Through a face of the In-Between to the Beyond, where the other Gods either consume the souls or Berath lets them pass through her Wheel to be reincarnated. I unlike those Gods, can travel between life and death, that is Jack’s true job but he gets lonely and still needs to eat. So I give him true freedom and when needed and in return he and the crew ferry the dead. I am still spirit still wraith, but Jack and this ship let me take on a semblance of life.” She hooked her finger under his shirt and pulled down, unbuttoning it, cocking her head to the side to analyse the skin underneath.

Ozpin stood perfectly still, he was NOT going to piss off a Goddess, no matter if her touch made his skin crawl. He guessed when you were an all powerful entity of the oceans, you could get away with making people uncomfortable. She touched him again, pressing her fingertips to the middle of his stomach.

“For someone who burns with life, you like to dance close with death.” She liked him and she had a year to find a way to have him, it was a welcome change to have a man resist her charms.

“It has been a rough few months.” Ozpin said taking shallow breaths, her fingers rising and falling on his chest.

“I know, what a mess Vale has become without you. Would you like to help them? Many of your people ride my oceans.” Naga traced over his muscles, admiring them.

Yes. Was the first thing that jumped into his mind, the second was that, that could have very easily been phrased as a deal, a bargain. He had to remember just who he was talking to. “My people can take care of themselves, they don’t need your help. Plus I already bare Berath’s chime, my soul is already being pulled in several directions.”

Nalfgar drew her hand away and laughed a dark thing, her features turned sharp and she lost the beauty, now she appeared like an undead creature barely holding itself together. The silk had turned to seaweed, her skin hung off her bones and her hair disappeared. Her eyes turned a dark silvered green and she smiled and touched him in the middle of his chest above his heart. “Oh a smart one you are. Yes my dear Ozpin, I will have you before we get to Mistral and not even Berath will be able to rip you from me.” Her smiled was twisted. She drove her hand through his chest and grabbed his heart. “Berath and I work together but we are not friends. Do not think invoking her name will save you.”

Oz fell to his knees with a gasp, cold radiated from her hand and he looked down to see how she had phased through his flesh rather than piercing it. Her hand tightened and pain flared through him, his copper gaze snapped up to her perversion of silver. The Nalfgar smiled, she always enjoyed a man on his knees, this one was so strong, stronger than her current captain. She’d have his soul if it took her a thousand years, she removed her hand and he slumped pressing a hand to his chest.

“Go rest my little King, tomorrow we move from Vacuo’s waters and your work will begin in earnest.”

Ozpin staggered to his feet and fled, dignity counted for not in the presence of a Goddess, he remembered to touch the ship as little as possible as he raced to his cabin. Shutting the door with his
boot and curling up on the bed, a hand still pressed to his chest. He called up his Aura and the remnants of the gift from Ruby and Qrow and wrapped it tightly around him like a blanket. He didn’t want to think about what Naga had tried to do, tried to ensnare him in a deal. He shivered and drew the Auras tighter around him, calm and love seeping from the red flames calming him till he fell asleep.

Chapter End Notes

*Ardy suffles a deck of cards and starts to lay them out*: Come play with me.
Rymrgand: This is pointless my end comes to all.
Berath: *sits at the table*
Ardy: Oh I'm not auguring that my auroch companion. *draws two tarot cards showing Qrow and the Relic of Destruction* However I have plans for this world.
Kry: Ohh this is gonna be fun. Thank you too:darkvampirekisses, lillithschild, Sportsfangirl815, QueenofSpades19, Celestialfae for your comments.
Berath: This world has no Engwithians, where did we come from this time?
Ardy: *lays out a few more cards* Won't that be fun to explore?
Yang was walking by Qrow’s room when she heard a long groan, she smiled and knocked on the door, that was very familiar groan.

“Come in!” Ruby called from inside and the sight that greeted Yang made her giggle.

Qrow as laying in the middle of the bed on his front with Ruby straddling his hips, wearing one of his shirts. Yang could see the shine of oil on his back as she walked and sat on the edge of the bed. “I thought I heard puddy cat.”

Qrow raised his head up and said. “I’m not a-.”

Ruby leaned forward, massaging in one long stroke the muscles on either side of his spine. “Ooo.” Qrow flopped back down, purring long and deeply.

Ruby smiled and cooed. “Yes, yes you did hear a puddy cat.”

Yang giggled, watching Ruby massage Qrow with strong rolling flexes of her hands. Qrow mumbled into the pillow. “HmmffHmmmmapuddhcat.”

The silver eyed teen giggled and moved up his back to his shoulders, the oil making her hands slick, leaning forward she asked. “How about a lion then?”

Qrow raised his head turning to the side so he could speak. “Rraw.” His eyes fluttered when Ruby pressed down a little harder and with circles over each shoulder blade.

“No, he’s not near blonde enough to be a lion, though he is lazy enough.” Yang said smiled when her uncle glared at her. “How about a panther?”

“Panther could work.” Ruby said working in larger and larger circles, she paused and reached over to the special oil candle and dribbled more down between his shoulder blades in a long line.

Qrow upped the volume of his purr when he felt the heat from the candle. Yang rose a brow while Ruby worked the hot liquid into his skin. Ruby really liked the candle and was really looking forward to her turn, as she worked. “Maybe panther is the right one, solitary apex predator, does sound like our Qrow.”

Oh, I’ll show you apex predator. Qrow thought hearing Ruby’s little smirk, for someone with such small hands, she had gotten really good at this.

“Apex predator? I’ve never seen any apex predator. Maybe lazy tom cat, getting his pets in before he raids the pantry.” Yang was having fun, panther really did suit him but this was too funny to not play with more.

Qrow rose and growled again, moving towards Yang. Ruby sat down on his back, more to remind him he wasn’t wearing anything then to stop him. Ruby shifted her hands to work on the intercostal muscles of his ribs and he flopped back down with a long purr. “Don’t be mean Yang, it’s getting too cold to do much hunting. Even strong manly panthers need a break.” Qrow again purred under her praise and touch.
The blonde giggled, “I suppose so.” she glanced up at the candle. “So what’s with the wax candle?”

“Its strawberry flavoured edible massage oil, someone here likes their massages with hot oils.” Ruby said, working back round to his back.

“Why haven’t you used that one before?” Yang asked, Ruby just usually used a cream.

“Edible, sis. I think Dad might have gotten the wrong idea.” She leaned forward and kissed the middle of Qrows back for emphasis, the oil making her lips shine when she withdrew. “And not wanting to waste it.”

“Ohhh.” Yang said smirking, “Yeah I can see Dad taking that the wrong way.”

Qrow purred thinking, *Just you wait till it’s my turn Ruby, I’ll show you how to really use this stuff.*

Ruby smiled, softly moving herself back up Qrows back, setting just at the point when his back started to curve upwards. She massaged the oil up between his shoulders, long smooth movements, the slight stretch and pull of the muscles. Her chest swayed back and forth slightly working, almost like she was dancing.

Yang could see Qrow relax after and rather into the bed and heard the little sigh that meant he was falling asleep. “I’ll leave you two to it.” Yang got off the bed and softly stepped out, closing the door behind her softly.

Ruby slid her hands up to his neck, flexing and contracting her fingers in little rotating circles while pushing the muscles forward and back. She brushed some of his hair out of the way and slide her fingers, up behind his ears and started to rotate behind them in little circles.

Qrow moaned softly, she had a lovely touch, those small fingers seeking out every little knot of tension. Ruby worked her hands down his neck to his arms working the oil off her fingers before trailing them with her fingertips ghosting over his skin. She slid them into his hair, from his neck upward, she started in tiny circles working her way up his head pressing with just the pads of her finger tips.

He purred again, the tension teasing away as she worked upwards when she got to his hairline she paused and asked, his back now dried. “Do you want to roll over?”

That would involving moving! Qrow did not like that idea one bit, only the knowledge of the lovely things she could to do his front, cause him to twitch enough that she stood up to give him room to move. That said the sight that greeted him made it all the more worth it, as he could see right up her parted legs, he smirked and licked his lips.

“What?” Ruby asked, she didn’t know where that wolfish smirk came from. He looked up to her eyes then back down between her legs and lifted a brow, he curled his tongue up behind his teeth and then flicked it out.

Ruby clued in, “Meep!” and dropped back down onto his chest covering her core with her hands.

Qrow laughed and caught her by her rear. “No need to be shy, I’ve had my tongue there remember.” He watched her blush as she moved her hands back to his chest, he kneaded her behind for a moment before sliding his fingers around to her front. He played with the tails of the shirt before starting on the buttons, one by slowly one, revealing pale white skin one button at a time.
Ruby bit her lips and let her shoulders fall back, causing the shirt to part a little more, when he got the last button. He traced the tips of his fingers down her body, teasing off her body when he got to her venus mound. His touch was soothing, Ruby closed her eyes, turning her head to the side for a beautiful profile of her face and let out a little moan, while pulling the shirt slowly off by the collar. Then looking down to him, she let gravity take it from and flicked it with a finger to the floor.

Qrow gazed lovely at her, seeing her smile at him, he loved it when she did this. They weren’t doing anything just looking. It eased the fear in his mind. His trailed from her eyes, to her slender neck, over her small chest, to the breasts that were filling out nicely upon it. Down her tight toned abdominal muscles to her hips also rounding out nicely, she’d always be of a petite body frame, not at all like her sister in that way. However he’d put money on her rounding out to compliment her petite size. She was so utterly lovely, he wondered what he had done to earn her love.

Ruby shifted herself down his chest to hover of his stomach, then reached over to the candle and dribbled a long line of oil over his pectorals. Qrow closed his eyes tilting his head back and breathing deeply through his nose as the hot oil fell upon his skin, the flame of the candle licking him. She set the candle aside and started in the middle of his chest, massaging along the muscles of his pectorals. Her hands following them outwards, in long smooth strokes, she’d reach his shoulders then bring her hands back and do it again, over and over.

Qrow watched her through lidded eyes, his breathing slow and steady. He watched her shoulders, rotate slightly each time she came back to center. When she pushed outward, she’d lean forward a little bit and her breasts would dip down, then rise again when she moved back. He found it to be a very pleasant sight, he had half a mind to reach up and cup them so he could feel their rise and fall, but then his arms would get in the way of her work. He found watching her expression entertaining as well, sometimes she was so relaxed it might as well have been her getting the massage. Other times the tip of her tongue would stick out to the side as she worked on a knot, smoothing it down.

Ruby worked her way up to his shoulders, starting his deltoids and working her way inward. She slide her hands up his neck gently working along the tendons, to behind his ear then up to his temples and forehead.

Qrow let out a long breath, closing his eyes completely, as her tiny fingers worked along his brow, she used only two fingers. Her circles tiny as she explored his face, her touch felt wonderful, near invisible lines fading away entirely.

The silver eyed teen felt him ease into almost sleep like state under her and she smiled. Working down between his brow with just a finger she worked down over his nose, then down under his eyes along his cheeks. He was so handsome like this, the worry lines gone and so utterly peaceful. She eased herself back and trailed a fingertip down from a sharp cheek, to his thin lips. She paused over the little bow, then followed it down to pause over his lips.

Qrow kissed her finger softly, and heard her giggle before feeling her shift down and kiss him properly. He purred deeply his hands sweeping gently up her thigh to chest over her rear spanning it easy.

One kiss became two, two turned into three, long slow movements between them, almost chaste but changing with each kiss. Their lips slowly parting, melding with each other, breaths shared. Ruby’s hands found themselves resting over his collar, as she tilted her head very slightly, darting just the tip of her tongue to touch his bottom lip.

The red eyed man breathed deeply at that and slide a hand up to weave into her hair. He deepened the kiss, as their lips parted again, he slid his tongue over hers, coaxing her into copying him. She let out a soft moan and mimicked him, slow little movements, letting her taste and explore him without
trying for to deep.

Qrow rolled them over, the bedding crinkling, while Ruby let out another soft moan. He drew softly way, their lips linger together for a moment as he opened his eyes. She was so lovely, her cheeks were flushed, hair falling across her temple, lips wet and parted. She opened her eyes as he tucked her hair behind her ear, she blinked slowly twice letting him see the ring of silver that he adored so much.

He pulled back, shifting his legs so he could sit back on his heels, hers hooking loosely over his thighs. Reaching over he carefully took the candle and brought it over her right breast just high enough that the candle heat only touched her and dribble oil over her right nipple over to her left, then down to the of her diaphragm then up to her right nipple again.

Ruby letting out a shuddered breath as the oil fell upon her skin, it was hot and it made her eyes widen, the flame just licking at her skin was thrilling. By the time he got to left nipple she decided she really liked this feeling, intense but gentle. She let out a long soft moan as the oil fell upon her skin, she watched each drop fall anticipation growing in her belly.

Qrow watched her eyes dilate even more and was sure if he ran a finger through her folds it would come back wet. He set the candle aside and cupped her breasts, the sound of his hands cradling them a soft *pat*. He started to knead them in large circle motions, thumbs going back and forth over her nipples. The man could see them swell and perk as Ruby started to moan more and more, they remained soft sounds, but it was a sweet gentle sound that Qrow enjoyed.

Her eyes fluttered as she tilted her head back with a soft, “Ohhh.” slipping from her lush parted lips. His hands were smoothed by the oil, the sound his touch made was different as he worked the oil into her skin. Done was the dry rasp in favour of the soft *pat* when he drew his hands back, then forward again to palm her orbs.

The raven haired man watched transfixed as she would move her head from one side to the other, started to feel her hips press up in time with his massages. He was growing hard from the sight of her alone, he ignored it in favour of watching her. He was sure she wasn’t aware that she was doing it, he ran his fingers down the sides of her breasts, treating the whole orb to his soft touch. Before drawing them over over her nipples, pausing their to press down slightly but enough so he could feel the interior of her breasts, then massaged his fingertips in little circles.

Ruby let out a little broke shuddering breath, throwing her head back and pressing her chest up into his hands. She grabbed the sheets her fingers pulling and releasing them, her hips lifted again as her toes curled. Her skin flushed from her neck to her ribs, as liquid seeped from her core.

Qrow smirked *So very responsive*, he licked his lips and paused for a moment to dribble more oil over her hard nipples, just them this time. Then he cupped them again pitching and rolling her nipples between his thumb and forefinger. His brow shot up when she keened under him with a soft scream, her whole body arching as orgasm swept through her. *Well, I’ll be damned, I barely did anything. Oz didn’t mention anything about that.* He released her nipples, cupping her breast with his whole hand and kneaded the orbs swiftly with his fingers while pitching the nipple to the side of his forefinger.

Ruby thrashed and sang out loudly, her hips bucking up higher brushing against his member now standing to attention. Only when Ruby’s breath start to falter did he relent, slowly down and just passing his thumb back and forth over her sensitive nipples. She came back round slowly, Qrow just watched her, running his fingers over her breasts in little strokes. Eventually she looked up and saw him smirking. “What’s so funny?”
Qrow shook his head and smiled a little wider. “Just you, you are so very lovely.” He pressed the flats of his fingers to her breasts and stroked from one side to the other. Licking his lips when she trembled and moaned loudly, he leaned over and blew out the candle.

“Huh?” Ruby asked, biting her lips as he kept caressing her breasts.

“I think we’re done with that for now, I just learned something very interesting.” He pinched her nipples.

Ruby jerked and gasped, then looked him over finally noticing him standing at attention between her legs. She bit her lip, already working on what she wanted to try, she yanked her gaze back up to his when he released her nipples and trailed his fingers down her chest. “What?”

“That you can orgasm from breast play alone.” Qrow said, shifting how he was sitting crossing his legs. “Come here.”

The silver eyed adult sat up and climbed into his lap, he pushed her back so his member was between them with space and so she could have some leverage with her legs. Her shins under his knees and her thighs supported by his. She sat up so she could rest her forehead against his, Qrow wove a hand into her hair supporting her head and neck. “That’s unique?” She asked trailing a hand down his torso, he mirrored her with the opposite hand going up her thigh.

“A bit yes.” Qrow teased a finger over her clitoris, he slid his hand down her back to hold her hips when she jumped slightly. “Stay still.” He drew her up so her chest was level with his face and started to pressed soft kisses to it.

Ruby couldn’t do that, not when he started to play gently with the engorged pearl of her sex. The kisses were soft the oil making her skin smooth, slowly collecting on his lips. She moaned out loudly and closed her eyes, leaning into his embrace, pressing her breasts up presenting them to him. Back and forth he went over her sex, one movement was a sweep of his fingers, the next a figure eight, teasing her drawing it out. She felt him purr and dip his head to draw his tongue over a nipple, before drawing it into his mouth sucking softly. She moaned out and forced her eyes open to see him eyes closed purring as he sucked softly. She shifted up pushing herself up closer to him, running her fingers through his hair stroking his head.

Qrow moved his hand tracing his damp fingers over hip, then around back up between her legs. Teasing a finger over her labia and pearl, he purred when she moaned louder rocking into his hand, her hands tightening in his hair. He traced his tongue over her nipple, long slow licks, listening to her moan softly, feeling her rock on his hips. He imagined doing this while inside of her, he moaned softly and switched breasts, licking up the oil before drawing it into his mouth and sucking gently.

Ruby keened above him. “Please.” Gods he was being so gentle yet he was playing her with perfection. His finger teased her, ghosting over her pearl through folds, over and over, the tension building up in her.

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The red eyed man rumbled softly adding two more fingers, starting to stroke through her folds pressing more firmly, drawing slow figure eights over her core. When she moan shuddering in his arms, he started to suck harder on her breast, just to listen to the keen. Her hands tightened in his hair, released, kneeling as she moaned and he loved it. He brought his free hand up to the small of her back, holding her gently she was just so small, delicate, he knew he had to be so careful. Even as she pressed herself yet tighter to him, moaned a soft song of praise, he traced a finger gently over her vulva and she came in his arms, crying out and he renewed his attentions to her chest, sliding his hand up between their bodies to massage her breast.
Ruby shuddered and moaned louder as he drew it out, her breasts tingled her core leaked little dribbles of fluid slipping from her to land on his member. She listened to him groan at that, felt his hand at her back press her to him, it all held her enraptured, her breathe started to heave and she sang out a long moaning cry. “Qrow!”

He stopped, easing off her breast in slow kisses, sliding his hand around her tiny chest to hold her by her back. Qrow nuzzled her neck as she slowly came back round, holding her gently to him.

The silver eyed woman rested her cheek on Qrows temple feeling his breath against her neck. She eased her grip on his hair and stroked down his neck to rest her hand just over and between his shoulder blades. *This is nice, I wonder if he did this with Oz.* Holding him was nice, he had never held her quite like this before, it was nice to feel his skin. Before the hearth he had kept his distance in a way, they hadn’t been pressed up together like this and sure they slept nude together now, but that was again different. Ruby felt him purr and kiss her neck, Qrow had always been tactile with her, though that had also been very different.

“What about you?” Ruby asked, fulling knowing he was standing to attention. She felt a bit bad for not reciprocating, the gentle pressure of his hands on her back kept her from moving away.

“I’m fine.” Qrow rumbled against her neck, nuzzling it and pressing a kiss to it. Ruby didn’t like the idea of neglecting him. “But.” She began and he spoke up again. “I can handle it myself, please just stay.”

“Okay.” Ruby said pressing a kiss to his head, wondering why he was so against having sex with her. “But do so here with me now.” She felt him draw a deep breath, his right hand slide from her back and he moved her so there was a little space between them before taking himself in hand. His other hand kept her from moving so she started to stroke his head, smile a little when he purred and kissed her neck. She could feel that he was working himself quickly, started to kiss her neck more often, she even felt teeth graze it once. She found it interesting how quiet he got, even as he worked himself quickly he was kissing her neck, taking deep breaths of her scent. The silver eyed maiden wondered why he didn’t let her touch him, she drew circles on his head and he bit down gently on her neck. She blushed when she felt him jerk under her, warm fluid hitting her thigh. Ruby held onto him as he relaxed, picking her up and moving them she was back on her back.

“Will you tell me why you’ve been so distant please?” She wondered if Ozpin knew what was wrong. She missed the silver haired man, however she had a feeling Qrow missed him more. She knew he thought she didn’t see him slip away and hide in his room, the rose in his hands. He always looked so heartbreakingly sad, she knew he loved Oz as much as he did her and that she wasn’t Oz so she couldn’t fill the same role, the same spot in his heart. The fact of the matter was that they weren’t complete without Oz, some part of her knew Qrow would always drift without Oz to anchor him.

She had a feeling that if she got to talk to Ozpin about it, he would tell her what was going on within Qrow’s head. So much of her understanding of Qrow came from touching, you could communicate so much with a touch. More than with words; how, where, when, why, a brush, a hold, a kiss, you could learn so much from a simple touch.

Qrow looked down to her rather then answering her question. Silver and red held for a long moment, Ruby got this strangest feeling of some unspoken challenge in Qrow’s gaze. She couldn’t pin down the emotion behind his eyes, the look ended when Ruby averted her eyes and bit her lip. She heard Qrow sigh and shift, curling up around her and resting his head on her breast. He grabbed the duvet and pulled it around them, closed his eyes to listen to the *thump, thump* of her heart.

Ruby rested a hand on his shoulder the other coming up to rest on the arm around her middle. She
took a deep breath and relaxed, slowing down her heart rate and letting herself doze. She felt that Qrow had tested her and something in the back of her mind told her that she had failed. She couldn’t replace Oz, fill that void, couldn’t be for Qrow what Oz was to him, but she was okay with that. The winter solstice was coming soon, then they were over the middle and moving towards spring, each day past, was one closer to Oz.

They stayed like that a long time, Qrow drifting off to sleep on her chest. Distantly she heard her Dad come home from town and him call her name. She petted Qrow’s head and he made a sleepy purr. “I’ll be right back, Dad’s home.”

Qrow moved off of her with a mumbling groan letting her go before falling back asleep. Tip toeing around, Ruby got dressed and silently left the room. Yang and Tai were in the kitchen, the former had gotten started on dinner.

“Where’s Qrow?” Tai asked, the other man was practically his daughter’s’ shadow.

“Sleeping. He was really tense earlier so I gave him a massage, I got him completely puddlifed.” Ruby’s smile faulted when her Dad did not smile.

Taiyang pulled an opened letter from his breast pocket and offered it to Ruby, her heart sank as she walked over and took the letter. Careful she unfolded it and read as her dad said. “It was just addressed to the Xiao Long’s, so I read it, it clearly wasn't for me.” His tone wasn’t angry but it was close.

The words on the page leapt at her, hope and fear twisting in equal measure in her chest.

Dear Beloveds

I have found passaged to Mistral, though in less than favourable circumstances. I have found work, or rather I have been blackmailed into working for the pirate Captain Sparrow. To this day, I still haven’t figured out how he tailed me when I broke into Shade. My current theory is that it involves his Semblance. Stop laughing Qrow, I’ll be the first to admit my infiltrating skills need some work. We can’t all just fly along the ceilings of compounds and perch wherever as guards never bother to look up.

Captain Jack Sparrow, as he likes to be called has agreed to take me to Mistral in exchange for my abilities against Grimm. As he is a pirate, I suspect he’ll try to get me to do some thieving along the way. Needless to say I am going to cure him of that hope as quickly as possible. More importantly, we will be going right past Patch, I can not give you a date, but hopefully with the amount of Lein I put forth to get this letter to you. It will come in time that you may find me.

I know you can not come with me, as much as I wish it, I do not wish to expose Ruby to these pirates and Jack has no plans to stop in Vales waters. He says he hates snow and intends to be away from the cold of winter as quickly as possible. I think he has cargo we should not and is eager to off load it in Mistral.

I don’t imagine I will be able to write again till we stop over in Mantle. I miss you both so very much, this accursed distance makes my heart ache.
“The list of people who write like that is small, people who know Qrow so well is even smaller. I know of only one that would address Qrow as a Beloved, Ruby do you have something you need to tell me?” Tai tried to soften his voice, he wasn’t mad per say, he was hurt that Ruby hadn’t told him.

Ruby bit her lip, tears pricking at her eyes, this was too much too soon. She folded the letter up and held it to her chest with a hand, balling her fist and pressing the side of her forefinger to her lips. This wasn’t far, what was she going to do? Part of her wanted to race upstairs to Qrow, but she had only just managed to get him to sleep and now her Dad knew about Oz… Her breath hitched in her chest and the tears started to fall, she hiccupped and sobbed. “I’m sorryyy.”

“Oh sweety.” Tai kelt and drew her into his embrace. “Shh, it’s okay.”

Ruby buried her face to his neck. “I, *hic* know I should have told you.” She cried harder she didn’t want him to be mad at her, but she had kept this from him. “I just didn’t know how to say anything.” She grabbed at his shirt balling her fist with it.

Tai rubbed up and down her back. “Shh, will you tell me what happened? Why Oz has started to address you so… fondly?”

He wasn’t yelling and he didn’t sound mad, Ruby tried to calm herself. “He was just training me, stuff to help with nightmares and then fighting. We ended up growing close, eventually it just happened and Qrow was okay with it too.” She nuzzled his neck and spoke again voice thick. So what if that wasn’t the complete truth but she didn’t want to explain just how messy and complicated it had been.

“I understand.” Tai said picking her up and holding her tightly. “We can’t control who we fall in love with. Does anyone else know?”

Ruby shook her head still clinging to her father. “My team. No one but the people in this house and James know that Oz is alive.”

Yang dropped the spoon she had been holding, thankfully it was clean, Ozpin was alive. Ruby hadn’t said a word, but then Qrow and Ruby had stopped mourning rather quickly.

Tai put Ruby down and wiped away her tears, “Go get Qrow, I need time to process this.”

Ruby fled and Tia sighed taking off his gear and then going to the pantry and returning with his jar of raspberry vodka. Yang wordless got two shot glasses, Tai raised a brow in question.

“Qrow’s gonna need a drink too.” Yang said setting the spaghetti dinner to simmer and sitting on her chair beside Tai.

Tai nodded in agreement, poured a shot and downed it following up with another. He ran a hand through his hair. “Well Ruby sure has a type.”

“Tall, mysterious and powerful? Or, kind, caring and protective? Sure they are both on the older side Dad, but they will keep her safe.” Yang pushed Tai in the right direction, she was kind of glad it came out like this. They were adults and they could talk about this like adults should.

Tai helped himself to another shot, Ozpin and Qrow were very alike, rather distressingly so sometimes. When he thought about it, it didn’t really surprise him that Ruby decided she liked him.
He tried not think about the other man’s hands on his daughter, it made the rage start to boil in his blood. He put the lid back on the vodka, he needed a clear head for this. Ozpin was a good man, there was no doubt of that, he’d taken care of Qrow and he could protect Ruby. Yang was right about that, Tai knew what Ruby would be a target now, had known it the moment she came home in Qrow’s arms. The signs of a power he’d seen Summer wield over her younger face. There really was no one better to protect Ruby then Oz. He stood up, this was all logical, but he was still mad, mad that Ruby had kept this from him, pissed that Qrow had done the same. Maybe it wouldn’t have been so bad if he had gotten a visit or a call from Oz, at least asking him in some way shape or form if he could court Ruby. Yes it was old fashioned, but a little formality would have gone a long way in this situation.

Qrow and Ruby crept up behind Tai, but they weren’t quiet enough as the blonde spun on his heel and clocked Qrow in the jaw. The smaller man spun flowing with the force of the blow before righting himself and rubbing his jaw.

“Dad!” Ruby shouted moving to step between the two.

“YOU SHOULD HAVE TOLD ME!” Tai roared. “YOU OR OZPIN! YOU SHOULD HAVE AT LEAST ASKED!”

Qrow shrank under Tai’s bellowed words, he was right and Qrow wasn’t going to defend himself. “We didn’t plan it Tai, it just happened.” He walked up and put a hand on the small of Ruby’s back, calming her with strokes of his thumb. “We just.” He paused and took a deep breath. “Fell in love... together.”

The red eyed man’s somber honest tone defused Tai, he knew what it was like to just ‘fall’. He looked over to Ruby, she had snuggled herself into Qrow’s chest, she knew he wouldn’t lash out again with her between them. Tai wanted to stay angry with them, but how could he? He, Raven and Summer had all just ‘fallen’ together, he couldn’t criticize these two for doing the same thing. Yes Ruby was young, but by the time this must have started she would have been of age, he really had no say over who she loved. It wasn’t up to him, it wasn’t his choice, he knew he’d either have to get with the program or risk alienating them both again.

Tai sighed and the anger dropped from him, you really couldn’t pick who you fell in love with. He turned away opened the jar, poured a shot for himself and Qrow. “Come sit, and start from the beginning.”

Chapter End Notes

Ardy: Thank you too: darkvampirekisses and Sportsfangirl815 for your comments.
Ozpin leaned on the railing of the ship, they were making their way steadily north, it had been the better part of week since his encounter with Naga. The gifts from Ruby and Qrow had gotten steadily more erotic, though Oz had noticed how Qrow favoured Ruby in every encounter. Oz was beginning worry about him, what was his red eyed love so afraid of?

“Brooding again? At the rate you do it, I’m surprised you don’t have a permanent line between your brow.” The money faunus leaned on the rail beside him.

“Jack.” Oz greeted sharply.

Jack sighed, thinking that Obsidian should have been named Frost or something. “Look, I get it. Naga can be a bit... much at times. And she has no respect for personal space, but she is a goddess, kinda comes with the territory. I can’t stop her from bothering you, but I did have a few rather... well loud words with her. Had I known she’d act like this I wouldn’t have brought you on board.” He rubbed the back of his head and turned to rest his hip on the rail and really looked at the huge man beside him. “I’m sorry, I didn’t know.”

Oz looked over to the smaller man, he sounded genuinely sincere which coming from the pirate was rather odd. “We are coming up on Vale.” Oz found himself looking towards Patch again.

“Your lovers live on Patch right?” Jack asked, turning to look out the same way.

“Yes.” Oz said pursing his lips, trying to keep any emotion out of his voice.

“We’re going to be doing some work in Vale’s waters, though I knock out the mortal crew for most of it. We can go a bit slower, if you like.”

“One of my lovers can fly, I’d appreciate you giving him a larger window to find me in.” Oz had to work to keep the hope out of his voice, this was personal and he still didn’t trust anyone on this ship.

Jack smiled slightly. “I can work with that, I’ll make a little adjustment to our course. Give them a chance,” He looked over offering his left unmarked hand. “think of it as a peace offering. I am not my ship and I’ll do my best to keep her off your back.” He then shrugged. “And your cock.”

After a pause. Oz took Jack’s hand and they shared a firm shake not too hard, not too soft, a peace treaty. “Thank you.”

Jack released his hand and waved off the thanks. “Would have done it sooner, should have but you know you are not the easiest person to approach. Plus if seeing your lover will cheer you up, it will be worth it, for someone burning with so much life. You ooze negative emotions near all the time, it’s a bloody wonder to me why the Grimm haven’t struck yet. The only time you seem to be happy is either when you’re sleeping or jerking off.”

Oz blushed, thankfully his tattoos hid it well. “Dare I ask how you know that?”

“Thanks to Naga Lizzy, Will, Gibbs and I all have some level of empathy, the rest of the crew will only start to notice it if it gets really extreme. There is Harkness below deck as well, but it’s next to impossible to pull the grease monkey away from the engines so I’m not sure he counts. I don’t even
have to be close to a person to know how they are feeling, it’s pretty useful when sailing through
Grimm infested waters.” Jack explained, he seemed to have Obsidian’s attention, which was a first.

“I haven’t met Harkness.” Oz found that odd one would think he would have at least seen everyone
on the ship now.

“You don’t spend much time below deck and Harkness really likes messing with the engines.
Endlessly calibrating that one. He actually should be coming up in a bit, he mentioned getting a bit
desperate for a game of tablero.” Jack looked over to the setting sun. “You could come join us,
tablero is always better with a extra person to pawn shots off on.”

“I have never played the game.” Ozpin said slipping slightly in his speech, sounding for a moment
like his old self. He had seen others play the game many times but it wasn’t really his idea of a good
time. He was curious and this Jack, maybe he was much more agreeable than the one he first met.

“Come on then, Harkness and I were going to play in my quarters.” If Jack noticed the slip he let it
slide and turned on his heel and Oz mutely followed. The captain’s quarters were spacious, taking up
a large portion of the bow’s lower deck. Its window gave a view of the water they had passed and
was filled with many chests and weapons taking up arms on the walls. Jack cleared a round dining
table and pulled out two bottles of rum, and four flagons after measuring out the liquor into them.

Oz stood off to the side as the door opened and Jack greeted his guest. Jack Harkness turned out to
be six feet tall and built like Ironwood, warm keen blue eyes and a messy brown mop of brown hair
that stood up on end. He worn dark blue jeans, combat boots, a light blue dress shirt rolled up past
his elbows and a blue vest. He had a heavy hand cannon strapped to this thigh and a board under his
arm, with a satchel over his shoulder.

Harkness caught sight of Oz and walked over purring out. “Hello~.”

“Harkness.” Jack ran a hand over his face, he should have remembered to mention this to Obsidian,
Harkness would flirt with and frankly fuck anyone.

Oz felt a smile pull at his lips and he offered his hand to shake, and flirted subtly back. “A pleasure to
meet you.”

Harkness took Oz’s hand but instead of shaking it bent bring it to his lips and kissed Oz’s knuckles.
“And where have you been hiding? Jack is supposed to tell me when he brings someone so
handsome on board.”

Blush dusted Oz’s cheeks but he didn’t remove his hand from Harkness. It had been a very long time
since someone, not Qrow or Ruby had flirted so openly with him. “Apologies, I prefer the deck and
don’t go below often, perhaps now I will have a reason to explore a bit more.”

“Oh I’d love to show you all the little nooks and crannies of this ship, there are a few that I think
would suit you well.” Harkness kissed Oz’s knuckles again and let go of his hand, turning he offered
the tablero board to Jack.

Jack stared at the two, jaw on the floor, he was used to Harkness flirting, it was practically how the
man said hello. What he wasn’t used to was someone flirting back, maybe that was why Obsidian
turned Naga down, she really truly wasn’t his type. “Less ogling more gaming Harkness.”

“Oh yes.” He handed over the board and satchel, then moving to pull out a chair and gesturing to
Oz.

Oz couldn’t help it, a smile pulled at his lips, this was fun he took the offered seat and lounged back
in the ornate cushioned chair. “So how does this game work?”

The board was divided into seven rows of seven and Jack pulled out seven bronze shot glass goblets from the satchel. Jack and Harkness started to pour rum into three goblets each then rolled the two piece each. Jack rolled higher so Harkness filled the seventh cup.

Harkness explained the game. “The goal is to make a line of six but seven is better. The winner has to drink two of his glasses and since you’re here he can pawn one off on you. The loser has to drink all their glasses and refill all the glasses. On a seven the person to cast it has to take a shot while saying ‘To the Queen!’ or ‘King’ their home kingdom pending. The goal is to make the other player use all their liquor or to get drunk, what counts as ‘winning’ kinda depends who you are playing with.”

“Where are you from?” Oz asked, cocking his head to the side trying to guess.

“Vale.” Harkness said softly. “You?”

“Vale.” Oz said, watching as Harkness rolled the dice and ended up with a seven. He picked up a cup at random and yelled. “To the King!” Tossed the shot down and rolled again, this time moving two cups forward to match the values on the dice.

Oz’s lips twitched, all this time and people still toast to him. Part of him was very flattered, even if it was just a game. For such a silly game, it was rather funny how seriously the pair played, both clearly wanted to win, Oz accepted the drinks given to him. The fine rum stronger than anything he had imbibed since his days running around the countryside with Qrow. He found he quite liked the spiced drink, and found himself relaxing as the game progressed. Whether it was because the two men were actually quite fun to be around or because they kept the shots flowing, at this point he didn’t frankly know.

Harkness watched the pretty man slowly but surely relax and he’d be amazed if he wasn’t at least buzzed by now. He was a bit surprised when Jack brought out the good stuff but then he wasn’t going to complain.

Oz leaned forward and snagged one of Harkness cups when the blue eyed man made another line and rested his forearms on his knees. He downed the shot and said slightly slurred to Harkness. “You know, you are very pretty.”

Jack smiled and pursed his lips leaning back in his chair, he had a feeling this was going to be very funny.

Harkness offered Oz another shot. “You are quite lovely yourself. Perhaps you’d like to join me in my quarters after the game?”

Oz downed the shot and sighed, drinking reminded him of Qrow, he shook his head drunkenly. “No~ can do. I already fucked one pretty lady, I’m not going for two. Once I see Qrow and Ruby, I’ll be sure to ask them though.” He put the cup back on the board the joy departing from his features. “They send me Aura, every night and memories, they are exploring each other and it feels so good when they share.” He sighed deeply. “But I miss them. I want to be with them, we haven’t all really been together yet. There was one or two times but nothing like, what I really want.”

Jack pushed the tankard of his rum at Obsidian, finally the man was speaking, if he knew getting him drunk was the way to get his tongue to loosen he would have done it ages ago.

Oz straightened up and saw the offer, he took it and had a sip. “Thank you.” He muttered taking a
“Why have you been brooding so much? It sounds like your lovers are fine.” Jack asked, rolling the die and moving to cups around. Harkness knew Jack was trying to keep the conversation casual, probably so Obi, as Harkness had decided to call him didn’t lock up.

Oz took another drink watching them play. “Qrow is very broken, I would send him out to do tasks for me and he’d never come back okay. I’d pick up the pieces of my Qrow and put him back together over and over. To make matters worse, Ruby, she is young, but she and Qrow have a history. She is the centre of his world. But for all the time he has loved her, he’s looked elsewhere for relief. Sometimes he came to me, other times it was whatever tavern wench could be swayed by his wolfish smirk, or at worse a whore.” He drank again, the rum was much stronger than he had originally thought and Gods did he need to talk to someone. “In the memories, I worry that he is focusing on her too much, not letting her reciprocate. I know he greatly likes oral but turns her away when she tries anything like that, he barely lets her touch him. He’s so messed up in the head, he’s got an awful Semblance and carries far too much guilt and shame around with him. I worry that he will damage his relationship with Ruby if something doesn’t change soon. Ruby knows him very well, practically empathic when it comes to him. She’ll start to push and he will run rather than try and explain, Gods help her if he hurts her by accident.” Ozpin took another drink and scoffed. “Ruby figured me out, I still don’t know how but somehow she wiggled her way under my walls.” Oz laughed drunkenly. “I’d been fucking Qrow for years, then in she comes and BOOM! He stops coming around as much, we well parted… Ironic it was her that got us back together again.” Oz got up and staggered over the window looking out to Patch, his heart ached for them. He missed Qrow the most, he knew Qrow best and he knew Qrow needed him.

“What happened?” Harkness got up and followed, ready to catch Obi should he fall.

“Ruby was fifteen when she admitted to loving Qrow and I lost him. We had traveled together before, and I was stupid. I never thought he’d love me. He was waiting for me to say something but I never did… never could.” Oz drained the last of the rum, it loosening his lips as tears slipped from his eyes. “I’m fucking immortal and I couldn’t know how but somehow she wiggled her way under my walls.” Oz laughed drunkenly. “I’d been fucking Qrow for years, then in she comes and BOOM! He stops coming around as much, we well parted… Ironic it was her that got us back together again.” Oz got up and staggered over the window looking out to Patch, his heart ached for them. He missed Qrow the most, he knew Qrow best and he knew Qrow needed him.

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Jack bit his lip, questions were ready to leap off his tongue, he had always guessed Obsidian was special. No one who burned so bright could be a mere mortal, but he let Harkness handle this. The man had this uncanny ability to slip between the walls of someone’s mind, though he did it with the uttermost sincerity and never with malice or intention to harm.

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Harkness reach out and rubbed Obi up and down his back, taking note of the lumpy texture. “What changed?”

Oz looked out blankly into the window. “I told him part of the truth, I told him who I was and made him an offer. I taught him how to be immortal like me, it was selfish and a bit stupid, I gave him everything he would need to be with me forever but never told him I loved him. He listened to everything I said, kissed me, drew me over to bed and made love to me.” He closed his eyes and took a deep breath calling up the memory. “I always lead, I put him back together but that night was different and we’ve never had another like it. By the time I woke up in the morning he was gone, back to Patch, back to Ruby.” Harkness reached over and offered Oz a bottle of whisky, the man was far enough gone that he took and had another drink.

“Well you said lovers, so I’m assuming something changed?” Harkness asked, keeping his hand moving up and down Obi’s back, he was the ship’s resident therapist.

Oz smiled his mind moving away from the memory to more pleasant ones. “Ruby did. Qrow came to
visit after I was already… I don’t want to talk about it. What I did was wrong and shameful and I hope that someday I will be able to live it down.” He looked back out the window, “And now they explore each other, without me.” he took another drink. “Maybe that’s for the best, they should figure each other out before I come in complicate things.”

This sounded a hell of a lot more complicated than what Harkness was used to dealing with. He turned looking over his shoulder to Jack. “Could you give us the room for a while? Keep the ship from eavesdropping too.”

Jack nodded and left, this was not at all what he expected, he figured Obsidian was lovesick, but this was a lot more than simple heart ache.

Harkness moved closer to Oz, rubbing up and down the mans’ back. “Talk to me, you’ve clearly been through a great deal in a short period of time.”

Oz shook his head and took a drink. “I can’t, it’s a secret.”

“A secret that is eating you alive, you miss your loves and you are sad you can’t touch them. But why not just go back to Patch, go back to them?” Harkness called up his Semblance and touched Oz’s cheek, stretching it over the man.

In his drunken haze he didn’t notice when Harkness suddenly started to smell good, with a stronger scent then he should have had. “Can’t, SHE would notice and then everything I’ve done would for not.” He drank again, “Have to wait, have to set up meeting them again.” he scoffed. “Let Qrow take me home like some petty one night stand. Can’t just go to them, can’t just walk up and kiss my bird. Can’t take him to some shitty hotel and remind myself what it feels like to have him.” Tears slipped from his eyes, he raised a hand and pressed his thumb and forefingers to the corners of either eye. He missed his Qrow, he missed him so much, only just let himself express his love before it was all ripped from him.

Harkness felt that whatever Obi was caught up in was pretty spectacularly shitty. “You’re hiding from someone? Someone who knows you well?”

Oz shook his head. “I don’t know if she knows me well, I know she wants me dead. I wasn’t subtle taking Qrow to bed, many people know we have a history. To many to just go to him as I am now, it would all be for not if I did.”

“What would be for not?” Harkness ask softly but was pushed away when Obi staggered away from him, draining the bottle in one go. Then he yanked the buckles that held his cloak in place and let it and the armour fall to the floor before all but tearing off his shirt not caring where it landed. He braced his hands against the table and showed Harkness his back.

The first thing the blue eyed man noticed was the black tattoos, then he reached out and ran his hands up from Obi’s hips to his shoulders, feeling the raised scared flesh. “What happened to you?” He let his Semblance fill the air.

Oz breathed deeply. “I burned so Cinder would think I was dead, tell HER that I was dead. Then I ran, almost died but I got help.” Something about Harkness’s scent was soothing. It felt like a cloud loomed over his scars, a veiled mist that gently touched the healing flesh like soft fingertips.

“Who are you?” Harkness had a pretty good idea, he was from Vale, had gone to Beacon with all that he had said… Well Harkness was far from stupid, so he took a risk and asked softly “Professor Ozpin?” He felt the man he was now sure was Ozpin shuddered under his hands.
Oz’s brain was getting sluggish, the alcohol being absorbed, Harkness scent mixing with it. He nodded and let out a choked sob, his knees giving out, Harkness barely catching him in time to ease him to the ground. Oz leaned on Harkness, the man oozed comfort. “No one’s called me that since Beacon fell, it’s all my fault and it was all for nothing.”

“Bull shit, I know who Cinder is, Jack keeps an eye on people like her. You couldn’t have done anything different. Vale was my home too, I know how it feels to see it burn.” Gods no wonder Oz was so hard to talk to, he’d be carrying his around all on his own for months. Harkness rubbed up and down Oz’s arm, feeling the uneven skin hidden by the tattoos. The man must be so lonely, to go from having all his friends and lovers close by, students to look after, to just have people that he knew around. Harkness couldn’t begin to guess what it was like to have that all taken away. On top of it all to know that his lovers were only a few weeks away and not to be able to go with them. From what he had said about Qrow and Ruby, Harkness guessed it was a good thing they were getting time to figure out their relationship on their own and it was very kind of them to find a way to share it with Oz.

“Ozpin.” Harkness said softly, Gods the world sounded strange on his tongue. “You can’t blame yourself for Vale, it will only eat you alive till your nothing but a husk and you won’t want to return to Qrow and Ruby like that would you?”

Oz shook his head. “No. I’m the strong one, Qrow’s the drunken reckless mess, Ruby’s the teenager that is supposed to get into trouble. I’m supposed to be the responsible one, keeping us safe, keeping us together.”

“Well you can’t do that if you don’t let go of some of this pain. Vale may be gone, but not all of it’s people perished. Many of them made their way to Vacou and none would put the blame for this on you. Oz you have people who love you, who want you to come home. It won’t be forever, someone will find a way to clear the Grimm, Vale will be rebuilt as will Beacon, you’ll get to go home.” Harkness ran his hand through Oz’s hair, massaging in calming circles.

“I’d settle for just being able to touch Qrow and Ruby. Once I figured out that people wouldn’t see me as ‘Professor Ozpin’ anymore I felt so liberated. I was free to do what I wanted for the first time in a decade, but then I realized I couldn’t do what I really wanted. Now this freedom just tastes bitter, at least when I was headmaster I could still have them, just had to be careful about it. Now I can’t even have them.” He was starting to get tired, the alcohol pulling him down, letting out all this pain and emotions didn’t help him stay awake either.

“But you will.” Harkness could feel Oz dwindling, he guessed the man didn’t drink much. He slid his hand out of Oz’s hair and put it around the other man’s ribs lifting Oz up and to his feet. “Come on, let’s get you to bed before you pass out.”

“Good idea.” Oz muttered and let Harkness guide him out of the room. He didn’t bother to grab Oz’s shirt or cloak, he’d come at get them after the larger man was in bed. What crew they did run into quickly got out of the way, Harkness guided Oz to bed who passed out shortly after his head hit the pillow.

Harkness returned to Jack’s cabin and found that the faunus had picked up Oz’s things and folded them. “You didn’t fuck him?” Jack asked. “I can smell your Semblance everywhere.”

Harkness ran a hand through his hair. “As much as he needs that, he was way to drunk, you really pulled out all the stops on the fine stuff didn’t you?”

Jack nodded. “You must have noticed the near endless misery and despair radiating from the man. He was never going to talk any other way, I’m amazed there hasn’t been any Grimm yet.” He
brushed a finger over Oz’s heavy pauldron. “So what did you learn?”

Harkness sat back at the table and drank a shot, then looked up to his boss. “That you blackmailed, Professor fucking OZPIN!” He glared at Jack.

Jack’s jaw hit the floor again. “What?” He asked grabbing a seat and sitting down himself.

“You, blackmailed, Ozpin, THE Ozpin, you have fucking Ozpin on this ship.” Harkness ran a hand over his face, it was only now just starting to sink into his own mind. “You are holding one of the most powerful Huntsmen in the world by the balls. On top of that, he’s a wreck! He’s lost everything! He can’t even go to his lovers for fear of Salem sniffing him out, no wonder why he’s so fucking Depressed!” Harkness got up and paced. “What the fuck are we going to do?”

Jack emptied his tablero cups in quick succession. “Gods.”

“Yeah, you really stepped in it.” Harkness growled at him.

Jack slumped over, he would have never guess that he had Ozpin on his ship, everyone thought he had died. “Well,” he started forming a plan. “We do what we were going to do anyway. We get him to Mistral, think you can hold him together for that long? The last thing I need on this ship is a huntsman with untreated PTSD.”

Harkness paused. “I don’t know if he’ll let me.”

“Your Semblance-.”

“Only makes me smell irresistible, using it on him for sex would only make things worse. I used to before to try and calm him down, kept it light and mixed it with the booze in his system. We need to get him to his lovers, he needs to talk to them. Giving them a day or two would be best.” Harkness started pacing. “Only after would I approach him to offer more consistent help, he could probably talk my ear off with all the pain he is carrying around and yeah I could fuck him to sleep. But that’s only a temporary fix, the man needs time with people who care about him.”

“We don’t know enough about this Qrow or Ruby to let them stay on this ship. With how Naga pounced on Oz, it does worry me. People like him gather those of equal… life to them, I don’t want to hurt him and I can’t know what Naga will do if they are anything like him.” Jack ran his hands over his head, he just wanted some help with the Grimm, it wasn’t supposed to be this complicated.

“That’s a good point, for all we know they could be just as powerful as Oz and with the three of them Naga could get up to all sorts of nasty shit.” Harkness didn’t hate Naga, but he didn’t like her either, the Goddess did creep into his bed fairly often and he did please her and send her on her way.

“Naga already tried to ensnare him once, catch him in a deal. If either Ruby or Qrow is weaker than Oz, she’ll probably try to grab one and force a contract out of the other two.” Jack said.

“Or maybe we’ll get really lucky and they’ll just be normal huntsman and huntress.” Harkness said hopefully.

Jack scoffed and got up and opened his door shouting. “Will! Lizzy! Get your butts in here!”

“We plan?” Harkness asked.

“We plan.” Jack confirmed.
Chapter End Notes

Ardy: Thank you too: darkvampirekisses, Celestialfae, lillithschild and Sportsfangirl815 for your comments.
Dinner was served up before there was any more talking, Yang looked between the three silent individuals and tried to piece together what was going to be said. She had heard Ruby’s side of it but not Qrows.

Tai cleaned off his plate with a piece of garlic bread and sighed. “Start with how Oz is alive.”

“We don’t know.” Qrow said. “He went to Vacuo to disguise himself and is now making his way to Mistral. That is all we know.” He voice was muted and soft. He still wondered why Oz hadn’t made use of his rebirth pool, but he wasn’t going to mention that to Tai.

“And you knew long before that letter.” Tai said matter of factly.

“Ruby’s rose, isn’t a rose. It’s an Aura object that Oz and I made for her, it’s a piece of him and a piece of me. So long as he is alive it will bloom, we can send Aura through it to him, but he can’t send anything back.” Qrow picked at his food, he was both starving and not hungry at the same time, glancing over at Ruby he knew she was in the same boat as she pushed a stray tomato to the edge of her plate.

“Aura object?” Yang asked.

Qrow picked up a piece of bread. “Say this is a person’s Aura, their soul.” He ripped a piece off and handed it to Ruby. “That’s the object, it’s still a part of the whole, the whole is missing a piece without it.” He took the piece of bread back from Ruby when she offered it and put it back with the bread. “You can put it back together, but it’s hard and painful.” He returned the piece of bread and Ruby ate it. “The piece will always be part of the whole, just apart from it. It can still be talked to, be connected to it.”

“You gave Ruby a piece of your soul?” Yang asked eyes widening.

“The soul is not stagnant Yang, it can heal, tearing a piece off isn’t as hard as you’d think. You’re using you’re soul to protect you everytime you go into battle, every time you get hit a piece of it is chipped away. Aura is a projection of the soul, but it’s still the soul.” Qrow explained.

“Wait how do you know this?” Tai asked.

“Oz taught me.” Qrow said with a shrug.

Ruby relaxed with Qrow and started eating slowly again as Tai asked. “What happened after that Ruby?”

The petite woman squirmed, she wasn’t sure how much to say. “I’m not really comfortable with talking about it without Oz. It’s all very personal to him.”
Taiyang frowned almost glaring at her. “How so?”

“There was a lot of magic going around on that night and some of it hurt Oz. Long term. I helped him as best I could.” Ruby wrung her hands. Talking about this hurt, she missed him and hoped he was okay.

Tai could see he wasn’t going to get anything more out of her. “Alright then. Ruby take Qrow back to bed he looks like he’s going to fall over.”

“To be fair I was sleeping very happily before you came home.” Qrow said getting up and grabbing Ruby’s plate, both empty now.

“Yes, I’m sure Ruby helped you relax, now go.” Tai said waving them off. “I’m sure you have things you want to talk about.”

The pair didn’t need to be told twice, if Tai was relaxed enough to make a joke then they were going to count themselves very lucky. Once back in there Qrow pulled his tank top off and tossed it on the dresser, he flopped back onto the bed with a smile. “Well that could have gone worse.”

Ruby giggled climbing on the bed and straddling him. “I’m amazed he only hit you once.”

Qrow reached up and rubbed his jaw, his Aura had long since healed it. “It wasn’t exactly a love tap Ruby.”

“You’re head is still connected to your shoulders and you still have your balls, I’ll count this as a win.” Ruby settled on his waist and traced a finger over his abs.

“You wouldn’t let Tai castrate me, and I wouldn’t say we’re out of the woods yet. We just better make sure he never catches us.” Ruby giggled at that. “And I am sure Oz is gonna get a lot worse than you did.”

“Very likely.” Qrow said and frowned. “Ruby, I’m gonna to try and make an object for Oz. If we can find him, probably in a few weeks when he gets closer, then we should try for something to connect us.”

“Can I help?” Ruby asked but Qrow shook his head. “I better try it on my own, I’ve never made one before, it could take some trial and error.”

“Alright, but you will ask if you need help right?” Ruby asked silver eyes wide.

“Of course love.”

“Better, again.”

Tai and Yang hid in the hallway peering into the living room, they had gone to bed but neither could slept right away and the pat pat, thud from living room drew them from their beds.

Swish, swish, thump, “Ow.”

“To wide, again.”
Pat, pat, swish, thump. “Ooof, much better.” The voice was pained.

Crash, thud, thud, pat, swish, crack. “Ha!”

“Yeah, yeah nice shot again.”

Yang and Tai walked Qrow and Ruby spin and strike at each other. The couch and table had been pushed to the side, along with the tv. Neither wore shirts, both in loose training pants, and Ruby with a white breast band. Qrow had been working at making an object for Oz but had no success rather than watch him stew in failure, Ruby offered to spar.

The pair were locked in battle, palms flat, thumbs tucked in, strikes were fast but calm. They twisted around each other, Ruby spun ducking under a strike, snapping her arm forth with all the speed of a snake’s strike. Qrow bent in almost drunken manner, moving mere millimeters out of her strike. His arm moving under Ruby’s, he grabbed her by the neck and wiped her back around spinning her so fast her hair flew around in a halo. Her back hit his front with a thud, as his other arm came around and pinned her in place. His hand splayed over her belly, as he dipped his head to her neck, breathing deeply. “Much better. But you still fight like Oz.” He rubbed his thumb over her belly. “And you’re easy to distract.”

Ruby bit her lip to stifle a moan, it wasn’t her fault he was very distracting. Her chest heaved, “I’m used to watching him, can we go again. I’m not tired.” his hand around her neck was doing all sorts of things to her, many of which that she didn’t understand.

Qrow could feel her pulse hammering under his hand and smirked. Oh I see. He let her go and she was sluggish moving away, turning smoothly to face him raising her arms again and sinking into her stance. He took a step back leaning on his back foot turning his front away from her, again almost drunk in his movements, though he hadn’t touched drink. He flexed and rolled his abs causing his chest to shift back as well.

Ruby found herself Very distracted by that, fighting him was so different then Oz. Oz was all controlled power, sharp, purposeful and contained. Qrow was the opposite, he was fluid, staggering, one moment he struck out with a familiar strike from Oz, the next it was a fist, or a kick to her stomach. Or attempted kick, she was getting pretty good at seeing those coming and getting out of the way. She knew him with a scythe, she knew herself with a scythe but this was different, more personal in a way. Neither were using their Aura, just hand and foot, when Ruby closed the gap between them striking out, Qrow would smile and lurch out of the way, flow and shift. Where Oz would move minimally, Qrow would move drastically, he moved like a drunkard even when sober.

Qrow blocked a kick to his head with his hand, dropping down and grabbing Ruby’s thigh with the other and tossed her back. Thump, she landed on her butt with a wince. She rolled out of the way, spinning back to her feet as Qrow slammed his foot down where her stomach had been moments ago. He smirked taking that drunken step back as Ruby glared at him, coiling up like a cat and leaping at him.

Qrow laughed, bending out of her way and catching her by the stomach, using a flick of his wrist to send her tumbling away. Except Ruby twisted again landing on her feet and launched her shoulder into his diaphragm. “Ooof.” Thud, Qrow was on his back with Ruby perched on him like smiling like that cat that had caught the canary.

“I win!” She declared.

Qrow smirked at her, and grabbed her hips pulling her up his torso. “Best nine out of ten?”
Tai pulled Yang by the arm, he sensed a shift in the two and didn’t want to intrude, or even really think about it.

“I don’t know… aren’t you sore old man?” Ruby grinned eyes alight with mischief.

Qrow grabbed her by her butt and spun them, rising to pin her down with a hand to her chest when she tried to get up. “Careful who you call old.” He growled into her ear, leaning in to catch the lob of her ear between his teeth.

Ruby reached up teased her fingers along his love handles. “Well if you are so sure you’re up for another round."

Qrow released her ear and pressed a kiss to her neck, grabbing her hands he pulled her back to her feet. Ruby staggered to her feet and took several steps back, that heat was back under her skin, pooling between her legs again. She pursed her lips determined to win again, she could not be beaten by the distraction he posed.

The raven haired man grinned, he could see the flush on her skin, sure he wasn’t much better himself, but he had a much better handle on it. This time he faced her, arms out before him.

They exploded into movement, this Qrow striking out first this time. Fist sailing for her head, Ruby dodged jumping up to land on his shoulders, vaulting off them, Qrow spun and grabbed her foot. She went slamming into the floor stunned for a moment, a moment was all Qrow needed, he straddled her hips, mindful of his weight, nimble fingers undoing her bra in seconds. Ruby’s eyes widened as she realized what he was doing, she pushed herself up on her arms trying to wriggle out from under him.

Qrow grabbed a breast roughly kneading as he pressed a kiss to her neck. “Yield.”

“No~!” Ruby said with a moan, his hand was draining her will to fight very fast, but she would not yield. Not because she wasn’t really really enjoying his rough actions but because she wanted to win. She activated her Semblance and blew herself out from under him.

“Cheater!” Qrow rose with a fast step, keeping pace with the roses.

Ruby reformed and grinned, “Maybe.” she launched her attack.

Qrow had been playing the game according to her skills, moderating himself, but she cheated. He batted her attacks away, striking out in that mixed style he had created over the years. He saw Ruby’s eyes widen and ignored the way her breasts swayed as she defended, he backed he into the corner of the room and saw panic alight in her eyes. He grabbed her by the shoulders when he saw that tensing she did before using her Semblance and pushed his Aura out over her, then slammed her into the wall. “Tisk, tisk, you really shouldn’t cheat.” He rumbled, shifting a hand to hold her by her neck again and slipping the other down the front of her sweat pants.

She moaned when he cupped her core through her panties, and shuddered against him. “Qrow.”

He tapped his thumb at her neck, “You like this don’t you,” he slipped a finger under wet panties to her soaked core. “What is it that gets you the most? Hmm, the sparing? Or my hand around your neck?” He removed his finger and shoved her panties and slacks to the floor, he pressed two fingers to her core, rolling her swollen lips between his fingers but never quite touching her clit.

Ruby moaned, all of it, she liked all of it, he’d never hurt her, even playing rough like this and it was so very arousing when he took control like this. Before the fireplace was magical, but he had been so very careful, only doing what she wanted, having him do what he wanted woke something in her.
He had always been so very careful, every time they did anything.

He removed his hand and pressed his hips to her pelvis, bring his hand up to lick his fingers clean where she could see, while growling out. “Words love.”

She whimpered watching his tongue dance over his fingers. “All of it.” She ground her hips forward but his kept her in place.

Qrow quirked his brow and that infamous smirk returned with a vengeance. “You are to perfect for words.” He looked her up, down and almost groaned, why did he do this to himself? She looked so very fuckable, but he didn’t want to rush, this was all to new as it was for her and for him. He hadn’t told her the real reason he wanted to wait, yes she was young, but she was maturing very swiftly now and some deep part of him did feel a little perverted about this. It would be so easy to forget how young she was here panting, eyes near black, chest heaving breasts just pleading to him to suck on them. He imagined it, taking her here and now, he’d never admit it but he had been fantasizing about having her on all the furniture. It would be so easy, just drop his pants and.. He bit his lip and let go of her neck, pressing kisses to it instead. Her hands came to his shoulders and she moaned,

She’d welcome it, she’d want it. He thought and that scared him, some small part of him that always whispered that she was too good for him. That he’d only hurt her.

Another thought rode on the heels of that one, what if it changed them? What if she changed her mind after? What if? What if? What if? What if he hurt her? What if she didn’t want him anymore after, what if he disappointed her? He squeezed his eyes shut and knelt moving down her body taking a breast in his mouth, she had liked that. The truth was he was afraid, that was why he wanted to wait, he had plenty of time to get used to the idea that she wanted him and would want him sexually. He was afraid he would mess this up. That she’d see how messed up he was inside.

“What’s wrong?” He felt fingers brush his cheeks, Shit. His cheeks were wet, when had that happened? Shit, shit, shit, fucking damn. He drew away from her and stepped away. “It’s nothing.” He said in rushed out words, taking several steps away and looking to the floor for her bra.

Ruby took a step towards him, what was going on? One minute he was frisky and ready to make her scream the next he’d shut down, shut her out. She reached out to touch his hand and he flinched away, tears gathered in her eyes but she blinked them away. Whatever was going through his head, wasn’t about her, if it was he’d be looking at her, no whatever was bothering him was about him.

“Talk to me please.”

Qrow stubbornly shook his head, “Please just let it drop Ruby, let’s go to bed.” he walked away from her and snagged her bra off the floor.

Ruby quirked her lips, grabbed her pants and followed him upstairs, he stripped out of his sweat pants and into fresh ones, not looking at her once. Well that wouldn’t do, since he wasn’t looking at her, Ruby set her things aside and slipped beneath the duvet before he could see her.

Qrow joined her silently but didn’t reach for her like normal, the rose sat on the nightstand waiting for the gift of Aura that it would not get this night, or for many nights after. He lay on his back thinking, around and around his gut getting tight and painful with dread.

Ruby wanted to see his face, she didn’t know what was going on but she was going to find out. She reached over and lite a small round candle, most of the light went up to the ceiling but it was enough.

“Ruby?” Qrow questioned looking over and seeing her bare back.
Ruby made sure the match was out and set it on the tray, she then turned over and slid up to him, shifting the duvet to straddle him.

Gods, seeing her like this was glorious each and every time, Qrow’s eyes couldn’t help but sweep over her skin, she was posed just above his groin with a look on her face that made him swallow. It was the look she wore when she knew he was bullshitting and was determined to find out why.

She saw the fear spark behind his eyes and frowned. “What’s wrong? And don’t you go saying nothing, you’re closing up. So whatever it is... is not nothing.”

Qrow’s jaw tensed and he didn’t dare move a muscle. “I don’t want to talk about it.”

Ruby rested her hands on his abs. “I understand that, but maybe you should talk about it.” What would Oz do? Ruby wondered, and started to trace over Qrow’s muscles. He’d want us to face it, whatever it is. He’s afraid of something, the question is what?

“I—” He snapped his jaw shut, teeth clanking, he was too tense to enjoy her touches. The raven haired man didn’t know what to do, did he move her? Did he tell her? What would she do? Did he send her back to her room, that sounded like a horrible idea.

“What are you afraid of?” Ruby asked, settling her weight on him.

How did she? Of course she did. This was his Ruby of course she figured out he was afraid of something. He took a deep breath and closed his eyes, what did he say? “I just, I think, that maybe we should slow down again. That you should go put something on.”

Any other woman would be hurt by that, but not Ruby, it gave her a valuable hint. “Do you regret it?”

No, no he really didn’t, every touch they shared was precious to him, that first night had been beautiful, he’d remember it for the rest of his life. He couldn’t lie, not to her, never to her. “No.” He said softly.

Then why did you stop? Why did you cry, what are you so afraid of?” Ruby asked softly.

“You.” His voice broke.

“What?” Ruby asked softly confused and concerned, had she been to forward before?

“I’m afraid that after something will change and you won’t want me anymore. I want to wait so that things don’t change, that I get to have you and love you for as long as possible.” He opened his eyes to see her stunned expression. I’m afraid of hurting you.

“I love you.” She leaned down moving her hands to her shoulders, her voice sure and strong. “And you are frankly silly to think I’d ever stop loving you.”

“You can’t know that, people change.” Qrow met her eyes. “You’re still so young, you haven’t seen what the world has to offer.” He saw her eyebrows go up and didn’t see her hand.

Slap.

The sound of skin hitting skin filled the room, Qrow’s cheek turned red and he stared up at her in complete shock.

She pointed at him and growled. “You listen to me, Qrow Branwen. I’ve loved you since I was
fifteen, it took me a year to work up the courage to tell you. I’ve loved you for two years, eleven
months and thirteen days, yes I kept count. I’ve grown up and changed a lot in that time, and I only
grew to love you more. I may be young and I may be inexperienced, but I know you.” She poked
him in the chest. “And I know me, and I know there is nothing you could do that would make me
stop loving you.” She giggled for a moment. “Not even being bad at sex, but I think it’s safe to say
that will never be a problem.” Qrow blushed, as per usual his reputation preceded him. Ruby turned
serious again and got off him, “When you get that through your thick head you know where to find
me.” she staked out of the room before he could get a word in.

The door closed behind her with a soft click, the candle guttering out, Qrow stared unseeing up
into the ceiling. “Damn.” His heart sank, maybe this was for the best, maybe a little distance was just
what they needed, what he needed. That treacherous organ in his chest told him that he was being
stupid, he rolled over to look at her cooling spot and saw the rose on the nightstand. “I really screwed
up Oz.”

Ruby tiptoed into the room she shared with Yang, pulling pajamas’ from her dresser and
pulling them on. She crept to her little single bed, slipped under the cold covers and shivered.

“What happened?” Yang asked, she hadn’t managed to fall asleep yet.

“Nothing.” Ruby said. “Just go to sleep.”

Come morning it was clear that ‘nothing’ was not what happened, Yang and Tai stood by amazed
when Qrow and Ruby somehow managed to avoid each other near perfectly. Ruby went into a
room, Qrow would leave as soon as he could without passing her, when Qrow entered a room Ruby
would do the same.

By the third day, Tai yanked Qrow into his bedroom tossed the smaller man onto the bed and
glared down at him. “What did you do?”

“Nothing.” Qrow sat on the edge of the bed and looked at the floor.

“Is that the same nothing that leads into binge drinking and other stupid shit?” Tai growled with a
knowing tone, Qrow and his infamous ‘nothing’, had gotten him into a lot of trouble in the past.

Yes, it was that ‘nothing’, the only reason he hadn’t tucked into the alcohol was because Tai still
had his flask and it was much harder to hide a cup. That and the glimpses of Ruby made him feel
guilty about even thinking about returning to the bottle, she’d be so disappointed
in him. That was a
sickening thought, he felt like he might be ill just thinking about it.

“Up here Qrow.” Tai said voice still hard.

Qrow looked up to his lilac eyed friend. “It’s nothing that should be changed.”

“Excuse me?” Tai’s brows rose. “You and Ruby have been avoiding each other like the plague,
for like the first time EVER! And you honestly expect me to think that nothing is wrong? That
something here needs a lot of attention, and you are going to tell me what.”
Qrow didn’t know what the hell to say, the whole truth was definitely out. “We just, had an argument.”

Again Tai was surprised. Ruby and Qrow didn’t argue, the occasional healthy debate yes but never anything that counted as an argument. “And?” He walked over and sat beside Qrow.

“And I feel that maybe some distance between us is a good idea.” Qrow threaded his fingers together loosely.

“It was about sex wasn’t it?” Tai said, wasn’t this a conversation he was supposed to be having with the bride and not the groom? Any other time and he would have found this reverse funny. “You two were all over each other a few nights ago and then this for days.”

Qrow winced, trust Tai to get to the heart of the matter. “Something along those lines yes.”

Tai rubbed a hand over his face, this was definitely not a conversation he thought he’d have when he woke up this morning. “And?”

“And I said something that I shouldn’t have, she slapped me and yeah, several days of avoiding each other.” Qrow said.

“That is not helpful, start from the beginning, you two were fine while you were sparing.”

The red eyed man hung his head and stared at the floor. “We played around in our last match, less sparing more… playing around. At one point, I uh, had her pressed up against a wall and was doing uh stuff. When I got to thinking about, how much I wanted her and how much I know she wants me. And the real reason I keep telling her no, and it got to me, she noticed and I brushed it off. We went to bed and she pressed asking what was wrong and I may have insinuated that she might not love me forever. That she was too young and inexperienced to know what she wanted, that she didn’t know what else was out there.” Qrow reached up and touched his cheek, it had healed by that morning but he swore he could still feel the sting. “She then slapped me and told me in many more words than this, that I was being stupid and I knew where to find her when I decided to pull my head out of my ass. Then she left and you know the rest.” Qrow really wanted a drink.

Tai sat silent for a minute working through that, sure he’d released Qrow from his vow to keep his hands off Ruby, but hearing about it even just vaguely was not something he was sure he was ready for. He massaged the bridge of his nose, well ready or not it was clear Qrow needed some help sorting this shit out. “Why won’t you sleep with her? The real reason, not the ‘waiting till she is eighteen because it’s the right thing to do’ spiel you’ve been giving her.”

Qrow looked over to Tai stunned. “You can’t seriously be okay with this.”

Tia’s gaze snapped over to him, that was not at all what he had been expecting. “Go on.”

“I’m afraid that something will change, that something will drive her away. That I’ll hurt her somehow and she’ll stop loving me.” He rubbed his chest, his heart ached and he knew it wasn’t a physical hurt.

“Well you’re doing a pretty good job of hurting her already and last I checked sex had a habit of strengthening bonds not ruining them.” Tai could barely believe he was saying this, but someone in this family needed to be the wise one and it seemed the job fell to him.

Qrow looked over to Tai stunned. “You can’t seriously be okay with this.”

“Ruby may still be a hormonal young adult, but you aren’t and you both know your hearts, sure as
hell better than I do. You are clearly hung up on this and you are going to have to face it. I’m getting a feeling sooner would be better than later.” Tai wasn’t sure how much longer he and Yang could tip toe around the pair, and he was getting tired of the mopping from both parties.

Qrow was having trouble believing his ears, was Tai, the Dragon, encouraging him to sleep with his daughter? He blinked twice staring at Tai his jaw hanging open, his brain was rather stuck on the idea. Finding words eventually as Tai started to smile at Qrow’s gobsmacked expression. “She’s still… fragile.”

“You could do to have more faith in yourself. She may be small but she is fit and strong, if you do something she doesn’t like. I’m sure she’ll let you know.” Taiyang sighed. “I know you have reservations about her age too. But the world we live in is not perfect, you should at least try. Before the opportunity is taken from you.” Tai squeezed Qrow’s shoulder and got up, “Think on it.” he left shutting the door behind him.

Qrow stared after him, What the hell just happened? He ran a hand through his hair, Have more faith in myself. The red eyed man shook his head, right cause that always ended so well. He sighed, he had to heal this rift. All he needed to do was get up and go to her and he’d fix his mess, he tried to tell his legs to move but they stubbornly refused. With a groan he flopped back into the bed, Tai was right, Ruby was right, he was being stupid, that doubt in his chest said that he was in the right. His brain said he should march down stairs, grab his girl, kiss her like he meant to devour her, take her upstairs and devour her. Drive himself into her little wet core and make love to her till she forgot her name, preferably while singing out his.

Qrow rubbed his eyes and yelled out, “Fuck!” he lurched out of the bed and stormed out into the hall, pausing in his bedroom to flip the duvet back. He walked down the stairs to find Ruby, Yang and Tai all watching the news, he softened his step so Ruby wouldn’t hear him.

He walked up silently behind and as she turned and saw him eyes darkening in pain, he grabbed her by the waist and threw her over his shoulder.

“HEY!” She yelled kicking out but not managing to hit him, though she did have half a mind to knee him in the chest.

He patted her butt and she shut up near instantly, “We need to have a talk.” he spun on his heel started back the way he had come with a squirming Ruby on his shoulder.

Tai smirked. “And here I thought I’d have to watch him mope around for another day or two.”

“What did you do?” Yang asked, she hadn’t managed to get a word out of Ruby as to what had gone wrong.

“Just gave him a push in the right direction, want to help with cookies? And maybe a cake and whatever else we can think of. Might as well make use of the power and I have a feeling that Ruby will be a screamer.” Tai got up and turned up the news.

“What!” Yang’s gaze snapped up the stairs.

“Come on, we’ll start with cookies and I’ll tell you what happened.” Yang followed her Dad into the kitchen.
Qrow kicked the door shut and put Ruby in the middle of the bed, she glared at him. “I’m still mad at you.”

“I know, you were right, I was stupid.” He pulled off his T shirt, flicking it to the floor and started on his belt. “And I have every intention of making it up to you.”

Ruby’s eyes went wide as what he was proposing started to sink in, particularly when his swelling member came into view already half hard. She bit her lip, clearly he had been thinking about this for a while.

Qrow moved to her crawling onto the bed and kissing her, one single kiss he meant it to be short but when Ruby’s hands wove themselves into his hair. It got longer and longer, lips parted melding with each other, he dipped his tongue into her mouth and massaged hers. They fell back into the bed, as Ruby leaned back and he was quite keen on following her.

He broke the kiss long enough to ask. “Unless you’ve changed your mind? Finally caught on that I am just a dusty old crow.”

Ruby gave him her very best unimpressed look. “Don’t make me hit you again.” She said with a smile and a little shake of her head.

Qrow laughed softly, “No thank you, as much as I deserved that, I will endeavor to make sure you never have to do it again.” he kissed her temple just like he used to before they graduated to proper kisses. “I’m sorry.”

Ruby hummed happy, she missed his kisses. “You’re forgiven.” She blushed and bit her lip.

“What?” Qrow asked.

“Could you do that thing you did before, when we were before the fireplace?” She blushed brighter and grew wetter at the thought alone.

The red eyed man gave her a devilish smirk. “Move back.” Ruby moved back and let him help her out of her shirt, bra was quickly discarded, but he left her pants on as she settled back onto the pillow. “Now.” Qrow purred and started to kiss her neck in soft teasing kisses. “You’ll have to be more specific, I did a few different things that night.”

Ruby blushed and she could feel him smirk against her skin. “The thing you did between my legs, with your tongue.” She sighed softly when he pressed a fuller kiss to her neck, her head fell to the side, giving him better access.

“Cullingus my love, or just oral sex, there is no reason to shy away from the terms.” He’d have to help her with this shyness of the terms, it was rather hard to have meaningful discussions when you couldn’t use the words. Ruby fell silent as he kissed down to her breasts, she closed her eyes and let out a little happy sigh.

Qrow felt the tension ease from her, a little banter went a long way and while sunlight reflecting in off the snow was no hearth, but it still lit her skin beautifully. He drew away from her skin to take a deep breath through his nose, before descending again. He could do this, he’d shove his fear aside and he’d share in the pleasure he’d created for them this time. He took a breast into his mouth and sucked on it softly listening to her moan, a hand sneaking up the inside of her leg, undoing the button of her pants and drawing the zipper down. He looked up to see her gazing down at him with a soft smile, she reached out and stroked the side of his head. He closed his eyes and sucked a little harder, running his tongue over her nipple feeling the swelling flesh under his caress.
Ruby arched slightly and moaned under him, her toes curling, he took this opportunity to pull her pants and panties off. Parting from her breast just long enough to draw them off her legs and flick them away to the floor. Ruby gasped softly as she looked up to him, that look in his eyes had changed. When he came in he looked, mischievous, with more that a bit of false bravado. Seeing him now she was sure that had been more for his sake then hers. She parted her legs in invitation and he moved between them, he shifted so he could keep his weight on his legs and kissed her again. She wove her hands into his hair and drew little massaging circles on his skull.

Qrow moaned into their kiss, he really liked that, her fingers passed over all the right spots and he found himself relaxing. He deepened the kiss wanting more, his tongue diving into her mouth suddenly, her little moan his reward as he explored her. His hands ghosted up her outside of her thighs, teasing touches that caused her to shiver under him. They parted when air started to become an issue, Qrow moved back to her breasts before she could distract him again.

The silver eyed woman kept touching his head, massaging, petting, stroking, he always purred just so, when she got the actions just right. His hair was thick and soft the pure black shown slightly in the light, it honestly reminded her of crows feathers. She moan softly when he kissed around the neglected breast, drawing his tongue over her small areola before nipping the nipple and taking the breast into his mouth. She arched again, kicking out when he sucked harder then before, she pulled his head closer to her while pressing her chest up into his mouth.

Qrow groaned and took ahold of her hips kneading, she was so responsive he couldn’t remember the last time he had a woman who loved having her breasts played with exclusively. He wondered if he could make her orgasm from breast play alone again, that was a route worth contemplating. He slide a hand up her body and took ahold of the other breasts and rolled the nipple between this thumb and forefinger while sucking more firmly on the other. Ruby screamed under him, bucking her hips, her eyes flying open wide as she thrashed under him. There’s a good little red. Qrow would have smirked had his mouth not been full of her soft flesh, he purred and flicked her nipple rapidly with his tongue while massaging the twin breast and pinching its nipple.

The silver eyed woman keened, kicked out arching against him, pressing her body to his, he could feel her core leave a wet spot on his stomach. Her orgasm cascaded through her, her hands tightening in his hair. Ruby fell slack all at once back into the bed, Qrow slowly eased up on his attentions, slowing the massage of her breast and sucking softer and softer. “Qrow.” She moaned softly, head falling to the side as she blinked slowly coming down, drawing deep breaths, her fingers loosening in his hair.

Qrow gave her breast one last wet kiss before kissing between them, he looked up to her and smirked at her blissful state. “Don’t fall asleep on me yet, we’ve got a long way to go.”

“Qrow~.” Ruby moaned again looking down to him, eyes dark and heavy.

Oh he could get used to that sound, that was music. The red eyed man kissed the top of her abs and shifted his weight so he could move down her. He pressed lingering kisses down her stomach, the rumple of the sheets and Ruby’s soft sighs being the only sounds in the room. Ruby felt that coiling tension start to bloom in her belly again, the sound of him moving down was a tease all in its own right.

When he got to her hips in a moment of curiosity, he pressed a kiss to the skin just above her love handles. Ruby shuddered and moaned out, with a smirk Qrow in a single long lick when from the height of the curve to the middle of her belly. He pinned her hips down with a hand when she jumped again, he didn’t want her to hit his chin. “You okay?”

Ruby nodded and took several breaths to relax again. “Just feels good and kinda tickles.”
Qrow chuckled and kissed just above her venus mound, “If you’re as sensitive internally as you are externally, I’ll count myself as the luckiest man alive.”

“All women aren’t like this?” Ruby asked confused, using the time given by the conversation to gather her wits for the next round.

The red eyed man shook his head. “Nope, some can only get off of clitoral stimulation, or just internal, some only care for having their breasts played with, others prefer anal. Or some mix of those, it’s rather rare in the grand scheme of things to find a women that enjoys all of them.” He shifted down and kissed the inside of her thigh several centimeters away from her core.

“That must suck for them.” Ruby parted her legs a little farther.

“Mmhmm,” Qrow purred kissing down her thigh eyeing her glistening folds, he was looking forward to the feast that awaited him there but he was give her some time to recover. “And I happen to be a breast man, so you will be orgasming from them often.” Deciding she’d had enough recovery time he moved to her core, grabbing her thighs and holding her apart for the clenching he knew she would do.

He licked from the bottom of her core to her swollen pearl with the flat of his tongue, gathering her sweet nectar on his tongue in one long stroke. Ruby cried out as his tongue spread her labia, moaned when he opened his mouth and sucked on the swollen flesh. She could feel him adjust the grip of his rough hands and moan as he drank down her juices, the knowledge that he enjoyed the taste of her, made her all the wetter. Qrow licked at her clit then shifted downwards again, tracing over the rose of her sex with the tip of his tongue, she shivered and clenched her thighs. He had to flex his arms to keep her thighs apart, he pushed his tongue inside, slowly working his way around her opening pressing firmly.

The silver eyed warrior mewed in a long cry. Leaning forward her hands found their way into his hair grabbing harshly at the thick locks, pulling him to her tighter, while flexing her butt trying to thrust herself on his tongue. She tried to break his grip on her thighs so she could plant her feet and thrust better.

Qrow licked upward and closing his mouth on her pearl, rubbing the soft underside of his tongue rapidly over it, while sucking hard and fast. She screamed above him a long drawn out keen, this time he left the juices that flowed forth. He let go of her thighs and pushed her back onto her back with a hand to her chest. He smirked as she flopped back and panted, smiling silly up at him. “You know, if you want to ride my face, there are better ways to do it.” The pleased rumble of his voice resonated through her bones.

Ruby giggled, flushed and sated. “Teach me about it next time.”

“Hmm, next time.” Qrow moved upwards, brushing his member to her core and she shivered at the contact. He was trying to decide the best way to go about this part, he could push her down and push in. Take her butt in his hands and lift her up and enter her that way, he could roll them over and have her ride him. So very many options, with another hmm he asked. “Would you like to try riding me?”

Ruby licked her lips, she had always enjoyed that with Oz. “Yes please.” She reached up and pushed on his shoulder, he rolled onto his back and she moved to straddle him. She reached down and stroked him, it had been a long time but he was different from Ozpin and she was very grateful to that.

Ruby lowered herself down carefully the wide head of his member making her pause and take it slow. Qrow’s gaze was fixed on her spread sex as he disappeared within her agonizingly slowly,
millimeter by millimeter, sometimes it would be a bit too much for her and she’d rise up undoing all
her hard work. She bit her lip as he gazed at her wolfishly, his sharp stare so utterly transfixed by her
movements. It hurt slightly, she was so wet it was dripping down his member but he hadn’t helped
stretch her beyond his tongue. So slowly she went, her breath catching as he stretched her. A little
yelp escaped her lips as filled her completely her walls clenching around him as she tried to catch her
breath.

Qrow grabbed her hips a little too tightly and held her in place as she quivered, she shifted readying
herself to move. “Don’t, there’s no rush.” He growled out, holding her still, his gaze fixed on their
point of joining. The sight stirred up all sorts of feelings he hadn’t felt in a very long time. “Just
breathe for a minute, I can feel you tensing.”

Easy for him to say he didn’t have a hard male part inside of him, she bit down on her hand and tried
to take deeper breaths. Qrow relaxed his grip and petted up and down her thighs, looking up to her
face. “Just breathe, oh don’t give me that look, I’ve been where you are.”

Ruby smiled at that, of course he would know what she was thinking. “Oh I know.”

Qrow took control lifting her slightly, she moaned and let him take control of her descent, he seemed
to know exactly when to stop. “What’s that like? Being with Oz like you guys do it?” Ruby asked
when he paused again, he looked up at her, talking seemed to be helping her relax.

“Much like what you’re experiencing I imagine, it takes longer to begin with and we almost always
used a condom. And we always used lots of lube, I swear Oz took far too much joy in sliding chilled
lube into my ass. I’m sure he does it just to hear me squawk.” Qrow lifted her up and down again,
letting out a soft moan as her velvety walls fluttered around him. Ruby’s hands clenched her
fingernails digging almost painfully into his abs, he guided her up and down farther this time.

“After that, it’s hard to describe. On one hand I could feel every detail of his cock, on the other as he
would.” Qrow had to pause and pant, the memory mixed with the imagine before him all made his
member throb harder and he knew Ruby could feel it when she let out a cute little mew. “When he
pushed inside all thoughts drained away, and there was just him. He knew.” He groaned when Ruby
worked with him adding a little grind to their actions. “He knew how to angle himself perfectly, no
matter the position, he’d be able to stroke my prostate with every move. I’ll explain later, I don’t
think I can be scientific right now.” Ruby nodded and eased herself down with him when he drew
her down again. She panted for a long moment and rubbed her stomach, she could feel him inside of
her the pain was gone. She licked her lips and purred, at long last they were together.

Qrow traced circles on her love handles with his thumbs, watching her expression as she rubbed little
circles on her belly, he could feel them through her skin. Then Ruby started to rock, lifting herself up
and undulating her hips. He groaned listening to her moan. Qrow’s eyes were fixed on her face as
she arched, throwing her head back, he was sure her eyes were open. His grip tightened on her hips
as her walls pulsed around him, squeezing him tight. He watched her breath catch in her chest in little
flutters, he let go of her hips and grabbed her hands pulling her down to lay on top of him. “There’s
no rush.” He said softly stroking up and down her back.

Ruby relaxed and focused on getting air into her lungs as her core fluttered around him. It felt a bit
better then Oz did, less overwhelming but still that heavy feeling of him within her. “Gods Qrow.”
She mumbled closing her eyes, she loved that feeling. The petite woman grabbed his shoulders and
tucking her face into his neck.

Qrow purred, it was so nice just to hold her. To be with her and within her with none of the usual
worry that he carried with him. He felt her pepper kisses along his neck. “Move please.” Ruby
whispered into his ear.
Qrow closed his eyes and started to rock his hips slowly, little movements born from flexing the muscles of his pelvis. He heard Ruby moan softly in his ear, felt her hands tighten on his shoulders, by the fifth rock she started to move with him, rising up and down with his strokes meeting him in the middle. Gods she felt so good, just grinding felt wonderful.

She pushed herself up on weakened arms and started to lengthen her strokes. Now it was starting to feel good a pleasant ache inside of her, he was constantly brushing over her g-spot. Her eyes bright and shining as she bit her lip and smiled, she arched her back presenting her breasts, gaining confidence in her movements.

Qrow watched her transform from shy to the vixen he knew and loved, he almost stilled his strokes just to watch her. How her lip was caught by her teeth, how her eyes met his and stared deep into his soul. Her hair was starting to stick to her face, those lovely twins started to swing with her strokes and he almost watched just them. A high moan had his eyes snapping back up to her. “Oh Qrow~.” And there was that worshiping of his name again, her lips had parted as she rocked herself down a little harder, the muscles of her tight stomach rolling as she descended on him. Not even Oz said his name quite like that, hearing to tumble from her lips. Qrow grabbed the top of her hip, his rough fingers spanning her back he pulled, guiding her down a little harder.

“QROW~!” Ruby screamed his name as he hit deep within her, he brought his other hand to span her hips and lifted her up and pulled her down harder. “Oh Gods! Qrow, Qrow!” She moaned and screamed his name, babbling praise to him and the deities. She started to bounce on him, his hands loose on her hips, as she rose and fell, wet slapping sounds soon started to fill the air when their hips met.

Qrow grabbed her hips harder, slowing her down, taking some control. He lifted and drew her down over and over, her arms gave out, and she panted against his chest. He moved his hands to her thighs and rolled them over, shifting to brace his weight on his forearms he picked up a much quicker pace with a shorter stroke, driving into her time and time again, their hips slapping together. Gods. Qrow didn’t know if it was her youth, how small she was, or if it was because he loved her, or a little bit of all of the above. He had no compare for how good she felt, when he looked into her eyes he almost came there and then. When she screamed with every thrust inside he knew she had a large g-spot, he’d find it with his fingers later. I’m the luckiest man alive, to have this woman love me.

Ruby wrapped her legs around his hips and wove a hand into his hair as he leaned down over her, her other hand coming up to grab his shoulder so hard she left little red crescents in his skin. Every drive inside sent pleasure firing up her spine, she could feel the head of his cock push against her walls, could feel how she tightened every time he withdrew, ensuring that next stroke was just as blissful as the last. Her breath was heaving between the screams, she lost the ability to form his name when he rolled them over. She could only feel, feel the sweat collecting on their skin, his chest to hers. Feel when he drew his entire torso back to drive into her harder for a longer stroke, her nipples were so hard it almost hurt. A sharp spike of electricity shot up from her clit, each time he slapped his hips forward, how her body resisted yet yielded to him. It all rose and twisted within her, pleasure and tension coiling tighter and tighter.

He moved within her over and over, rocking his hips to hers shortening his strokes, with a soft moan from the back of his throat. Ruby would never be able to find a voice for that feeling, to have him inside of her and to give in to him. Body and soul, her soul had been his for such a long time, but this was different that had always be an unspoken almost distant ownership. This was different, so very different, it felt like she was finally really his and he was hers. It made her heart sing as she moaned and clung to him. As he drove inside again and again, she could feel the sweat start to gather on their skin. Could hear him labour above her, his breath by her ear as he worked his member deeper and deeper inside of her. She drew a deep breath trying to get air into her lungs and let out a long moan,
as the bed creaked under them. Qrow slowed and lengthened his strokes, wishing to draw this out, give her more. He could feel her start to tighten rhythmically around him, the trembles of her limbs, to the squeezing of her sex. *Not yet love, wait for me.*

The silver eyed woman let out a long sighing moan, she was so close, but she could tell he wasn’t. She took deep breaths grateful for the reprieve, if only till he pressed back inside letting a little of his strength behind the movement. Ruby’s eyes widened as her breath seized, there was that feeling again, she could feel every part of him, feel herself yield to his strength. Her body didn’t welcome him, didn’t let him in, it squeezed him, made him work for every mutually blissful stroke. Her silken velvet walls pressing up against the head of his member every time he drove inside, tight and strong, but not as strong as him. She moaned and let her head fall to the side, this resistance her body was so keen on, only made it feel better. Her insides had adapted as much as they were going to, but...

Qrow pushed himself up on one hand and slide the other down her side and grabbed her hips, forcing her to tilt them up slightly. Withdrew in a slow teasing movement till only the head of his member remained inside, then rammed inside throwing his weight behind the stroke. Ruby cried out her arms falling from him to grab the sheet and draw it into fists. She tried to arch her back but Qrow held her hips in place pick up long hard heavy strokes.

The red eyed man couldn’t help the grunt that slipped from his lips, it just felt so good the endless tight squeezing, the heat, the wet slickness. He wasn’t a vocal man during sex, at least not when he was the one doing the riding, when he was subbing, particularly for Oz, all bets were off. She was just so perfect, every part of her, he could feel her walls pulse and flutter around him. See the tension gathering throughout her, how she gasped and moaned with every stroke the little “ah” she made in the back of her throat every time he bottomed out within her. He dipped his head and kissed her neck, drawing his teeth over the slender column. His hindbrain told him to sink his teeth into her neck and have his way with her, the thinking part said no and that he should be more gentle.

He released her hip while driving inside, easing her down to another angle he liked if a bit less intense. Picking up with steady long strokes, he slide his hand up her body, relishing in the feel of her soft skin, he cupped a breast for a moment massaging it as Ruby moaned. Her eyes fluttering as she turned her head back to look up to him. Qrow swallowed, even fogged by lust her eyes were soft the little smile so filled with trust and love. He drew his fingertips up over her chest, brushing over her neck before he slide his hand under the pillow and bent down to kiss her.

Ruby moaned she was so close just a little more, just a little longer, she parted her lips for him and letting him command the kiss, her hands came up and held him just under his shoulder blades, she tightened her legs around his hips and pulled him to her briefly. She wanted to pull him over with her, it was so hard to think, somehow through the building pleasure, she managed to clench herself around him as he drove deep inside. Qrow moaned, shortened his strokes for faster and deep movements. Letting out another softer moan to her louder ones, feeling her tense under him.

Ruby’s minded was gone as he kept up the quick deep thrusts, she barely noticed when he slid a hand out from under the pillow and pulled one of her arms off of him, wove his fingers with hers. Her focused snapped back to when the kiss ended and his fingers tightened around hers. She blinked up at him, red met silver as their lips hovered millimeters apart, she moved her hand over his shoulder and buried it into his hair, tightening her fingers in the black locks. His strokes never wavered or slowed, their lips brushed, breaths were shared.

“I love you.” Qrow’s voice was raspy and harsh, then he kissed her again and braced himself on his forearm. He need more, just a little more, to just feel her, he closed his eyes and gave into that drive within him. He threw his weight in the into pounding thrusts, slamming into her without mercy before she could respond.
Ruby came screaming into the kiss, writhing under him her fingers tightening around his, eyes closed tight. Her body arch beneath him and her legs tightened around his waist, yanking him to her causing him to groan and orgasm himself, his member throbbed over and over, spilling hot thick seed inside of her. Qrow’s own back tried to arch as she held him to her, as his eyes shut as he focused on the kiss, there was no space between them as they came, her body clenching tight around him. Her legs, to her inner walls pulsing and squeezing his member, drawing yet more seed from him, to their fingers woven tightly together.

It was a long orgasm on both their parts, but Qrow came around first with a nearly silent. “Fuck.” Hissing from his lips as he looked down at her. Her hair was a mess sticking to her head her eyes glassily and lidded as she came down, relaxing bit by bit into the bed. In that moment he decided she was the most beautiful thing he’d ever seen, and that this was his favourite look for her. He started to draw back, though he was still very hard, but most women didn’t like it when he lingered.

“Don’t.” Ruby uttered her first word for quite some time, she pulled him back with her tired legs. “Come here.” She looked up to him, silver eyes shining again.

Qrow untangled their fingers and carefully lowered his chest back to hers, slipping his hands under the pillow as Ruby wrapped her arms around his chest and kissed his neck. Qrow tucked his head to hers and relaxed against her. “I’m not to heavy?”

Ruby shook her head slightly and squeezed him as tight as her tired limbs allowed. “Just.. stay.”

Qrow was never going to turn down cuddles, so he stayed, resting his temple against the pillow beside hers. He could hear her breath even out, she pressed kisses to his neck, small chaste ones. “Love you.”

He smiled and shifted, letting his weight rest on their joining point again so he could rise back again to look at her. “Love you too.” They shared a kiss, long and slow, when he moved to pull from her again she let her exhausted sore legs fall to his sides. She moaned softly as he pulled out, she was sore and tender, she closed her legs as he let himself fall to the side.

Qrow reached out and pulled her back into his embrace, Ruby let out a happy little hmm and promptly fell asleep. He smiled at that, pulled the duvet over them and followed suit, who cared it it was the middle of the day.

“Is it safe?” Yang asked as her Dad came down the stairs nibbling on a cookie. He had gone up to check on them, after Yang and he made cookies and a cake. He checked by walking up and down the hall to see if he heard anything, he didn’t.

“I think so. Remind me come spring to get a tighter fitting thicker door for Qrows’ room.” They went into the kitchen and Tai snagged another chocolate chip cookie.

Yang giggled at that. “I am allowed to tease her about screaming the house down?” They’d heard her, despite the effort they put into doing other noisy things.

“No,” Tai paused and thought a moment. “Well okay, but be nice, I know Qrow I have a feeling she didn’t really get what she was getting into, till she was getting on it.”

“Eww dad! That is my uncle and my sister you are talking about!” Yang shook her head trying to
“Half sister,” he corrected, normally it wasn’t something that he brought up but in this context it was important. “You have to remember that when talking about the two of them.” He leveled his steely gaze on her. “And as you’ve gotten so fond of saying, you’re an adult now we adults poke fun at each other all the time.” Taiyang was good as dishing it, he was less good at receiving it but Yang didn’t have any material to use against him so he was happy.

Yang glared at him and ate her cookie. “So movie?”

Tai picked up the plate of cookies and a pitch of milk, with his pinky grabbing his cup. “Movie, I’ll give them an hour before they wake up.”

Tai’s guess was right on the dot, how he knew, was his to know and everyone else's to wonder. Qrow woke up first and woke Ruby by petting up and down her back, his fingers teasing over her behind. His woman stirred and winced, she hurt, like Ow, stop and address it kind of hurt. She blinked up at him and kissed his neck, and squeezed her legs together, her thighs were sticky and she was very sore between them. “You okay?” Qrow asked feeling her pained twitches, guilt stabbed at him, this was one thing he had been afraid of, he hurt her.

Ruby shook her head and he rolled them over, moving down her body and kissing between her hips, a whisper of his Aura sinking inside of her to sooth the pain. She sighed softly as the pain eased but felt more more of their fluids leak from her. “I’m gonna make a wet spot.”

Qrow parted her legs with a hand as little as he could and licked up her sex, lapping up their fluids. Her eyes widened and she let out a soft moan, she hadn’t expected him to do that. “Would you like a bath? It will help with your legs.” He massaged the strained inner tendon joining her hips to her thighs for emphasis, guilt twisted inside of him, he’d been so careful only to lose himself in her at the end.

Ruby nodded, that hurt a little but it also felt good. “Okay.” She shifted to get up, Qrow stopped her with a hand on her waist. “Wait here.” With considerably more spry than Ruby thought was fair, Qrow was up off the bed grabbing his towels and out of the room. She closed her eyes and sighed softly listening to him move around, he went to her room, probably to grab her towels, then she heard the water run in the bathroom and he came back.

Qrow paused in the doorway a moment to observe her, her legs were drawn together tight and he knew they still hurt, after all she had taken the brunt of his weight over and over. However the rest of her was relaxed, she had her eyes shut and her chest was softly rising and falling. He could see slight purple hickies on her nipples from when he had sucked on them. Her hair was fanned out on the bedding, it had gotten longer in the last few weeks and had a little more red in it. He walked softly over and she looked up at him and smiled. So beautiful, inside and out. He very carefully picked her up cradling her to his chest.

“Hmm, free ride.” She purred. “I should let you remove my ability to walk more often.”

Qrow chuckled and took her to the bathroom. “Something tells me that won’t be a problem anymore.” He set her down on the edge of the large tub and she bit her lip and asked. “Could you step out for a second?”
Qrow raised a brow then clued in. “Oh right yeah, I've a thing I need to get.” He zipped from the bathroom.

By the time she was done using the facilities, Qrow came back, announcing himself by knocking first, he found her perched where he left her, testing the slowly rising water with a finger. “You okay?” He asked opening the bag he’d brought back and putting five small scoops of purple salt into the water.

“Yeah, what's that?” Ruby asked, shifting on the tub to stick her foot in. It was round and very large as was needed to be comfortable for men of Taiyangs and Qrows size. A perk to building your own house was you could do whatever you wanted in the bathroom. It was just a coincidence that the bath was also large enough for two to use as well.

“Lavender epsom salts. There are three fine things in life above all else you'll learn to appreciate above all else after a month or two in the road.” He raising a finger with each point, then setting the bag aside. “Soft lavatory paper, good dentistry and hot water.”

Ruby giggled as Qrow tested the water, it was hot, just this side of painful and turning purple with the salts. He stepped in and sat legs crossed in the circular tub, then reached over and pulled her into his lap, with her back to his front. When the water came up over her breasts he reached over and turned the water off.

She purred when Qrow ran his hands up the insides of her thighs and drew them apart slightly, he pressed his fingers to the joining point of her hips and started to massage in gentle circles. Ruby rested her cheek against his chest turned toward his neck. “Ow.”

Qrow almost winced and made his touch even lighter and started to massage in little strokes along the tendon. “Better?” He asked, he could feel her relax against his chest, her thighs falling open bit by bit.

“Mhmhm.” Ruby could feel the hot water at her core, it was soothing, she guessed that was what the bath salts were for.

Qrow shifted his hands again, using his palms as well as fingers to massage her hips. Ruby let out a soft moan and spread her legs as they relaxed giving Qrow more room to work. She wasn’t really aware how long he worked on her legs, but before long they felt like they were back to normal. Turning her head and snuggling into him with a wiggle of her hips, she kissed his chest. “This is nice.”

He smiled, letting his fingers drift up and down her thighs. “I thought you’d like it, and the salts will help you heal.” He left out that it was also making her skin feel even smoother than normal.

“Where’d you get them?” Ruby looked down to his hands, up and down they went, rough pads feeling softer in the water. She moved her hands to draw circles on Qrow’s forearms as he petted her legs, it was a very nice feeling if he wasn’t careful she’d start thinking about another round.

“Mistral, one perk to traveling I guess, sometimes I find something worth taking home. Remind me to take you to a bathhouse when we go there.” He felt her wiggle her butt and he smirked, letting his fingers drift higher and higher up her thighs as he stroke.

The silver eyed woman purred and lifted herself slightly, grinding her butt against him. “Sounds like a plan.”

“Something tells me it’s not the only plan you’ve got right now.” Qrow said casually while tracing
over her labia parting them with both hands, teasing fingers moving in unison, his middle fingers ghosting over her core. He wasn’t surprised she wanted more, he’d just endeavor to do a better job of putting her first, maybe she’d let him stay out of her this time. He’d much rather pleasure her without running the risk of hurting her because his control slipped.

Ruby bit her lip and pressed herself back against his chest while, bucking her hips forward slightly. She could feel the water flow over her core, but Qrow lifted his fingers out of the way when she bucked, depriving her of any contact. He chuckled when she let out a little huff of annoyance and went back to tracing over her folds and vulva. “No interior play while in water, it’s not good enough lubricant. And aren’t you still sore?”

“A little, but I think my Aura has healed me and the water has helped with my muscles.” Ruby turned her head and kissed his collarbone.

Qrow thought on that, while tapping a finger on her clit, he felt her jump slightly in his arms with every tap. He was reluctant to take her again, he decided to test the metaphorical waters then go from there. He turned her around and lifted her up to sit on the edge of the tub with her back to the wall. The tub was high enough and the lip wide enough that it was really quite comfy for Ruby. Steam curled up from the water keeping her warm as Qrow shifted to sit between her legs, rising up to kneel so he could kiss her. Sure his knees would scream at him later, but he had a feeling it would be worth it. Ruby spread her legs a comfortable distance her thighs resting on either side of his hips. She met him when he leaned up to kiss her, he trailed his fingers up the side of her thigh. She mewed into the kiss when he pressed a single finger inside of her, his palm facing upwards.

Qrow hummed, he could feel that her silken walls were slightly still swollen so she wasn’t completely healed. He gently felt around rotating his finger slowly, feeling her jump and twitch. He broke the kiss and watched her very closely as she leaned against the cool tiled wall, biting her lip. “How’s that feel?” He asked looked up to her, watching her carefully.

It hurt a little, mostly around her entrance and he kept brushing something along her front wall, he was being so gentle with his exploration that it was hard to tell. “It’s okay.” She touched her entrance where his finger was, “Hurts a little bit here though.” she gasped and shivered when another rotation of his finger brushed that spot again. “And whatever you just did felt good.”

He eased his finger back and pressed the pad of his finger to her front wall, then gently push inward again. He could feel the change from silken flesh to that slightly spongy texture, with a smirk he pressed his finger to it and moved it back and forth.

Ruby shouted out a moan, jerking against him, her head falling back against the wall for a moment. Before she snapped her gaze to his and grabbed the edges of the tub to ground herself as she rocking her hips on his finger. She saw him smirk and let out another little yelp when he pressed his thumb to the left of her clit and pushed her back against the lip of the tub. He rotated his finger again testing her entrance, she flexed her butt again with a little shudder, it still stung a bit but was getting better.

Qrow could feel her insides start to dilate, Well then. He thought and carefully added another finger, watching her closely, when she moaned and rocked her hips, he guessed it was safe to say she was doing fine. “You okay?” He asked, his eyes darting down to his fingers as he worked her with steadily firmer actions, slipping in a third finger when he felt her spread enough for it.

Ruby moaned softly, flexed and rocked her hips forward in time with his fingers, her gazed swept over them to the fingers he had buried inside of her. Her eyes flicked to the part of him standing at attention all neglected and wanting. She bit her lip and pulled at his fingers for him to stop, Qrow
raised a brow at her but removed his fingers. His question was swiftly answered when she ran her palm over the head of his member. “Please.” She asked looking into his red eyes.

He’d always been bad at denying a pleading woman, and he had always been terrible at tell her no. The red eyed man stood taking ahold of her hips and lifting her up holding her against the wall. “You sure?” He’d be more careful this time, be more gentle, keep his weight off of her and keep control.

“I did just ask didn’t I?” Feeling bold she parted her folds for him and bit her lip again, looking up to him.

Qrow loved that, one of his favourite things was watching someone pleasure themselves, seeing her spread herself for him. Gods, he lined up and pushed very slowly inside, he could feel her tremble. It was so much easier this time, but he still took it slow a long moan slipping from his throat as he slid within her. They hadn’t even done much as she was so ready, wet satin silk wrapping tightly around him. He grit his teeth, he wouldn’t loss it this time, no matter how tight, hot and welcoming she felt.

Ruby braced her hands on the wall, he was holding her still so she couldn’t move her hips, his fingers digging into her skin. She wrapped her legs loosely around his hips and let out a moan of her own, this felt different it was a strange mix of him having more control over it. He could sink inside and rest his weight on her, but he didn’t he was almost wary of doing so. She studied him, he was biting his lip, eyes closed, she could feel him shift his feet, hear the water move as he took all of his weight off of her. He broke her concentration, when their hips met, the feel of him causing her to moan. He was going so slow, being so careful, she could feel the tension of his muscles.

She shifted her legs wrapping them more tightly around his hips and tried pulling him to her. Qrow didn’t let her, he could feel the pressure of her attempt on his back, but it was easy to ignore. He brought their hips together slowly but was careful to keep just a few millimeters between them. He watched Ruby bite her lip, a little moan rose in the back of her throat as she let her head fall to one side.

The raven haired man started with slow long strokes, watching her every movement, the flutter of her eyes, the rise and fall of her chest. The way her hands grabbed at the tiles as she tried to push herself to him, he could feel her try and pull him to her harder. Ruby could feel his gaze, he was holding her tight enough to keep her still but not tight enough to excite. She looked up to him, his brow was furrowed and she reached up and grabbed him by the back of the head, yanking him down. She tightened her fingers in his hair till it almost hurt, Qrow surprised caused him to falter on a inward stroke their hips slammed together. Ruby let out a loud moan tightening her legs around him so he couldn’t ease off. She kissed him deeply, pressing her tongue to his lips till they parted at let her in.

Qrow let out a moan and let her dominate the kiss, she was no Oz but he would definitely give her a A for effort. He let go of her hips and wove his fingers into her damp hair, teeth clashed as he fought back, their tongues meeting in the middle. He wondered what brought his on but his thoughts were cut short when she squeezed her walls around him, rolling her belly to help create a ripping and squeezing feeling around his member. He devoured the moan from her as his fingers tightened in her hair almost matching her grip of his.

Ruby was annoyed with him again, almost to the point where she wanted to slap him again. She could feel the restraint he had been applying, he was still afraid of hurting her. The kiss was to take some control, to distract him till she figured out what to do. If only she could just spin them around… Qrow felt the smile then an all too familiar yank behind his navel.

“SHIT RUBY!” Qrow exclaimed a moment later when they formed him sitting on the edge of the tub, he had to let go of her to grab it so he didn’t fall on his ass while he tried to get his feet under
him. Ruby grabbed his shoulders and fold her legs so she had some leverage and started to rid him
with determination and purpose. Qrow had to hold himself in place as she raised herself up and
slammed herself down as hard as she could.

She let out a high moan throwing her head back, now this was what she wanted. She go of his
shoulders and wove her fingers into her hair raising it up pulling slightly. She quickly found a
stroke that felt perfect, driving him deep within her, while giving her the control to roll her hips when
she wished. She rose as high as she could then let gravity take her back down, her eyes fluttering as
he bit her lip. She could feel him lock his body under her so they didn’t fall, she looked down to him
and smiled. He was almost glaring at her, she let go over hair and palmed her breasts massaging them
in large circles, moaning for his viewing pleasure.

Her thighs started to burn as she tried to impale herself on his member. She felt the pleasure build
rapidly instead of her, no more of that teasing. She thought and grabbed his shoulders nails digging
into his skin. Again she stared into his near black eyes, she couldn’t name the expression on his face.
The shock had faded, now his lips were set in a line though she could see the subtle twitches of
muscle in his jaw that said he was moments away from snarling. The silver eyed woman let smiled
her own little determined grin, and threw her weight down on her next thrust.

The moment their hips met with a wet slap Qrow moved, a hand grabbed her by her butt the other by
the back of her head. Faster than she could follow he had moved her back to the wall. There he let
her head go and grabbed her legs and threw them over his shoulders. He drove into her harder, not as
hard as he would have preferred, but hard enough to have her kneening every time he moved back
inside. “Is this what you want?” He growled, he didn’t mean to sound so aggressive, but there was a
reason him and Oz fucking had been was pretty close to him and Oz fighting for a while.

Ruby grabbed his forearms and tried to move with him, her stare said ‘what do you think?’ Qrow
reined himself in, being careful to hold back, he could feel her flutter around him. He watched as her
eyes slide shut as she moaned out louder, the steam from the water coiled around them collecting on
their skin in little droplets mixing with sweat. Out of curiosity Qrow changed his stroke adding more
of a swing of his hips.

Ruby screamed, coming fast and hard around him, she missed his smirk as he threw a little of his
strength into his movements, closing his own eyes to just enjoy the movement. Her fingers dug into
his forearms caused him to open his eyes, they look on her face made his heart seeze. Though the
orgasmic haze, there was that loving smile she saved for when he did something special, the one she
used when he did something romantic, plucking a peach petal from the air and presenting it to her
with a sweeping bow. Making her breakfast on her birthday, or when they snuggled up alone to
watch the fireplace. He pulled her legs down and wrapped them around his hips, bending down he
kissed her softly.

The silver eyed woman purred softly, breath heaving as she tried to keep up with him, he just keep
going driving into her over and over. Her mind was a fog of pleasure, she managed to start rock her
hips to him, trying to give him more, his lips on hers were so very distracting, she parted her lips and
let him inside. His moan was a reward all of its own, she could feel it when his movements started to
get rougher. When his fingers started to bite into her hips and his breath deepen, she almost smiled
had she not been busy trying to keep up with his kiss. This was what Ruby wanted, she wanted to
please him just as much as he did her. Sure she was getting sore and the tension was coiling tight in
her belly again, but she wanted to bring him over with her.

Qrow felt her clench around him, squeezing every centimeter of his member for all her worth and
came with a soft moan, he could feel Ruby follow him over moaning loudly into their kiss. He broke
the kiss and pressed his forehead to hers, he opened his eyes to watch her climax, the way her eye
squeezed shut and lips parted. The red eyed man smiled and held her tight to him as he turned and sat back in the water, Ruby snuggled into his chest with a sleepy sigh.

He rested his head against the edge of the tub, holding her gently to his chest with an arm. The water had cooled, but then it had been very hot when they got in so the drop was very nice. After a while Ruby stirred and sat up, wiggling on his member in a very pleasant way. She giggled when she felt him twitch inside of her and looked slowly down to her. Qrow leaned down and kissed her so she didn’t have to move. “You okay?”

“Very.” She rocked her hips again, she noticed it was easier in the water, though she was mindful of what he said and didn’t raise herself off of him. Just contented herself to rocking her hips and tightening her walls around him. She reached up and traced her fingers down over his chest. “Qrow,” She wasn’t sure how to go about her question. “Why were you being so careful? I could tell you were, so don’t deny it.”

“I hurt you before.” Qrow reached up and cupped her cheek, brushing it gently with his thumb.

Ruby’s brow furrowed. “When?”

“At the end, I lost control I went harder than I should have.” Guilt again tightened in his chest, he’d done it again here. She just felt so good and egged him on so much, he watched as Ruby shook her head and kissed his palm.

“It feels the best when you do that.”

“No.” She looked up into his pale red eyes. “You listen to me, I know you are afraid of hurting me, but I’m not made of glass! I like when you do what you like, yes I was a little bit sore before. But that is normal, I was always sore after Oz and I were together.” She rocked her hips again tightening and releasing her core around him. “If I was really hurt I won’t be able to do that. Please stop being so afraid, I’m not going anywhere.”

Qrow winced, so that was why she used her Semblance to take control. “Sorry, it’s just.” He ran his hand down her back to span her hips... her small hips. Sure they were rounding out but how small she was, it just served to remind him of how careful he needed to be. She didn’t get it, but he was a Huntsman even without using Aura he could probably break her hip just from squeezing it too hard. “You don’t know just how strong I am, if I forget myself, I could really hurt you. You’re so small as it is.” He gripped a hip and steadily applied pressure till she bit her lip. “I wouldn’t even have to try Ruby, just forget. Jimmy and Glynda used to be a thing, but he forgot once and she has refused to go near him ever since.” He let her hip go knowing the bruise would be gone in moments. “Ozpin has broken my arm once, he dislocated it another time.”

Ruby’s brows shot up, she couldn’t imagine Oz doing that. Even in the throes of passion he had never hurt her, being sore and hurt weren’t the same thing.

“It was before we really figured out our limits, Oz likes it when his partners put up a fight and I am really good at that. He’s always careful mind you, but we were both younger and very eager, accidents happened.” Qrow explained, he didn’t want Ruby to worry. Oz could also shred most anything under this fingers, many sheets had been lost to his grip. He wondered how many Ozpin had wretched sleeping with Ruby or if he had found some other way to redirect that urge.

Ruby nodded understanding, people made mistakes she closed her eyes and remembered the feel of Oz when they slept together or practiced, the control he always had. Oz was incredibly strong and it
wasn’t all just in his Aura, she also thought she would really like being chased. “Well, I’m not Glynda and you’re not Ironwood, though.” She wiggled her hips and felt him twitch and brush her g-spot. “you do seem to have it. My point being is that we aren’t those people. I don’t want you to be trying not to hurt me all the time, can you just try and let go? I’m on the pill this.” She squeezed him again. “Is just for us because we want to and it feels good, because I like having you here and I want to make love to you. But we won’t figure out what we like, till we try stuff and we can’t try stuff till you let your guard down.”

Qrow sighed, she was right, he’d ruin this for them if he kept worrying so much. “I’ll try.” He said softly, leaning in to kiss her again.

Ruby purred and broke the kiss for a moment, “Good.” then she smirked, Qrow would grow to know that smirk very well. “Now, I want to see if we can make this work.” She rocked her hips again, tightening and releasing her walls. “Cause someone is still standing to attention and I want to make use of it.”

Qrow laughed a deep rasping laugh that made his whole chest shake, Ruby beamed at him, happy to finally have him relax. He shook his head, kissed her again and said with a hungry growl of his own and a flex of his hips pressing up deep inside of her causing her to moan softly. “Oh we can.”
Oz woke up with a splitting headache, he groaned and hid his face in his pillow. “Oww.” He muttered, he felt like a teenager again who had just discovered booze. He felt a hand on his head and a presence sit on the edge of his bed.

Softly a voice said. “Drink this.”

“No.” Oz curled up away from the presence, he covered his exposed ear. He knew distantly in the back of his throbbing head, that he was being childish, but to be fair he hadn’t been hungover like this in a very long time. He most definitely didn’t have Qrow’s tolerance for the drink, despite being a much larger man. Though to be fair, Qrow probably had the liver of a god by now.

The voice remained soft but took on an amused tone. “You know it’s only going to get worse if you don’t do anything about it.”

Oz forced his eyes open, turning slowly over to find Harkness sitting on his bed, large tankard in his hand. “Come on. It’s just orange juice, get some sugar and water into you.” The black haired man slowly sat up, Harkness grab his right hand to help and offered the tankard again. Oz took it and had a small sip, the sweet juice was a welcome contrast to the cottony feeling in his mouth.

“I take it you don’t drink much?” Harkness asked as Oz took larger and larger drinks.

“No.” Oz said voice still rough. “Up till recently I didn’t drink at all, unless it was to tease Qrow.”

“Tell me about him.” Harkness asked, drawing Oz to his side.

Oz tried to glare at him but the muscles in his face protested very loudly.

“Ease up Professor, there are no friends of Salem on this ship, a war only means more work for us and that is something no one here wants. Plus war is bad for business and we like the world the way it is.” He rubbed up and down Oz’s back.

Ozpin sighed and finished the juice, it really was helping, he was also hungry but he ignored it. He had gotten good at that, ignoring hunger pangs, he went to some lengths to avoid the mess hall.

Harkness added speaking again. “We’ll even hide you from her if need be. I get that you are lonely and homesick, talking will help. So tell me about Qrow.”

“He’s about six feet tall, his body is about twenty-two, though he is thirty seven in mental age. His hair is a messy black almost feathered and it thick, so much fun to run your fingers through. His’s, I guess what could be called athletic slim and pale skin, not to much just a few shades lighter than mine.” Oz smiled vacantly. “He’s got pale red eyes, his sisters are more of blood red. I always liked his best, they can be so sharp one moment and so soft the next.”

“So he’s built like you?” Harkness asked.

Oz shook his head very slightly. “I’m much broader, he’s practically delicate in comparison.” Oz smiled with a little chuckle. “Tai used to call him xiao niao, for the longest time I couldn’t figure out if he meant little piss or little bird, or if he was calling Qrow delicate. Though the blush from Qrow should have been a hint.”
“Delicate?”

“Delicate.” Oz confirmed with a grin. “I figured it out the first time I pinned him down to a bed. Tai is shorter but very strong, more than strong enough to hold Qrow down, Qrow would have been very slight when they messed around.”

“You mentioned he had a bad Semblance.” Harkness asked, reducing the touches on Oz’s back to just his thumb petting him. He had a pretty good idea of the extent of the scaring, it was healed very well but still present.”

“Misfortune, he brings bad luck wherever he goes. I have a theory that if he is bonded to a person the effects are reduced for that person, but I don’t think it stops the passive stuff that could happen.” Oz had been thinking about it for a long time.

“Gods.” Harkness whispered, that would be a pretty shitty Semblance. “I guess that explains his name.”

“It’s a warning, his ‘family’ was rather cruel when it came to names. His sister Raven, you can guess which one was favoured when they grew up. When Qrow first came to Beacon, he was a skinny rake that could barely be counted as healthy, while his sister was a bossy, wild and much stronger.” Oz snarled. “I could never stand her.”

Harkness slide his hand up and drew little circles on Oz’s neck. “I take it you did something?”

Oz nodded. “I was Beacon’s defense instructor, I’m only a couple years older than Qrow. He started with a sword but it always looked, I don’t know wrong in his hands. I started to seek him out, getting him away from Raven’s verbal abuse was just a bonus, she liked to blame him when anything went wrong. Rather than acknowledge her own character flaws, anyway I took Qrow as an apprentice. It took awhile but one day I gave him a scythe,” Oz smiled a warm genuine smile that no one on the ship had seen before. “The look he gave me, within the space of thirty seconds we knew we had found his weapon.”

“So how did you two become lovers?”

“Not right away.” Oz looked away staring into a dark corner of the dreary room. “I caught him doing stupid shit sometimes, usually after something had gone horribly wrong with his team. It got the point where I’d go looking for him after something happened, he was and is still stubborn when it comes to asking for help. He blames himself for everything, carries guilt and shame around for things he didn’t do. Semblance be damned, and Raven was very good at making him feel worthless, I still think it was her that planted the idea that he should end his existence.” Oz truly hated Raven, sure they had been younger and stupid but that was no excuse. He took a deep breath. “But I guess seeking him out started to lay the foundations of our relationships.”

“Couldn’t you do anything about it? Break up the team?” Harkness asked, he would need to get food soon here, he didn’t like how Oz’s collarbone stuck out from his chest.

Oz shook his head, the hangover was starting to dissipate. “I tried, the other teachers saw that they balanced each other. The best I could do was give Qrow a place to hide, Qrow became very powerful and life at Beacon healed whatever physical damage he grew up with. I guess the downside to teaching him myself, was it got to the point where I am the only one who can really beat him in a fight now. He and Tai usually well tie, as Tai knows to be on the lookout for things Qrow’s Semblance could affect.” Oz barked out a laugh. “Qrow has one of the most powerful Semblances I’ve seen and I don’t even think he realizes it. He says that it’s always there, I think he locked it down when he was a child and never learned how to use it. I don’t think it’s always there, I think it’s
always leaking out.” He wrung his hands together, he was worried, a lifetime of suppressing a Semblance couldn’t end well.

Naga was going to have a problem with that, stuff would break just because if Qrow was allowed on the ship. “What about Ruby?”

“Ruby’s simpler and more complicated, she’s only seventeen but... Gods it’s hard to explain to someone who hasn’t met her. She knows herself very well, better then most adults, Qrow was her honorary uncle.” Oz glanced over and stressed. “Was, they aren’t related by blood, her half sisters’ mother was Raven, Raven left and Qrow stuck around. He trained to her to be a huntress, I don’t know where or when but somewhere along the line, Ruby fell in love. She eventually told him and after a period of adjustment, Qrow started to love her back. Beyond these growing feelings and admissions, nothing changed, till Beacon. As I said she is very perceptive at times. I made many mistakes, but she forgave me and Qrow and I sorted ourselves out. We ended up working very well together.” Oz smiled remembering her beauty when they were together.

“She sounds very special.”

“She’s a silver eyes.” Oz said smiling off into the distance, lovely shining beautiful silver eyes.

Harkness brain stalled, now that was something they’d have to hide from Naga.

“What?” Oz asked feeling Harkness tense up beside him.

“I’m asking because Jack wants to give you time with them, while you were sleeping we tried to work out a plan. But we need to know a bit about Qrow and Ruby before we can make a guess at what Naga will do. Jack wanted your help because he needed an extra hand with the Grimm, now you are saying that one of your loves is a Silver Eyes. Naga’s not going to let her slip away if she comes on board.” Harkness explained then shook his head. “I’ll talk it over with the others, Naga can only ‘see’ if she takes on a physical from, so long as Ruby doesn’t look at her it should be okay.”

“Thank you.” Ozpin said.

“It’s nothing, with how complicated this all this, I’m sure someone someday will write a romance novel about it.” Harkness said with a smile.

Oz chuckled. “No thank you, ‘The man with two souls’ is bad enough.”

Harkness got up and pulled Oz to his feet. “Come on, let’s get you some food.”

“What time is it?” Oz asked.

“Almost dinner why?” The blue eyed man said.

Oz shifted away, putting his back to a wall. “I’ll wait till after the crowds have gone.”

Harkness didn’t believe that for one second. “I’ll wait till after the crowds are gone, probably turned into, I’ll wait till breakfast and then lunch. ‘Liar, what about the mess hall bugs you?”

Oz swallowed, he’d already said so much to someone he didn’t know, but he knew he needed help so softly under his breath. “The smell of cooking meat. I can eat it just fine after, I just can’t be around it as it’s cooking and open flame. Candles are fine, but I made a campfire once and a Grimm had to . . break me out of it. Heat’s fine so long as I am facing it.”

Harkness pursed his lips. “Those were pretty simple.” he knew how to help with those. “Think you
can go without your shirt? I know a trick that might help.”

Oz stiffened up. “The Crew—.”

“Has more than its fair share of issues, Jack picks up strays more often than not. My job is more than just chief engineer to a ship that can heal itself.” Harkness said with a raised brow.

“Oh, right.” Oz hadn’t known the ship could fix itself but then it did have an Aura. He reached across his chest to rub his shoulder, the scars pronounced on his skin.

“And your tattoos do a very good job of hiding your scars, you have to be touching to know they are there. Come on.” Harkness opened the door and stepped out waiting for Oz.

Oz glanced at his shirt and cloak over the footlocker, he pursed his lips and followed Harkness. He seemed to know what he was doing and Oz was getting tired of being afraid of fire. Harkness led him a side door but not into the mess hall, “Wait here.” he walked swiftly off he needed to get something.

Smells started to waft under Oz’s nose, he pinched his nose closed and took deep breaths through his mouth. Staring at the floor and refusing to close his eyes, he had his eyes closed when Amber’s machine blew up behind him. The last thing he needed was the darkness and the smell.

Oz jumped when an ice cold cloth was rubbed up and down his back, taking care to go over every centimeter of skin.

“You’re fine, you’re not burning.” Harkness said softly, pulled Oz’s hand gently away from his nose. “It’s just food, not you.” Up and down the cold cloth went, water dripped down his back.

Oz drew deeper and harsher breaths. *I’m fine, I’m fine, I’m fine.*

Harkness licked his lips, softly said almost whispering, all the while moving the cold cloth. “I must not fear. Fear is the mindkiller. Fear is the little death that total obliteration. I will face my fear. I will permit it to pass over me and through me. And when it has gone past I will turn the inner eye to see its path. Where the fear has gone there will be nothing. Only I will remain.”

Ozpinned repeated it over in his mind, he already knew the concepts involved so he found it easy to work with the litany. The cloth helped, the smells curled under his nose but the cold kept his nerves cold so no matter the signals his brain sent, he knew he wasn’t burning. “Never heard that one before.”

“I should hope not, I made it, I have a shorter version but I find the longer one works better.” Harkness unfolding the cloth so it could lie over Oz’s chest and back without falling off. “Come on let’s get something to eat.” Harkness put his hand on the small of Oz’s back and guided him into mess.

Oz was very thankful it was busy enough that no one seemed to notice them come in. The heart of the room had a long table, filled end to end with people. Oz had seen many of them but never spoken to them, he made his breaths shallow and tried to block out the noise as Harkness led him to an empty side table. “I’ll be right back.”

He left to get them food and Oz sat silently, kneading his hands together. *I’m fine, I’m not on fire.* He reached up to the cloth and pressed it down so water dripped from it. *See stupid hindbrain, I’m fine. I’m not burning, I’m not burning.* The scent and sounds of cooking meat enveloped him, his breaths started to quicken and his fingers bit into the cloth. He stared blankly at the table and completely missed Lizzy approach.
She saw fear start to close in around Oz from across the hall and enforced her voice with her Semblance. “Calm down, Harkness will be back in a moment.”

Oz felt her power but didn’t fight it, repeating the litany in his mind and trying to slow his breathing down.

She sat down across from Oz and poked at her food, she left Will with Jack, but they were going to stay away. Oz was as skittish as a deer as it was, the last thing he needed was more people around.

Harkness appeared, placing a bowl of stew and piece of bread before Oz before sitting down beside him and nodding to Lizzy. He reached out and moved the damp cloth over Oz’s back. “Eat something.” Harkness said softly.

Oz obeyed silently working his way through the meal, why Harkness presence calmed him he couldn’t say, but it did. It was a bit strange to have hot food again, rather just a handful of dates and a bottle of mudders milk. The stew was a bit thin and the vegetables were clearly had been dehydrated but the little bits of fish were fresh and the venison had been clearly stored in salt. In short it wasn’t very good, but he was hungry so it tasted just fine to him.

Lizzy poked at her food and kept an eye on both of them, it was very odd seeing Oz without his cloak or shirt. The tattoos curved around his muscles and from how they lay on his face and neck, she figured he must have shaved his head to have them inked. That must have been painful. “So we’ll be coming, upon Patch in around two weeks, shortly after the solstice. Do you have any traditions for winter?”

Oz finished the stew and started on the bread. “Not really, Vale has a festival but I don’t imagine that will be happening this year.” His stomach turned, if Berath was real, did that mean Rymrgand was as well? He did not like that idea one bit.

“Well Jack holds a little something, there are songs, he brings out the good stuff. You should join in.” Lizzy said casually, setting her elbow on the table and rested her chin in her hand.

Oz shook his head and finished the bread. “Not my idea of fun.”

“You can’t blame me for trying.” Lizzy said and got up, giving a small wave. “Talk you to you later Harkness.”

“Catch you around Lizz.” Harkness said and set the cloth, it was mostly try now over Oz’s shoulder. “How are you doing?”

“Alright.” Oz said, the hall was starting to remind him of Beacons mess hall, the noise stopped making him twitch and he feel a bit better to have food in him. A smiled twitched at his lips, he remembered the food fight that teams RWBY and JNPR, given the stains on the walls something similar must happened here in the past. He wondered if his staff was okay, probably Glynda, Bartholomew and Peter were tough cookies.

Harkness finished his food quickly. “Would you like to stick with me for the rest of the day?”

Oz’s first thought was no, but then he didn’t really have a reason to say no. “I suppose.”

“Follow me then.” Harkness picked up their bowls and made his way towards the kitchens, Oz got to the eve before the smell got to be a bit much. He came to a lurching halt and dived back out into the mess. He pressed a hand to his nose and the other came up and grabbed the drying towel. The noise started to feel oppressive, he barely found the door out before all but bashing it out of the way and running down a random corridor.
The cloth had dried and his skin was crawl, he pressed his back to a cold hall and tried to find that
calm place again. He barely came to a stop before Harkness had his hands on his shoulders and his
semblance distracting him. “Easy, you’re okay.” He took the dry cloth from Oz, and set it over his
arm. “Sorry, I wanted to see how close you could get. You did really well, you almost got to the
kitchen, before you could barely get into the mess.” Harkness pulled him away from the wall before
Naga had a chance to delve too deep into the fractured man. “Come on, let’s go to my cabin and talk
some more. Maybe we’ll work on helping you with open flame.”

Oz let himself be lead away, deeper into the ship, it was so nice to let someone help him for once. So
he went without a fight, Harkness had already helped him twice and he had no reason to distrust him
anymore.

Harkness’s help came just in time, for Qrow and Ruby stopped sending Aura from that night on.
With that loss the comfort they provided that Oz had grown accustomed too, his sleep patterns took a
turn for the worse. He dreamed of fire and of burning, Harkness had opened his door for whenever
Oz needed aid. Oz didn’t miss the sexual suggestion behind that, but he wanted Qrow and Ruby.
They were close and he could feel it.

By the third day of this, dark circles had formed under his eyes and he didn’t speak, barely ate or
slept. Only appearing when Grimm did, slaughtered them without care of how much power he
showed before retiring to his cabin. He wanted peace and quiet, simply stopped responding when
called upon. Harkness was powerless to help someone who didn’t want aid.

That all changed on the fourth night, when the Aura returned while he rested in that fitful state
between true sleep and awareness. The memories were crisp and clear, the apology profound. Oz
didn’t blame them, even if Qrow had been an idiot he only wished he could reach out to them. Tell
them how much he missed them, how he didn’t blame them at all for disappearing. That night he got
up after the Aura had faded, sneaked into the kitchens and raided the leftovers that the chiefs set aside
for those hungry in the middle of the night. Ate till he was stuffed, something he hadn’t done since
Beacon, then made his way to Harkness cabin.

The man was nothing short of amazed to find Oz standing outside his door with a smile on his face.
The black haired man simply said. “They’re okay.” Harkness smiled shook his head and let Oz in
and they picked up where they had felt off.

Ozpin actually began to enjoy life on the ship, mid winter started to close in on them and he noticed
things. Lanterns started to appear and be hung around the ship, in every corner or alcove. He was
leaning against the rail upon the quarterdeck when movement in the water caught his attention. Oz
squinted and cautiously called. “Gibbs, what’s that?” He pointed at the back that broke the surface of
sea again.

The older human came over and followed Oz’s finger, a smile bloomed over his features and he
shouted. “GET OUT THE HARPOONS AND LINES LADS! WE’VE A LIVYATAN ON
PORTSIDE!” Gibbs raced back to the wheel and turned the ship to chase the whale.
Ozpin was unprepared for the happy screams and hollers that came up from the ship. Near the entire crew burst out upon the deck hunting gear in hand. Captain Jack was among them and he cast the first harpoon.

Oz turned his gaze away and walked down into the ship as they caught their prize. Whaling never sat well with him, but hungry was hungry and he knew they’d be eating well tonight. The ship almost seemed to be humming around him, feeding off the joy of her crew. Ozpin eventually found himself in the engine room. The massive things he still didn’t understand, they churned occasionally but the whale was already caught they didn’t need any speed.

Harkness looked up from his calibrating. “You’re not going to help? I heard Gibbs all the way down here.”

“Not… my thing.” Ozpin said drawing his cloak tight around him, though the chill still seeped into him.

“Better us then some Grimm.” Jack pulled out another stool and put it beside him.

“It’s still wrong.” Oz walked over and sat looking over the illuminated console that Jack was working with.

“It will all get used. Eaten, traded, crafted in some way shape or form.” Jack said not looking up from his tinkering. “It’s no different from hunting a deer. It’s not like it’s a commercial industry, to many Grimm for that.” He glanced up at Oz. “You’ll be eating it. You should help.”

“I’d rather not eat it.”

“Then you’re portion will go to waste.” Jack said looking back to his work.

“Someone else will eat it.”

“That’s not the point Oz. It’s going to die whether you like it or not, you could help and end it’s suffering faster. Or you can mope here because it goes against your ideals. But that won’t change the fact that the whale is dying out there. That you’re going to have it for dinner.” Jack said.

Oz’s stomach turned when he couldn’t find a flaw in Jack’s reasoning. He got up and returned the way he had come. He found the crew pulling the Livyatan upon the deck still thrashing, it was around fifteen meters long and it twisted and snapped it’s huge jaws, it’s teeth more than thirty centimeters long. Shouts filled the air as the pirates coordinated with each other, trying to get a harpoon in a vital region.

Ozpin pulled out his sword and extended it leaping into the air. He came down with a thump driving his sword clean into the whales brain. He ripped it out trying to ignore how the fat jiggled and hopped off the creature. With a flick of his wrist the blood upon his blade splattered on the ground and he strode off.

Ozpin chose to ignore the sound of his door opening. Lizzy walked in a plate in hand. “You know, the one to deal the death blow gets the finest cut. A few of the crew are a bit sore you just killed it and walked away.”
“I couldn’t leave it thrashing in agony while they took their time.” Oz didn’t open his eyes, he could smell the sweet meat. “Let them have it, I don’t want it.”

Lizzy sighed and pushed a strand of curly blonde hair out of the way. “Something tells me we’ll never make a sailor out of you.” She walked over and sat on the edge of his bed.

“Good.”

“I know you only wish to be a passenger, but alienating yourself from the rest of the crew isn’t wise. You’re going to be with us for many months yet, you should at least try to make a few friends.” She got up and set the plate on his bedside table. “Tonight’s mid winter, we hold a celebration for living another year. There will be food, booze, dance and music, the usual fun to chase Rymrgand off. Showing your face would do a lot for improving your relations with the crew.”

“I’ll think about it.” Ozpin said still not stir as Lizzy left closing the heavy door behind her with a clang.

Even as the black haired man tried to ignore it the smell from the meat permeated the room. Hunger turned in his guts. If he didn’t eat it, it would just go cold, would go to waste. He turned on his side away from it, Jacks words echoing in his skull. With a sigh he sat up and looked at the dark red meat.

Before he could change his mind, he grabbed the plate and lifted the meat to his mouth sinking his teeth into the juice sweet cut. Oz couldn’t help but purr, it was so good. The flavors danced upon his tongue, his stomach demanded more and he finished the thick piece of meat quickly. Fat and blood clung to his fingers and guilt turned in his stomach, but he licked them off.

Ozpin got up and departed from his room, moving through the ship the other men ducking out of his way in the cramped halls. He returned his plate to the mess hall, with a soft word of thank you that earned him a smile. He merged in with the rest of the crew, moving tables up into the deck.

Time whittled away and soon the night pushed on around them. The tables quickly became laden with food and alcohols. The lanterns were lit and glowed an eerie green. Holly appeared in doorways, little bits of green and red on a otherwise dark ship. The crew gathered upon the deck, in a little clumps of friends already talking when Naga appeared on the quarterdeck.

Only on this night she looked like a goddess. Oozing power and beauty, she lifted her hands and spoke. “Tonight we remember and give thanks to all the souls consumed by the Beast of Winter. We give thanks that his touch has not reached out, that we eat well and are healthy. That no plague has touched us. That we are free of entropy. Let the celebration begin!”

Ozpin shivered violently at the word plague. The new memories had steadily been fading over the months now one rushed to the fore.

Ozpin rushed through the snow, his heavy cloak whipped around him. He came upon the old farmhouse. He shoved the door open, and slammed it behind him.

A young teenager came bounding down the steps. His hazel eyes would forever be ingrained into Oz’s memory. “Alex! You came back!”

Oz yanked his boots off and strode over kneeling and offering a hug. “Of course Arien.” Hugging the little boy tight, worry twisted in him as he felt how thin he had grown. “I heard there was a pl-sickness going through Vale and I had to check on you.” He drew away and worried his lip at dark circles under Arien’s eyes.

The little boy started to sniff. “I’m okay but mom.” He rubbed at his eyes as the tears started to fall.
“Do you have anything to eat?” Ozpin asked.

Arien nodded. “Yeah.”

“Then go eat. I’ll check on mom.” Oz stood and patted Arien on the middle of the back.

“Okay.” The small child headed off for the kitchen.

Ozpin pulled off his coat and started up the stairs, pausing a moment when he came upon his old bedroom tossing it on the bed. He walked down the small hall and into the master bedroom.

As soon as he opened the door the overwhelming smell of sickness filled his nose. The window was open but it didn’t help, Arien had cleaned the place as best he could but he was only a child. Oz picked up the stool that was pushed into the corner and moved it over to the bed calling out softly.

“Mama.”

The woman in the bed was no older than forty but her skin was an ashen white with black boils growing in small clumps. Her dull hazel eyes looked up at him, for a few seconds she didn’t recognize him. “Alex?... You came back?”

“I told you I’d be back if you needed me Mama.” Oz said.

She reached up with a frail hand. “I knew you’d come back…” Her eyes went out of focus. “I’ve been thinking about you. When I found you half dead with cold in that river... but I can’t remember what happened next.”

Ozpin worked to keep the tears from his eyes. He killed him to see her like this. “You took me home, bandaged up my wounds. Gave me food and a bed. And told me to stay as long as I wanted.”

“You were so weak back then, with your head of baby fluff. Now look at you, strong and so handsome.” She reached out to again and this time he took her hand.

“I just needed to get my feet under me Mama. Now it’s time to do the same to you.”

The woman started to cough and Oz grabbed a nearby bowl. She cough thick green mucus into it. “Don’t be silly dear. This old girl knows when her time has come. I’m happy a got to see you again, take care of Arien for me. Get him away from this ailing Kingdom.”

“Mama this is his home. Our home-.

Her drip tightened around his hand. “You promise me Alex... Ozpin. You take him away from here, you get him somewhere safe. Away from this plague.”

Oz could see the light fading from her eyes. “I promise Mama.”

“Good boy.” She took a deep exhausted breath and closed her eyes. She didn’t move again.

Tears fell onto the bedding as Oz held her hand. “I’m sorry, I should have come sooner.” He felt small arms wrap around his arm and heard other cries. He set her hand down and said. “Go wash your hands Arien. I need to take care of Mama.”

“Are you going to put her in the ground. Like everyone else who-”

“I’m not going to put her in one of the mass graves. I’ll put her under the oak tree, it was her favorite. But go wash yourself as thoroughly as you can, I don’t want you to get sick too.” Ozpin said and turned to Arien, he didn’t dare touch the boy with his dirty hands.
“Okay.” Arien mumbled, he knew Oz was right and there was no point in fighting him.

When the small boy had gone Ozpin wrapped the only woman he had remembered calling mother up in the blankets around her and carried her outside. The cold would keep the flies away. He walked to the barn and grabbed a shovel before returning to the tree. The ice made it hard to dig but he refused to take her to one of the pits. He made free use of his enhanced strength to dig and by the time he had put her in the ground Arien returned.

He held up a bottle of brandy. “Mama said to cover your hands in this then set them on fire to cleanse them of the sickness.”

“Pour it for me please?” Ozpin said kneeling so Arien could pour the brandy over his hands.

When they were covered, a quick strike of a match set them on fire. Just as the brandy burned way Oz thrust his hands into the snow. Only then did he reached out and hug Arien again. “Do you have anything you want to say before I cover her?”

The little boy shook his head, he was more then old enough to understand what was going on in the kingdom. “Do you?”

“I’ve nothing to say, that she doesn’t already know.” Ozpin drew away and pulled his gloves on taking up the shovel again.

They didn’t speak as dirt and ice covered their mother. When the job was finally done Ozpin said. “She wanted me to take you from here.”

“Where are we going to go?”

“Mistral.”

“Are you alright?” A hand on Oz’s shoulder had him jerk back to the present day. He looked over to find Harkness looking up at him concerned.

Ozpin reached up and rubbed the corners of his eyes. “I’m alright.”

“You looked a bit vacant there.” Harkness said.

Oz reached up and held Harkness hand for a moment. “I’m good.”

Harkness nodded and offered a tankard of rum as Elizabeth started to sing, gathering the crew into it. The musicians joining in, the tune was mournful at first with a drum at it’s core.

:I met a lad from Donegal,

Heave away, haul away

I got pregnant by the fall,

Got hauled away to Vale.

I got jailed for all my sins.
Heave away, haul away,
Had me branded on my skin,
When hauled away to Vale.

My name was Annabel I say,
My name was Annabel.
But now I'm resting in the ground,
In a grave in Vale.

Ozpin found his foot tapping along with the tune. He couldn't remember the last time he had listened to music live like this.

I've been drinking far too much.
Heave away, haul away,
Banker's got me in his clutch,
Hauled away to Vale.

Whisky's not my only vice.
Heave away, haul away,
Lost my farm on card and dice,
Got hauled away to Vale.

My name was Annabel I say,
My name was Annabel.
But now I'm resting in the ground,
In a grave in Vale.

The pirates joined in with Lizzy for the chorus lending their voices.
Her name was Annabel I say,
Her name was Annabel.
But now she's resting in the ground,
In a grave in Vale.

Brick for brick and stone for stone.
Heave away, haul away,
Building George a brand new home,
Hauled away to Vale.

Picking cotton for his vest.
Heave away, haul away,
When indebted there’s no rest,
Hauled away to Vale.

My name was Annabel I say,
My name was Annabel.
But now I’m resting in the ground,
In a grave in Vale.

Her name was Annabel I say
Her name was Annabel.
But now she's resting in the ground,
In a grave in Vale.

Ambushed by the yemassee.
Heave away, haul away,
Pinned an arrow to my knee.
When hauled away to Vale.
Doctor came into my tent.

Heave away, haul away,

Took me leg and off he went,

Hauled away to Vale.

My name was Annabel I say.

My name was Annabel,

But now I’m resting in the ground,

In a grave in Vale.

Her name was Annabel I say.

Her name was Annabel,

But now she's resting in the ground,

In a grave in Vale.

Fever’s gotten to my head.

Heave away, haul away,

The Devil’s sleeping in my bed,

Hauled away to Vale.

The be no drinking when I’m gone.

Heave away, haul away,

Oglethorpe, he snatched our rum,

Hauled away to Vale.

My name was Annabel I say.

Her name was Annabel,

But now I’m resting in the ground,
In a grave in Vale.

Her name was Annabel I say.

Her name was Annabel,

But now I'm resting in the ground,

In a grave in Vale.

The the end of the song many more instruments had been added and Ozpin had all but forgotten the memory. Sipping his rum and bobbing his head to the song. Lizzy caught sight of him in the little corner of the deck he had been hiding in.

“Hey Obsidian do you sing? We could do with a new voice.” She called out to him.

“Oh no, I haven’t sang publicly in ages. I’m probably woefully out of practice.” Ozpin said almost backing up and getting ready to run. Many eyes were now fixed on him.

Harkness clapped him on the shoulder. “Come on, I bet you have a wonderful singing voice.”

“The only song I can think of you all might know is on the morbid side.” Ozpin said trying to weal his way out.

Lizzy laughed. “It’s Rymrgand’s Night. Morbid is expected.”

“Alright, alright. Do you all know Drunken Whaler?” Ozpin asked.

“Aye!” Was shouted from many voices.

Oz set his rum aside and cleared his throat, he hadn’t sung since he burned. He started slow and almost soft, but still projecting so he would be heard.

:What will we do with the Drunken Whaler?

What will we do with the Drunken Whaler?

What will we do with the Drunken Whaler?

  Early in the morning.

  Way-Hay and up she rises,

Way-Hay and up she rises,

Way-Hay and up she rises.

  Early in the morning.:
The intrustements struck up and Oz’s heart swelled, he forgot how good this felt and raised his voice. Letting the words reverberate forth.

:Stuff him in a sack and throw him over,
Stuff him in a sack and throw him over,
Stuff him in a sack and throw him over.

Early in the morning

Feed him to the hungry rats for dinner,
Feed him to the hungry rats for dinner,
Feed him to the hungry rats for dinner.

Early in the morning.

Way-Hay and up she rises,
Way-Hay and up she rises,
Way-Hay and up she rises.

Early in the morning:

Oz lowered his voice to smoothly almost whispering the next lines.

:Shoot him through the heart with a loaded pistol,
Shoot him through the heart with a loaded pistol,
Shoot him through the heart with a loaded pistol.

Early in the morning.

Slice his throat with a rusty cleaver,
Slice his throat with a rusty cleaver,
Slice his throat with a rusty cleaver.

Early in the morning:

His voice rouse with many others the words thrumming through their hearts.

:Way-Hay and up she rises,
Way-Hay and up she rises,
Way-Hay and up she rises.

Early in the morning…:

Ozpin finished the song humming the tune as the instruments settled. There was silence for a moment before the clapping started. Blush dusted Ozpin’s cheeks and Lizzy called out. “Well I know what you are doing for the rest of the night!”

Oz chuckled and took his tankard back from Harkness. “Maybe one or two more later.”

“I’ll hold you to that.” Lizzy said and picked out another song. This one about rum!

The tall man chuckled as the crew joined in and finished his rum. Beside him Harkness said. “Wasn’t very kind of her to put you on the spot like that.”

“It’s alright, it was nice to sing.” Oz set the tankard down and ran his hands over his arms. Feeling the messy scars under the ink. “I haven’t sang anything since…” He looked away.

“Come now, tonight is a night to eat, drink and be merry. Think not on it.” Harkness grabbed his arm and pulled him toward a table laden with food.

Ozpin only laughed and let himself be pulled. Harkness stuck with him for the whole night and many more songs were sung, till the wee hours of dawn. It reminded him of the festival he had spent with Ruby, but Harkness didn’t allow him to brood.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you too: darkvampirekisses, Sportsfangirl815, Baker1762, lillithschild for your comments and bribes! I do love my sweets, the next chapter might be a bit slower coming because as mentioned before Kry has been very busy of late.

Songs!
Annabel - Ye Banished Privateers - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cASZvj3VMKU (There is a music video version but I like to avoid those when I just want the audio)
Drunken Whaler - Dishonored - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Itr4mk_9Lkk
And if anyone is curious the last song I mention in this chapters is. Coopers Rum by Ye Banished Privateers. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=niMnmclIleY
Honestly Ye Banished Privateers are really awesome, if you are in need of something new to listen I’d recommend checking them out! Though wear headphones if you can or privately, some of their songs are very explicit.
Lastly: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Livyatan If anyone is curious as to what they are.
When Qrow and Ruby finally came back downstairs hair wet and both very relaxed, Tai had to smile at the extra spring in Qrows step. Ruby was much more cautious as she went and sat on the couch, drawing her legs up and leaning into it, looking rather tired.

Yang bounced over to her. “Wow sis, I knew you had good lungs, I didn’t know they were that good.”

Ruby stuck her tongue out, partly closing her eyes. “Not another word, or I’ll tell Blake you were ogling her and Sun when they danced.”

The smirk feel from Yangs face. “I was not and you left early!”

Ruby smirked. “But I stuck around long enough to see that.”

Qrow came over with a plate of cookies and a glass milk. “Fluids.” He commented sitting down beside her and offering the cup.

“Thank you.” Ruby took the cup and had a long drink, then helped herself to a cookie, she was hungry.

“So what do you three want to do for Rymrgand’s Night?” Tai asked sitting on the end of the sofa farthest from Ruby, Yang and Qrow between them.

“We could go into town.” Ruby suggested, though she wondered if here would be booths this year.

Tai shook his head. “With everything that has gone down, there’s not going to be any booths.”

“Then I guess it’s stay home and add a few extra logs to the hearth.” Qrow said, finishing his cookie and helping himself to another. Ruby did the same, they had calories they needed to replace.

“Can I put a vote forth for Cards against Humanity?” Yang asked.

“Maybe, I might even crack open the peach vodka.” Tai said thinking on it.

“Ooo.” Qrow really liked that idea, the plate of cookies rapidly emptied and Qrow took the equally empty cup from Ruby and setting them on the table, before scooping her up and into his lap. He shifted back into her old spot, his fingers splayed over her hip in a manner he wouldn’t have dared yesterday. A not so subtle Mine, it only made Tai smile and Yang blush.

Tai nodded thinking it over and looked over to Ruby who was snuggling into Qrows chest. “And you’re old enough that you should start learning what liquor tastes like, if only so you know if someone’s spiked your drink.”

“People will do that?” Ruby asked looked over to her dad.

Qrow growled out lowly. “There is a long list of things idiots will try to do to a pretty woman at a bar or club. Better you learn now, safe at home where the worst you’ll have to endure is the teasing.”
“And the hangover.” Ruby said, she was familiar with those and Qrow was always grumpy when he had one.

“First lesson Ruby,” Tai spoke up raising a finger indicating one. “Drink double the water to alcohol and you won’t get hung over, it can also help with not getting drunk.”

Ruby looked up to Qrow. “And you didn’t do that why?”

“I didn’t drink for fun.” Qrow said solemnly, playing with a corner of her shirt. Ruby leaned up and kissed his throat. “Sorry.” Qrow just hummed and drew the corner of her shirt up so he could pet her bare hip with a finger.

Yang stared at his finger till Tai snapped his fingers before her face. She gave him a look What?, Tai shrugged and turned the TV on, not paying Qrow and Ruby any mind.

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Later when Qrow and Ruby retired they both stopped shock still when they saw the forgotten Rose. Ruby all but ripped off her clothes crawling across the bed to grab it, Qrow appreciated the sight but he was far to wrapped up in guilt to enjoy it. He followed her into the bed and sat in the middle, pulling her into his lap and wrapping his arms around her waist. Unlike usual when he called up their auras, red flames dancing over their skins, Ruby shifted up so their foreheads to rest against each other. Together, they called upon the memories and feelings and allowed them to flow. They almost mediated, trying to play out the memories at the pace which they happened. Lastly they apologized for forgetting, for being to wrapped up in their own problems to remember Oz needed them too.

When they were done, Ruby put the Rose in her hair the act of sharing. Reliving the days feelings making her more then ready for her Qrow and he for her. She shifted up in his lap and took him within her, their Aura still flowing through the Rose, they made a slow, sensual love, sending it to Oz as it played out.

It was this action that set them on the path to create a ring for Oz. Qrow had tried time and time again over the week to create an Aura object, but he simply lacked the power. On the night of the winter solstice at midnight after Yang and Tai had gone to bed. Ruby decided to try something new.

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“I don’t think this will make any difference Ruby.” Qrow said adding a log to the hearth, they didn’t want a roaring fire, just a steady one. Enough to fill the room in a comfortable warmth but low enough that the light couldn’t touch every point of the room. Pillows and blankets from each of their rooms scattered over the floor, their scents lingering and surrounding them.

Zwei was in Yang’s room tonight after a particularly hard moment when the blonde woman broke a glass. Ruby had heard the smash and come in to find her loving sister shaking and sweating by the sink. At times like this her usually boisterous sister would retreat into her bedroom, taking the little corgi with her and not emerge until the following morning. It grieved Ruby to see Yang so distraught
and scared, her sister had always been strong, stronger then perhaps she needed to be. To see her now was heartbreaking at times, sure Yang smiled and giggled with them but it lacked its usual luster, her love for life and adventure. Now it seemed hallow and as much as Ruby wanted to hold her sister, sometimes when she tried just that, to comfort her, Yang pushed away. Something she had never done before.

Ruby pushed thoughts of her sister aside for now, there would be a time to help her sister and fixed their blankets before the fire, folded up on the side for later, she shifted the pillows around. “It’s the solstice, we’ve got almost two hours till midnight, we add sex and I don’t think we could gather much more magic into a moment. We are trying to make something, the only way we could do better was to do it in the summertime.” She got up and opened the curtains letting the light from the full moon in, it caught in her rose making it glow. “We’ve even got a full moon!”

“Making an object requires concentration, I don’t think I’ll be able to concentrate while inside of you.” Qrow pulled off his shirt and pants setting them to the side, then sitting in the middle of the blanket.

Ruby walked over pulling off her clothes as she came. “Well you’ve been trying it on your own ‘concentrating’ for two weeks now! Let’s try it my way.” She put her clothes beside his and sat cross legged before him, within reach but still apart. She sat up very straight and started to brush a finger over a nipple, teasing herself slightly.

Qrow brushed a finger over his neck, tracing it over a bite scar from Oz. “I still think you read to many romance books, I’d say fairy tales too but there is actually useful information sometimes in those.”

Ruby giggled and arched her chest forward slightly, watching him with a little smile. She cupped her breasts and started to massage in little circles. “Just think if it was summer, I’d drag you out to find a ley line too.”

Qrow snorted and shook his head with an amused smile, moving his other hand between his legs and stroking his balls gently. “Defiantly reading too many fantasy novels.”

The silver eyed woman just smiled and watched him, easing off on her massage to just play with the tip of a nipple. She slowly traced her fingers down her torso and touched the pearl of her sex. She let out a little moan removing the hand from her breast and using it to brace herself. She leaned back and shifted her hips upward, relaxing her legs so they fell closer to the ground and presenting her core to him.

Qrow watched her entranced by her beauty, he gently stroked himself to attention watching her fluids gather on her labia, her little fingers sliding inside of her. The fire burned slowly at the log, the light was faint compared to the single beam of moonlight coming within the room. The red eyed man was wondering if she was a goddess or an angel, he really couldn’t decide.

Ruby watched his eyes roam over her, over and over, like they didn’t want to miss a moment. She bit her lip and pushed three fingers inside of her, moaning out softly. Her goal was to take this slow, to build up that energy between them, the emotions behind it. She wanted him to be wrapped up in her, before he even got inside of her. She swallowed and tried to let her body and mind relax, she had a feeling that if they let the creation of the ring be a natural thing. It would make up for their mutual lack of skill and power, instead of calling upon willpower, they’d call upon love and let it take shape. She looked up to Qrow eyes, they were soft and warm. She withdrew her fingers and spread her labia for a moment letting him see.

The sight was arousing enough to make him throb, he eased off his strokes of himself and
extended a hand to her. Ruby paused for a moment but then went to him, it felt like the right thing to do rather than draw it out. She moved into his lap, legs around his waist, he took her behind in hand and eased her down slowly onto him.

The position didn’t allow for much movement on either of their parts, but a rush to the end was not their goal. Ruby leaned up to him, pressing her chest forward and holding his shoulders. Slowly she started to rock, his hands guiding her holding her comfortably.

Something within Ruby’s chest started to feel warm and open. A path that had existed in a quiet form waking up and responding to their actions. The mood between them, the special circumstances of the night.

Their eyes closed together as they tucked their heads together so they were cheek to cheek. They didn’t kiss, they didn’t need too, instead they let their bodies guide them, didn’t think just felt. Together they breathed deeply and slowly, their heart beat steady but not racing. Every action was slow and smooth, gentle but not teasing. The bond within Ruby slowly bloomed calling it’s counterpart to it.

Qrow slid his hand so he could span her behind with just one, then stroked up and down her back. Any other time and this would only tease him, but on this solstice night it didn’t. The feel of her clinging to him as he rocked slowly inside of her was strangely calming. With each little movement, soft sounds she made, in the back of his mind he began to think maybe she had been onto something here. This was very different from how he was used to approaching sex, or even making love.

Ruby felt every little action he made, pleasure coiling within her, rather than the sharp shocks of feeling she was used too. This was gentler, the feel of him pressed up as deep as he could go still pleased her, but it was a different kind of pleasure. A soft comforting fire rather than a storm. Unlike going into battle she didn’t call on her Aura, instead she opened that circle that had been so natural for her to visualize and let it flow as it wished.

Her lover felt her soul call out to his and he followed her example, though he was a bit reluctant about this bit. He was well aware what his soul had been through, it was twisted, changed and warped because of of the things he had seen and done. Qrow drew her back very slightly, his hand behind her head cupping it gently, he dipped his head down and kissed her neck. His lips lingered on her pale skin, as he opened up and let it flow.

Red smoldering flames alight upon their skin, Ruby’s eyes slide open as she moaned softly and for the first time since Beacon. Those powerful beautiful silver eyes glowed, a soft silver white shone from them like wisps and flickers of white flames.

Qrow opened his eyes and paused at the glow but chose not to say anything, instead he moved slowly smooth, laying Ruby down on her back. She smiled up at him, oblivious to her eyes and slid her legs down his back and over his thighs petting him. He kissed her lips softly, hers parting and molding to his, it remained light, governed love not lust. As she drew her legs back up his body to wrap loosely around his waist, as he started a slow roll of his hips. Moving in and out of her gently, calmly, his hand remained behind her head, the other brush her neck and cheek.

Their Auras acted of their own occured, blurring the lines between Ruby and Qrow till there weren’t any anymore. Qrows soul flowed with Ruby and hers within him, tiny sparkling lines of silver started to weave through both. What neither knew was that the power of a silver eyes was governed by emotion, strong emotion as it had with Ruby it was frequently only awoke by despair. True heartbreaking loss, the kind of pain that never went away and that was the emotion that most silver eyes relied upon to use their power. However this wasn’t needed, what was needed, was for the emotion to consume them, for there to be no doubt or conflict in their hearts and souls. Love worked
just as well as despair, but if anything it was harder to achieve being purer and unhindered by all else. Their souls knew what their goal was and on this night and time, this perfect moment, they acted.

Slowly wisps of red and silver gathered above Ruby’s heart, with each kiss, each touch, each gently movement deeper within her from Qrow. Light formed between them, faint and thin at first but the more they felt, the more their Aura’s connected, the brighter it became, solidifying. The ring formed, the burning flame of Aura transformed into a flowing water, one by one silken drops gathered together.

The pair didn’t notice, they were too wrapped up in each other to notice anything. Tai could come down the stairs and shout at them and they wouldn’t have noticed. A quake could rumble the ground beneath them and they would have felt nothing from it.

Ruby her soul now open to her love knew what it felt like to be Qrow, she knew the deep ache in his heart that only she and Oz could soothe. She could feel the years of guilt, the shame, the belief that he was just a good for nothing bad luck charm. Deeper beyond those feelings, she could feel his love for her and older love for Oz. He held her enraptured with those feelings, she knew he loved Oz but she hadn’t know just how far it went. Little memories flitted behind her eyes, first smiles, first touches, first kisses. Their first night together after Oz told Qrow his story, a lifetime's worth of love that had only recently been allowed to show. It all gathered in her heart and she loved Qrow all the more, things she had never known, feelings she had never felt. It all flowed through her, became a part of her.

Like Ruby, Qrow’s mind was devoid of thoughts, no worries no doubts. No wondering if he should go faster a little harder, wondering if she wanted more. His body knew what to do and was content to do it without his thinking input. In a way he got less from Ruby then she did from him, simply because she hadn’t lived as long, hadn’t felt as much. The essence of Ruby though, still filled him, her endless love, her burning life. Complete trust, undoubted feelings of love, wonder and determination, they all flowed through him like a burning wave of strength and light.

He had been wondering what he had done on this very night two years ago that caused her to fall in love with him and it was so simple that it made his heart ache with love. It was no gift or word, just one simple thing. He had come home, on a night just like this one she had waited for him and he came home to her. Sword in hand, mud on his shoes, cloak in tatters, tired circles under his eyes. He couldn’t have been in a worse messier shape, Ruby hadn’t seen any of it. She just saw him, saw those red eyes soften at the sight of her and his heart soared with the love she had felt in that moment.

They made love sensually in the moonlight flowing upon their skins, the hearth beside them keeping them warm. Ruby hands came up to his head, the backs of her fingers tracing through his scruffy beard, before sliding into his hair to rest there. Their memories of played out behind their eyes, the feelings of one another shared. Qrow saw Ruby’s confession of love from her perspective, she saw his love for her change from uncle to lover. Years of interactions followed between them, each act of love, added another drop to the ring upon Ruby’s chest.

Slowly their bodies moved towards the precipice, Ruby held him tighter, started to pull him to her a little harder with her legs. Qrow broke their kiss and hovered above her, his slow rocks turning into firmer harder drives. The memories flowed forward into more recent mouths, where innocent touches of love started to hold something else. A want for each other, a wish to finally truly be together, it intensified the pleasure growing between them.

Their first night together past through them and moans slipped from their throats, as they felt each others pleasure as well as their own. The couplings after, the exploring touches, even Qrow’s
reluctance and fear was felt, because it was born out of love. They came yet closer to the present, the
days of painful separation the longing they had for each other. Then the feeling of finally coming
together, then after the night they shared together how they made love just for Oz. How they poured
their love and feelings into the rose, coupled with the pleasure of each other.

The ring was fully formed now, it started to densify to have weight and substance. Dark red near
black crow’s feathers started to weave around the ring, lighter crimson red rose petals started to form
between them, both were flecked with silver. It wove along the shaft and barbs of the feathers and
over the edges of the petals.

The memories transformed from past to present, Ruby would feel Qrow’s pleasure and he could feel
hers. That ache, that bond in her chest urged her and Ruby cried out. “Muninn!” In that moment, he
dipped his head back down and kissed her, climax swept through their bodies and they moaned
softly together. “Ruby.” Qrow’s soul sang over the bond, the word echoing in her mind.

He came deep within her, long and hard as she squeezed so perfectly around him, her eyes glowing
brightly. Their Aura’s flared one last time before disappearing from sight, without retracting from
their partner. The ring made that one last transition from energy to matter and rested upon Ruby’s
chest, heavier than it should have been.

Ruby and Qrow paused to catch their breaths, slowly their eyes opened, bodies relaxed. “Ruby.”
Qrow slowly kissed her cheek as his chest heaved. “Gods I love you.”

“I know. I love you too.” Ruby tipped her head up to nuzzle her cheek to his.

Qrow gently let go of her hair and pushed himself up on his hands, looking down between them he a
smile played over his lips. “You’re so beautiful.”

“You look so happy Muninn.”

Only then did Qrow notice that Ruby’s lips hadn’t moved. He looked down at his fingernails, still
black with the magic Ozpin had given him. He swallowed and didn’t speak aloud. “Uh Ruby. I’m
not actually talking.”

“Huh?” Ruby blinked a few times, her brain was still catching up to the rest of her.

“Not saying a word aloud. And you can clearly hear me.”

The Silver Eyed Warrior heard the words and saw that his lips weren’t moving. “That’s so weird.”
She spoke over the bond without thinking about it.

“Well that’s one way to put it.” Qrow chuckled sheepishly and ran a hand through his hair.

Ruby looked down and reached out her hand picking up the red ring. “Do you think this has
something to do with it?” She smiled, it was much too big for her, but something told her it would fit
on Oz’s ring finger perfectly.

“I have no idea. Shit, don’t tell me you heard that.” At Ruby’s giggle, Qrow facepalmed and
consciously put the effort into speaking aloud. “I don’t know. Are you in my head or just hearing it
when I think at you?”

“Just the words, no real thoughts behind them.” Ruby said sitting up, cradling the ring. “It’s like
you’re tugging at something in my chest when you speak… Come to think of it when Oz was having
a bad day I got a similar feeling. Only no words ever came through, only feelings, hunches. Maybe
they weren’t as random as I thought. Think this has something to do with my weird Aura?”
“Of that I’m certain, and I’m so glad you don’t get thoughts.” Out of curiosity he glanced over at the clock, it was only a few minutes past midnight by his guess they must have finished exactly at it. Smiling at that he said. “Something tells me we’ll never be able to do this twice.”

“Told you tonight was the perfect night.” Ruby said smirking as he pulled out of her, for once sated by just the one round. “So we’ve got a selective telepathy?”

“Yeah you were right about tonight. As for the telepathy, it seems so. As much as I doubt it’s a good idea to play around with it. Without Oz, we’re on our own and just ignoring it doesn’t seem wise.” Qrow laid down beside her beside her and she offered him the ring. “Heavy.” He commented taking it from her and sliding it onto his left ring finger, it was too big but it would be safe there for now.

“Well.” Ruby shifted and snuggled up to him teasing a nipple piercing of his with a thumb.

“Ruby~. Aren’t you sore?” Qrow only cocked a brow at her.

“No. Maybe because you were the topic of the thought?” Qrow pursed his lips.

“Well you’re still all black eyes so you might want to call your magic in and see if you can still think at me.” Ruby said while tracing over the curve of his jaw.

“I hadn’t noticed.” Qrow’s brow furrowed. “Which is weird in of itself.” He closed his eyes and focused, sure enough he managed to shut the magic down. It didn’t feel normal then, less like something that was separated from himself. “Do you hear me now?”

“Yes.” Ruby said aloud.

The red eyed man sighed. “Well this is going to be an interesting thing to figure out.”

“Maybe just leaving it be and only thinking at each other when you want the thought to be heard?” Ruby rubbed at her chest. “That feeling, I’ve been getting feels different now. Maybe I have some control over it.”

“Maybe it’s like a Scroll call and you can turn it off?” Qrow ventured.

“Hmm.” Ruby closed her eyes and focused her awareness inwards. She was used to feeling foreign sensations within her now and easily found a warmth. Inside of her, within her soul tethered tightly to her. She traced along it within her mind and tired to think. Close, at it.

“Did you hear that thought?” Qrow asked as she opened her eyes.

“No.” Ruby said, already not linking the quietness on the edge of her consciousness.

“So you can control it.” Qrow hummed and reach out petting over her stomach.

Ruby yawned. “To be explored later. How’s the ring feel?”

The raven haired man held his hand up so the ring caught the moonlight. “Warm like the rose.” A chuckle escaped him. “Guess we have to marry him now, we have a ring.”

Ruby giggled and snuggled into his side, resting her head on his shoulder. “Ozpin Rose.” She scrunched up her nose. “Na, Ozpin Branwen has a much better ring to it.”

Qrow chuckled and turned to her reaching over and grabbing the duvet pulling it over them. “Where
does that leave you? Ruby Branwen?"

Ruby beamed at him and his heart near stopped. “I could live with that.” She said warmly, boldly.

Qrow’s heart raced in his chest as he absorbed what she said, he thought he couldn’t love her any more than he already did. Well she just proved him wrong, he leaned over and kissed her, diving his tongue between her lips and giving her the most thorough kiss of her life.

Ruby giggled when he drew back and softly said. “Wow.”

Qrow just smiled at her, stroked the side of her face, admiring her beauty both the interior and exterior.

“Remind me when we get to Mistral, one of the first things I think we should do is find a priest.” Ruby said leaning over to kiss his lips again.

Qrow chuckled and drew her to him, wrapping an arm around her, touching her forehead lightly with his. “You don’t have to convince me, though we both should probably ask Tai for permission.”

The silver eyed woman giggled. “I will find a way to do that, maybe he’ll come visit in Mistral. That will give him more time to become used to us and Oz.”

“Good plan now sleep.” Qrow was exhausted, it had been creeping up on him.

Ruby yawned as soon as he mentioned it she started feeling tired as well. “Goodnight, love you.”

“Love you too.” The pair fell asleep swiftly, obvious to the fact that their Aura’s had never parted. Thoughts and feelings flitting over the newly strengthened bond.

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Oz stood out on the deck, the night air was particularly cold tonight but wrapped up as he was it didn’t bother him so much. His eyes were trained on the shores miles away as more familiar land was coming into view. The moon cast its light over the ocean and waves gently rocked the ship as they slowly made their way eastwards. The sound of boots coming up from below deck caught up with him though the weight didn’t suggest it was Jack or Lizzy.

“You always seem to find ya way up here, can’t sleep?” Will asked stepping up to the rails, leaning tanned arms on the side of the ship. His dark haired pulled back in a short ponytail as he searched the shore ahead.

Oz still kept the material of his coat between his skin and the ship. “Sleep is harder than it use to be but that’s not why I’m here tonight.”

“Then ‘why’ are you here?”

Oz pointed towards the curve of Sanus. “Just beyond that turn is an island.”

“Patch right. We’re be in her waters soon.” Will leaned back, the light from the moon and his own uniqueness gave him enough vision to be able to see in the darkened night.

“Well that’s where my loves are, they are waiting for me.”
“Obi~ Why are you still here then? Why haven’t ya just left already, grabbed a boat or swam back to 
them?”

Oz looked down for a moment. “Because I have an agreement with your captain and besides, if I 
were to go to them now it could put them in danger.”

The pirate made a face at him, Will couldn’t understand the other man’s reason, not really. If it had 
been Lizzy there and him stuck on a ship he would have jumped into the sea already, not wanting 
anything to keep them apart. While he wasn’t like Jack who would lie cheat and steal he knew if 
there was any motivation that could change a man’s ideals it was love. Why choose to be a land 
away from your loved ones to keep them safe when he could be standing in their stead and protect 
them head on. Out of sight out of mind didn’t work when it came to matters of the heart, Will knew 
that.

Yet this man, so burned and disfigured, covered in scars and somehow broken inside, he believed his 
actions right. Maybe he would find out one day what made him think in such a way, for tonight at 
least the gently rocking of Naga’s ship would help him sleep. Will gave another look to the shore 
ahead. “I hope your right. Goodnight Obsidian.”

Oz stayed where he was watching the ship come slightly closer to land. A sudden flurry of emotion 
and memory of Ruby and Qrow filled him. He drank in their lovemaking, was there something 
different tonight? There was an airy sense of excitement between them that made him smile. 
Tomorrow my loves, I’ll see you soon.

Oz turned on his heel heading back down to his cabin, he intended to hold these sensations tonight 
and let them pull him to sleep.

Chapter End Notes

Ardy: Thank you too: darkvampirekisses, QueenofSpades19, Sportsfangirl815 and 
lillithschild.
Kry: Ardy~
Ardy: I'm not forgetting! So for those who haven't noticed. I am a REALLY big science 
fiction and science fantasy fan. With that said these elements often get into my stories, a 
more subtle then usual appearance of this is how heavily Emerald Rose has been 
influenced by Elf Quest. This piece between Ruby and Qrow and this fledgling 
telepathy was inspired by Sending from Elf Quest. Why are you mentioning any of this 
Ardy? Because I figured I'd toss a link to Elf Quest up, it's an awesome comic and old 

enough that I imagine many don't know about it. 
favourite comics ever.
Qrow and Ruby sat on the beach, winter cloaks drawn up tight around them, to the south they could see a huge ship making its way towards them. Ruby was bouncing in place she so dearly wanted to see Oz, while Qrow was stationary she could tell he was just as eager.

“You get him first.” Ruby said, snuggling up into Qrow’s side.

“Huh?” Qrow looked down at her.

“You get him first, I know you really miss him. I’ll fly a little slower and you should get a good kiss in before I get there. Then afterward as I’ve got supplies, you should get to have him first.” Ruby knew, she’d felt it when they made the ring, Qrow needed Oz, needed him like he needed air. She could wait, she needed to see Oz and hold him, to know he was okay but Qrow just needed him.

“Thank you.” Qrow said getting up and pulling Ruby up with him, the ship was as close as it was going to get now, though it still lingered a mile from the shore. While he could make that trip easy it would be more challenging for Ruby. He grabbed her by her hands. “You ready?”

Ruby nodded, and Qrow stepped and swung her around once, twice, gaining speed and momentum and threw her towards the ship with all his strength. He had to smile as he watched her soar through the air, her form shimmered and burst into rose petals. He watched as the blustery wind carried her the rest of the way before leaping up into the sky himself shifting into his crow form, using just a little bit of Aura to speed his flight.

Harkness stood beside Oz though still the better part of a meter away. “She’s not going to make it.”

“Yes she is.” Oz said watching Ruby fly up into the sky, he had to admit coming from Qrow that was an impressive throw. His heart was beating a raging tattoo in his chest, he wasn’t worried, he was excited for the first time since Beacon. He was excited, eager, his heart pounded away knowing that he was just moments away from seeing his lovers again.

He scanned the water, it was a dark winter day so spotting a black crow was next to impossible. Oz glanced back up to the sky, Ruby had just hit the apex of Qrow’s throw, she dissolved into rose petals and flew almost leisurely towards him, letting the wind guide her.

Harkness whistled beside him. “Pretty, that is one nice Semblance. Is that a Nevermore?” He pointed at the speck of black flying beside the swirl of petals, it started to dive heading straight for Oz.

Oz took a few steps back from the railing and planted his feet, a grin spread across his face.

“Oz?” Harkness asked raising a brow.
“It’s not a Nevermore.” Oz lifted his arms and got ready to catch one very eager bird.

Harkness stood by, his jaw dropping when mere meters above Oz the bird turned into a man and tackled Oz full force. The huge man had to take a step back to absorb the force and his arms came up to hug Qrow like his life depended on it.

Qrow let out a soft almost inaudible sigh, only Oz heard it as Qrow buried his face in Oz’s neck and took a deep breath. For all outward appearances, Oz still smelled the same, if slightly more salty from the weeks spent upon the ocean. Not caring in the slightest if he looked like a damsel Qrow stood up on the tips of his toes and grabbed two handfuls of Oz’s hair and kissed him.

Oz moaned, a hand found its way to the small of Qrow’s back pulling him up and the other into his hair. Lips parted and he slid his tongue into Qrow’s mouth, moderately surprised when the other man didn’t put up a fight. He just greedily accepted it and massaged it with his own, Oz purred at that and deepened the kiss till neither one of them was capable of thinking.

Poor Harkness had a raging hard on just watching them, he could see Jack, Lizzy, Will and Gibs at the helm watching. He glanced up as red rose petals started to float down over the ship, twirling in lazy circles. He watched as the movements of the both men got more desperate, hands started to dig into flesh and moans got louder. The rose petals descended and wrapped around the two men, red Aura flared up whenever they brushed against them.

Oz moaned and drew away as he felt Ruby tease them, his eyes were completely dilated and he could see Qrow was in the same state. Qrow smiled and backed away, drawing Oz’s hands up with his own.

Ruby formed around Oz, her legs wrapped around his waist, her hands on his shoulders. “Hello!” She said grinning as Oz grabbed her behind to support her.

“Hello.” Oz said with a smile before dipping his head down to kiss her deeply. Ruby purred and tightened around him like a vice.

Harkness spoke up before they got too wrapped up in each other, moving over so that he didn’t have to raise his voice. “You three should hurry up and get to my room. It’s only a matter of time before Naga shows up, Ruby if you see a dark skinned woman with long wavy black hair, don’t look at her. Heck it might be best if you don’t look at anything but those two till you’re in my room.”

“Thank you Harkness.” Oz said as Ruby tucked her face to his neck, the feeling of her breath on his skin sent tingles of teasing pleasure around him.

Harkness waved him off. “Go get acquainted, we’ll keep an eye out for Naga.”

Oz nodded and led the way into the ship. “Naga?” Qrow asked softly keeping close step.

“The ship has the soul of a goddess bound to it, she likes to collect interesting people. Given Ruby’s gifts, she’d be very interested in collecting her.” Qrow’s guts turned remembering how different his magic had acted when Ruby called upon it. Something was wrong with it but now wasn’t the time.

They moved deeper into the ship, quickly coming up upon Harkness’s cabin, the door was unlocked and they stepped inside. Oz locked it behind them and while that wouldn’t stop Naga, it was a not so subtle do not disturb.

Harkness’s room was several times the size of Oz’s with a bed carved into the wall more than big enough for the three of them and a bathroom through a door on the right. It had a circular table with some fresh fruits and wine, as well as several padded chairs. Ruby drew away from Oz’s neck and
looked up at him and frowned.

“What?” He asked spotting it.

She reached up and played with a lock of void black hair. “I miss the silver.”

Qrow only now noticed that, he had been too focused on just the feel of Oz to notice any physical things. “Me too.” He walked over and ran a hand through Oz’s hair. “And you’re wearing contacts.”

Oz let Ruby down when she wiggled in his embrace. “I got them before the tattoos, I suppose I could get different ones next time.”

Ruby stepped away with a smile as Qrow filled the space where she had been. “I already miss your copper.” He said, raising a hand, tracing the tattoos over Oz’s forehead, temple and down to his jaw with a finger.

Oz slid his eyes shut, enjoying the light touch. “Qrow.” He said softly. Qrow’s finger paused over his lips and he opened his eyes, the soft look in Qrow’s eyes told him everything he needed to know. Qrow knew, he had waited for so very long, they had almost been there before it had been ripped from them. Oz kissed Qrow’s finger softly and the smaller man let out a soft shuddering sigh.

They didn’t need words after that, Qrow’s fingers found their way to buckles and buttons, Oz’s cloak and shirt hit the floor almost as fast as Qrow’s did. Weapons and pants were carelessly discarded in a pile around them. Oz’s lips found Qrow’s as he ran his hands down the smaller man’s sides, he had filled out a bit since he last saw him. Winter life with Ruby was clearly doing him some good, Qrow moaned as Oz’s hands wandered, they quickly found his butt and Oz picked him up. Qrow wrapped his legs around Oz’s hips instinctively and grabbed his shoulders, pressing up into the kiss.

Ruby bit her lip as Oz set Qrow down on the bed, it was strange seeing Qrow like this. She was used to being the one lying on her back, she knew Qrow subbed for Oz but seeing him do it so easily was different. With her he was always in such control of himself, Oz had barely touched him and Qrow was purring and lax beneath him. It was strange, but nice to see Qrow relax like this, to listen to him purr as Oz started to press soft kisses to his neck.

She poked the bond within her open and was almost washed away with the shear joy and euphia that pulsed through it. With a smirk and as quiet as a mouse, Ruby gathered up the weapons from the floor and set them on the table, her insides clenching when Qrow’s moans echoed through the room. She pulled off her little backpack and crept over to the bedside table, pulling out the condoms, lube and gloves they had brought from home. Or rather what she had pilfered from Qrow’s sex drawer, watching him blush had been funny. There was already a large bowl with a washcloth in it on the table, she guessed the man that had sent them here must have put it out.

She picked her way back over to the clothes and put them over a chair before sitting herself on one. After a moment of watching Oz tease Qrow’s cock with a finger, she pulled off her boots and leggings. Followed quickly by the rest of her clothes when her nipples started to hardened and push almost painfully against her corset. In the end she sat nude in her chair, brushing a finger over a nipple as she watched. She wanted to touch herself but she’d refrain, she had a feeling it would be worth it.

Oz teased a nipple with his tongue, finally getting the chance to play with the barbell piercing as Qrow moaned under him, the other man’s hands coming up to touch and pet his hair. Out of the corner of his eyes he saw Ruby lay out supplies and clean up a bit, he appreciated what she was doing, giving him time alone with Qrow. He started to move down but Qrow grabbed him by the
back of the head and pulled him up again.

Qrow nipped Oz’s lip before smoothing it with his tongue, he knew Oz’s strategy and he didn’t want it right now. He slid his hands from Oz’s hair to his shoulders and flipped them, Oz landing on his back with an Oof, as Qrow straddled him, moving his hands back into his hair and kissing all the while.

Oz purred as he parted his lips and let Qrow dive his tongue into his mouth, he slid his over the other man’s and they danced. Power shifting from one to the other, with each action. Qrow shifted moving down so he could reach between Oz’s legs and took his member in hand firmly. They both were already hard, the kisses on the deck had done that, Qrow stroked slowly moaning into the kiss as his hand finally got to travel over familiar territory.

Oz bucked up into Qrow’s hand and moaned out softly. “Qrow~.”

Qrow smiled and broke the kissing, moving down pressing kisses along the middle of Oz’s torso the man’s member twitched in his hand in anticipation. Oz parted his legs as Qrow moved down letting the man settle between them rather than straddle him, it was a bit easier for this.

Qrow kissed the tip of Oz’s cock before parting his lips and slowly taking him into his mouth. Oz let out a strangled moan that had Ruby’s eyes snapping up to his face as his eyes slid shut as he pressed his head back arching slightly.

Qrow purred and carefully moved down stroking the underside of Oz’s member with his tongue as he sucked a little harder. A hand came up to wrap around the base of the thick cock in his mouth while the other teased Oz’s balls, rolling them gently.

“Qrow!” Oz yelped as Qrow hummed taking more and more of him into his mouth. Shit he knew Qrow had his talents but he figured he’d be at least a bit out of practice by now. His hands wove into Qrow’s hair gently, his pelvis tensed he wanted to thrust but he resisted.

The red eyed man looked up at him through lidded eyes feeling rather pleased with himself. He relaxed his throat and moved his hand out of the way, he took a breath and sucked as he took all of Oz into his mouth and down his throat. He took Oz’s fingers tightening in his hair as his reward, and heard another long moan from the larger man. This wasn’t the best position for this so he didn’t linger instead starting to bob slowly up and down, taking breaths as he rose up.

Ruby couldn’t help it, she slid two fingers into her silken core and clenched around them, the pool between her legs was already getting on the chair and she ached for either of them to take her. She watched as Oz’s face contorted in pleasure, he leaned up and rose his hips very slightly in time with Qrow’s actions. She wondered how Qrow did that, take Oz all the way to the root in his mouth.

Qrow slowly worked up to a quicker pace, sucking all the while as Oz started to buck up into his mouth and moaned louder and louder. His saliva coated Oz’s cock as he relaxed further, he pressed his head up into Oz’s hands then moved his to rest on either sides of Oz’s hips.

Oz took the hint and guided Qrow down again and started to carefully fuck the man’s mouth. His hands weaving tighter into Qrow’s hair, thumbs petting behind his jaw. He could feel every humm and breath from Qrow, the mischievous man’s tongue stroking him as he worked. He let out a grunt as he picked up his pace, in some lust fogged corner of his mind he knew he should warn Qrow that the end was nigh but then Qrow had given him control. Qrow was well aware of how he got with a mouth wrapped around his cock. As he bottomed out within Qrow, the red eyed man smirked and tightened his throat and sucked harder.
Oz groaned and couldn’t help but lean up and hold Qrow’s head in place as he shot his seed down the man’s throat. Qrow drank him down without hesitation, purred as the hot semen hit the back of his throat and Oz’s hands tightened almost painfully in his hair.

Oz let up and let go of Qrow’s hair falling back into the bed, drawing great deep breaths of air as Qrow carefully drew off of him and sat up, rubbing his throat. Oz looked over to his partner and smiled. “Well you haven’t lost your touch.”

Qrow smirked, moving to straddle him and fetched a glove off the nightstand. “Speaking of touch.”

Oz took the glove but instead of putting it on he wrapped a hand around Qrow’s cock and started to tightly stroke. “I’ve half a mind to return the favour.”

Qrow bit his lip and couldn’t help but thrust his hips forward into Oz’s hand. “I’d rather have you inside of me.” He grabbed Oz’s hand and drew it away, bending down to softly kiss him again.

Oz pulled the glove on then flipped them over again, all the while kissing he could taste himself on Qrow’s tongue but that never ceased to be anything other than a turn on. He drew away long enough to ask. “You done anything recently?”

Qrow shook his head. “Fingering myself is always more effort than it’s worth, otherwise I’m good.”

Oz kissed his lips once more before dipping down to start kissing Qrow’s neck. Soft little kisses more to relax than arouse, Qrow parted his legs and tilted his hips up. Oz took the hint and only teased his way down Qrow’s thigh once before pressing a finger to the man’s anus and waiting. He nipped at the faded scar upon Qrow’s throat and pondered renewing it. He did like marking what was his and just the casual use of Aura had made it almost invisible. He filed that thought away for later as he felt Qrow pucker up, he reached over to the lube and pumped a small handful into his un gloved hands before pouring it over the fingers of the gloved one and returning a finger to Qrow’s ass.

Qrow shivered as he felt the lube and focused on taking large deep breaths, willing the tension from his body with practiced movements. It was quicker this time though not by much but Qrow relaxed and Oz slowly pushed his finger inside just a little before withdrawing. Moving more lube on his finger with his thumb and doing it again, over and over till he could press his whole finger inside.

Ruby couldn’t see what Oz was doing, Qrow’s thigh was in the way but she could see the states Qrow went through. From relaxed to steadily being worked up, she could see his cock bob and start to leak pearly white fluid. Whatever Oz was doing must have felt really good, Qrow’s eyes were closed and his mouth was hanging open slightly. Yet another thing she had never seen him do with her, she removed her fingers from her core when Oz had started working Qrow. She was sure she was getting the chair wet, she drew her feet up resting on the side of the chair and her chin on her raised knees wrapping her arms around them to watch.

“Please Oz.” Qrow keened as Oz continued to work him with just a finger, constantly adding lube and working it around every millimeter of the tight channel. His body had long since remembered this and was relaxing, he was sure Oz could manage at least two fingers by now, maybe three.

“Hmm.” Oz hummed he was happy to take his time, he was trying to burn this moment into his memory. He decided to be merciful and added another finger after lubing up his palm again.

Qrow jerked under him and pressed his arse onto Oz’s fingers, he could feel Oz move them around, teasing testing, just brushing his prostate. He barely heard Oz softly ask. “How do you want it?” The red eyed man moaned when Oz added another finger, tipping yet more lube into him. Qrow blinked
several times trying to gather his wits, he reached over to the table and grabbed a condom. “I want to ride you.”

Oz paused surprised, the last time Qrow did that was after Oz had told him the truth about himself. He slowly withdrew his fingers and pulled the glove off, turning it inside out and tossing it into the waste bin at the end of the bed.

Qrow moved his leg and Oz slowly laid down beside him, Qrow straddled him tearing open the condom packet and stroking Oz’s member a few times. It having long since recovered from Qrow’s hard work before, he rolled the item down over it, lubed it up and posed himself overtop. Qrow paused his hands splayed over Oz’s hard abs, red met green as Qrow slowly eased himself down onto Oz, letting out a soft moan eyes partly closing.

Oz was transfixed by Qrow’s expressions, trying to embed them into his memory. The moans were softer, movements gentler and as Qrow seated himself on Oz those red eyes opened again and Oz could see. Oh beloved. Oz reached up to take him by the hand but Qrow raised his left and then paused, looking at his hand.

“I can’t believe I forgot.” Qrow pulled the red ring off of his ring finger, grabbed Oz’s left hand and slid the ring onto his ring finger.

Oz’s eyes widened, he could immediately feel what the ring was, could feel Qrow and Ruby through it, how had they done it? Make it? The significance of where Qrow chose to place it didn’t escape his notice either. “I.” He didn’t know what to say.

Qrow smiled lovingly. “There, now no matter how far apart we are, you’ll still be connected to us.”

Oz just stared up at him at a complete loss for words, so instead he let what he was feeling flow through the ring as they had done so very many times to him and rolled his hips up into Qrow.

They heard an echo of Qrow’s moan in the form of a high keen but were both to wrapped up in each other to pay it much mind. Both fell into rhythm with each other, Oz grabbed Qrow’s hands and let the man brace his weight on them as he rode Oz, Oz bucked at the perfect moment each time bringing them together with a slap.

Ruby envied their coordination, the flare of Aura from Oz made her blood pound in her ears, she carefully moved her hard nipples away from her legs. She bit her lip to keep from making another sound, this was for them and they needed it. The silver eyed woman was determined to stay out of it till she was invited, so she waited and tried to take mental notes. In Qrow’s place she was sure her brain would be utter mush. Her eyes roamed up Qrow’s torso, she could see the sweat start to shine on his skin, though he really seemed to be enjoy this position.

Qrow forced himself down harder on Oz’s member, it was getting so very hard to think. He knew he’d have to hand over the reins soon here, his cock started to leak drips falling down onto Oz’s stomach.

Oz smiled he knew that desperate action, he let go of Qrow’s hands with one hand, moved the other to help the man out and wrapped the other around Qrow’s cock. “Oz!” Qrow yelped and buck up, Oz slammed him back down and tightened his grip on Qrow cock before working him in time with the smaller man’s growing yet more frenzied moments.

Qrow’s eyes flew open as Oz planted his feet and bucked up in short fast movements and came with a shout. Spilling onto Oz's stomach, Oz rolled them over and threw Qrow’s legs over his shoulders and pounded into him.
“Shit Oz!” Qrow howled as the larger man picked a pace that would please him and reduce Qrow to a sated puddle. He grabbed the sheets and tightened his legs over Oz’s shoulders, trying to hold himself steady for the man.

Oz leaned forward forcing Qrow’s hips to tilt up and hammered into the smaller man, watching the expressions flit rapidly over Qrow’s features. The fluttering of his eyes, the loud moans, the way he would gain just one moment of coherence and look up to him with those red eyes. Oz grabbed Qrow’s legs and parted them moving down he stole a kiss, diving his tongue into the willing man and grabbed at his hair.

Qrow was ready to come again, he was making a mess over their stomachs he couldn’t keep up with the kiss only submit to it. When Oz broke it and started to kiss down his neck another layer of tension coiled inside of him, Oz’s thin lips tracing easily over to the faded scar. Qrow moaned when he felt teeth graze it. “Please.” He whimpered, he knew what Oz wanted to do, it was just as marking as a ring.

Oz did need telling twice, he bit down hard enough that the skin broke and groaned softly as he felt Qrow orgasm below him with a long howling cry and followed the other man over. Qrow grabbed Oz’s head, fingers weaving tight into his hair and holding Oz to his neck.

Oz’s eyes slid shut as he enjoyed the feel of Qrow’s tremors, he slowly drew away and gazed at his handy work. The blood was quick to coagulate but he was sure it would keep for another nine months if it had too. He pressed his palm to it all the same, not making a mess was always a good idea. He smiled at Qrow’s blissed out state below him and slowly drew out, Qrow moaning softly.

Qrow blinked up at Oz and smiled, his mind pleasantly blanked in a way it hadn’t been since the last time they got together. He reached up lazily and petted down Oz’s jaw with a finger. “Love you.” He said with a silly grin, that only showed after he had his brains fucked out.

Oz leaned back down and pressed a chaste kiss his lips. “And I you.”

Qrow chuckled as Oz pulled out and pulled the condom off tossing it into the rubbish bin. “Just took you almost two decades to admit it.”

Oz chuckled and let another brush of Aura flow through the ring accompanied by his feelings on that subject. Qrow moaned softly his cock starting to stir again at the gift of Aura, another moan drew their gaze across the room.

Oz couldn’t help but grin at the sight of Ruby, he could just see between her legs in the low light, could see the glistening of her sex. He got off the bed and paused by the bedside table, grabbing the cloth and getting it thoroughly wet he, set about cleaning himself of the lube, facing Ruby.

She bit her lip as her eyes watched Ozpin’s every movement, her core gushed a little more. It and her nipples ached, just begging for some touch that wasn’t her own. Ruby smirked as he set the cloth aside and got up from her chair… then promptly wobbled as her legs weren’t the steadiest at that moment.

“Hello Ruby.” Ozpin purred watching her stride over to him. “Long time no see.”

Ruby stopped before him and pushed him back into the bed. He let himself fall with a laugh. “Yeah you up and vanished on us. I am very cross with you, how are you going to make it up to me?” She crawled onto the bed and up his body stranding him, stroking his rapidly hardening erection with a hand just how he liked it.
Oz chuckled, *Well hello~ my little vixen.* “I can think of a few things, you seem to have your heart set on something though.”

“Mmmhmm. Maybe I do.” Her hand moved down and cupped his heavy balls playing with them in her palm. Smiling as Oz sucked in a sharp breath. “Maybe I need you to hurry up and stretch me so I can pounce on you properly.”

“Is that so? What makes you think I’m in any rush?” Ozpin said admiring her perched above him.

“Well you did jump Qrow’s bones the instant you two came into contact.” Ruby said continuing to play with him.

The tall man teased a hand up her spine for a moment before gripping in it and flipping them over. Ruby looked up to him stunned for a second as he shifted bracing himself above her. “As much as I appreciate you finally understanding the need for foreplay.” Oz bent down and kissed her lips for a long moment before softly saying. “After missing you for so long, I’d rather take my time and enjoy you. My most succulent Ruby.”

Oz moved down and pressed a kiss to her chest, enjoying that soft lily-white skin. Oh, how he missed her, miss the curve of her breasts. How full they had grown in the months they had been apart, he slid a hand up her thigh. Enjoying the smoothness of her skin, the play of muscle under that skin. He palmed a buttcheck and squeezed the round softer flesh.

Ruby moaned softly, letting her eyes close while parting her legs further. She ached for him, longed for her body just to welcome him back inside. Instead he kissed over her chest, her lush breasts rose and feel as she breathed deeply letting him draw her deeper into ecstasy. The pleasure reflected through the ring made her body hum, it would take so little to draw her over. “Oz please~.” She sang out in a long sigh.

Ozpin couldn’t help but moan against her skin. Oh, how he had missed that sound, he moved down and took a wide nipple into his mouth and lathed his tongue over it. He moved his hand from her behind to her core and easily sank two fingers into it. He felt Ruby come apart with just that action and had to smirk, he pushed another finger into her and gently coaxed her walls to spread for him.

Qrow watched Ruby fall head first into an enduring climax, how her body arched, and she held tight to the sheets as if they would ground her. *Beautiful.*

Oz removed his fingers and moved back up her body, arranging them so they would have enough space upon the bed. He took himself in hand and lined up as Ruby blinked up at him, those silver eyes shining as she lifted her pelvis. They moaned as he pushed into her, Oz’s eyes closed, and his lips parted as he let the feeling of her surround him. He bowed over her and tucked his face to her neck. “Gods I’ve missed you.”

Ruby was too distracted to respond; her breathing grew rapid as he pushed into her. She was used to Qrow, Oz on the other hand… not so much anymore. She felt him wrap himself around her an arm under her back, his thighs sliding down away from her pushing them together tightly. “Move with me.” He uttered into her ear, then started to move.

Ruby could only keen, whatever he was doing was different than normal. There was no harshness in his actions, the fever of movement, the edge of desperation she was so used to feeling from him was completely absent. It didn’t feel like he was trying to fuck the air out of her lungs to leave her gasping. Instead he rolled his hips, but not just thrust into her it was a wave a mix long and short strokes that varied the feel of him within her.
Qrow raised a brow and admired Oz’s pelvic action, he didn’t often bother to do that but when he did... He watched Ruby pant, her eyes squeezed shut as her hands grabbed at Oz’s back. Little and white in contrast to the black tattoos that dominated his skin now.

The Silver eyed woman could barely think through the rolling drive of Ozpin’s pelvis. Being with him was as overwhelming as always, his arm tightened around her as he braced himself with the other. Oz kept his head tucked against her neck breathing deeply of her scent. Gods he had missed her, ached for her just as much as Qrow. Listening to her gasp and moan was a balm to his soul all its own. To feel her again, to be wrapped up in her, their bodies together. He could feel her start to move with him as she adapted to him again. Her hands roamed up his shoulders and wove into his hair, the moan he let out reverberated in her chest. “I missed you.” He whispered into her ear.

Ruby nuzzled his cheek with hers and he drew away to kiss her long and slow. The pleasure coiled slowly between them. “Say what you mean.”

“I love you.” He uttered and stole another kiss, diving his tongue between her lips. Oh, how he missed her taste. Oz slid his hand down her back, tracing over her butt check before moved down to grab her behind a knee. He pulled back lifting her up and spearing deep into her core. Moaning softly at the tight contraction she made around him.

Ruby’s eyes flew open and she screamed, pleasure mixed with pain, he filled her so completely. Taking all she had to give, then a little bit more grinding his hips into her. Oz loved the sight, his member burned deep inside of her, those full breasts presented to him. How fast Ruby breathed watching her face contort with that fine pleasure. He grabbed her other leg and held her up, starting to move his hips again rocking them up with a slight tilt accompanying each thrust.

He watched her moan and cry out for him, he had missed her so much. Missed her smile, missed her company, missed what it was like to have her. To take her for his and to hold her close. Ruby reached up to him eyes shining and he lowered himself again setting over her. Her fingers grabbed at his back, pausing for a second as she felt the welts hidden by the tattoos.

“Oz-”

“No don’t ask not now.” Ozpin kissed her diving his tongue into her mouth and drawing hers into a dance. Ruby moaned under him, as his thrusts grew punishing, they made her keen and shout the ecstasy swept through her all at once. Oz moaned as she came under him, her core clenched tight around him as her legs drew his hips tight to her. He didn't want to stop, but he couldn’t help but follow her over, sheathing himself one last time and spilling his seed in several hot gushes. He rested his weight against their joining point and wrapped his arms tight around her. Holding as they both lost themselves in orgasm. He was mindful to ease off of her before his weight became too much but Ruby kept her legs locked around his waist as he lifted his torso away from her. After a moment's hesitation he bent back down and kissed her lips softly.

Ruby smiled up at him and reached out petting along his jaw with both hands. “Are you okay?”

Oz dipped his head back down and nuzzled her neck. “Now I am.”

Qrow moved over and pet Oz’s back with a hand a frown forming on his lips. “Oz… your back-.”

“Please I don’t want to talk about it. Not now, you’re both here now, we’re together. I don’t want to dwell on the cost.” Ozpin drew any and pulled out of Ruby leaning over to kiss Qrow.

Qrow reached up and stroked through Oz’s messy short hair. “Alright.” He uttered as their lips parted for a moment.
Ruby sat up feeling very sore but knelt and started pressing kisses to Oz’s neck. “We’ve missed you too. Even when we are making love together you’re never far from our minds.”

Ozpin moaned softly at the thought of them together. “I want to watch you both.” He reached up and held Qrow’s head in a gentle cupping motion.

That reminded Ruby of something, she turned her attention inward and opened the bond between her and Qrow a bit wider. “Should we tell him?”

“I will.” Qrow sent the thought back at her and said to Oz. “About that, we’re not sure what we did but it seems that Ruby and I can send thoughts to each other. And sometimes when we have sex, I think we send as much time in each other’s heads as we are in our bodies.”

Ozpin drew away from Qrow and hummed thoughtfully. “Do you share Aura’s at the same time?”

“We were the first time it happened, but since then we can do it whenever we wish. Though I seem to have control over it, like I can turn it off and on.” Ruby said. “And when I call Qrow Muninn, it’s so much more intense for him.”

At the mention of his name Qrow’s eyes and nails turned black. He hissed. “Ruby~!”

“Sorry.” Ruby said.

Ozpin was already having a few ideas about what could have happened. He reached out putting a hand on Qrow’s chest. “Shhh Muninn, just be, relax.”

Qrow did, or more so the magic woven into his soul did. The features did not fade but he no longer felt the compulsion to obey the one speaking his name. Ozpin pressed his fingers to Qrow’s chest harder and reached out with what magic he had. His eyes slid closed and he checked in on what he had given to Qrow.

Surprise had him tense up, the magic he had given Qrow had warped and changed. Into what he wasn’t sure, but it felt like it would continue to change too… evolve. Guilt twisted in Oz’s stomach, this wasn’t what was supposed to happen, but then magic was a the embodiment of change, change and permanency. He hated to think what it might be doing to Qrow. “Well the magic I gave you has… evolved. Changed, what caused it I don’t know.”

“Well the first time it happened, when we spoke to each other with our minds. I called him Muninn, could that have anything to do with it?” Ruby asked.

“Unlikely, it feels like it has been happening very gradually for a long time. Only I wasn’t paying attention.” Ozpin clenched his fist and looked away from them both.

“Hey.” Qrow touched Oz’s chin with a finger and drew his face back up, then kissed him thoroughly. “You are forgiven.”

Ozpin pulled away thinking on the rest of what Ruby had said. “Qrow do you remember when we merged souls?”

“Yeah, it was… intense. You gave me magic and named me after.” Qrow said.

“I never told you why I named you Murinn did I?” Ozpin said sudden feeling very anxious. He hadn’t meant to keep it from Qrow, but if something had happened to them when Ruby called out Muninn… they needed to be more careful.
“No. You never mentioned it. I just thought it was because of the stories and the role you wanted me to take.” Qrow said.

“When we joined souls, I... well I found the name Murinn within you. In every aspect of you, it’s everything your soul ever has and ever will be wrapped up in a word. A... as corny as it sounds, it is your soul name. I think that is why it has such power over you, when Ruby calls out Muninn. She is calling out to the very essence of your soul. I did not think it would ever become a problem, maybe I shouldn’t have said anything.” Oz trailed off worried.

“He looks like he’s about to skip down guilt trip lane again.” Ruby sent to Qrow.

“I’m trying to figure out if I’m mad at him or not. For not telling me, I never heard a name from him when we merged.”

“Don’t be mad, part of it is me. We know that, plus it’s given us this. Can you really be angry about that?”

Qrow sighed. “It’s alright Oz, we know part of what happened between Ruby and me is because of her. Plus we can control it, we’ll just have to be more careful where that name is used.”

They both saw Oz relax, like a great weight had been lifted from his shoulders. “Thank you for understanding.”

“Hmm.” Qrow purred and looked over to Ruby. “You mentioned wanting to watch us?”

“Oh yes.” Oz sat back on his heels.

Ruby looked over to Qrow who smirked. He prowled over to her and kissed her, Ruby parted her lips and let him inside laying back. “How do you want it?”

“On my front?” Ruby dared to ask, they hadn’t done that before. She had a feeling that with Oz here he might be more willing to relax with her.

“Allright.” Qrow said, squishing down his constant worry of being too rough with her. He had after all just watched Oz have his fun with her, if she could take that without complaint. Well he really needed to worry less.

Ruby rolled over and moved into her hands and knees. Anticipation curled in her belly, she still ached from taking Oz deep within her but as Qrow pulled her labia apart with his thumbs her core gushed anew.

“Gods you’re wet.” Qrow moaned at the sight, just the thought of Oz’s seed already in her made him hard in seconds. Still he stroked himself a few times before lining up and slowly pushing in.

“Ahh QROW!” Ruby moaned out long and loud, he went slow letting her really feel every inch. Qrow could feel the euphoria rush over the bond that Ruby hadn’t bothered to close. He could feel something she wanted but didn’t have the bravery to ask reflect through it. The garnet eyed man reached out and wrapped a hand around the back of her neck. Not even noticing that his nails were still black. He pushed her face down into the bedding, letting her turn her head to the side so she could breath. “Like that?” He squeezed carefully.

“YES!” Ruby grabbed at the sheets, as he started to move slowly at first.

Ozpin could practically see the unspoken conversation, he could see it in how Qrow studied her. How Ruby would make eye contact with him. He rose from the bed and walked over to Ruby’s
clothes retrieving the rose. He crawled back into the bed and wove it through her hair. “I want to hear you both, let me feel what you do.”

Ruby closed her eyes and called on her Aura letting it flow herself and the rose. She heard both men moan and felt Oz sit beside her. When she looked at him he was stroking himself slowly, teasing fingers over his neck. Qrow let her neck go and bent over her, wrapping an arm around her torso as he pushed his hips to hers over and over. Moaning into his ear as her pleasure was shared with them. “Ruby, I won’t... ohh gods.”

Oz and moved to kneel behind Qrow, drawing him up and running his hands over Qrow’s chest. Drawing lightly over his pierced nipples, then stroking down his stomach. Savoring the wiry muscles of his torso. He bit down on the juncture of the smaller man’s neck and shoulder. He spoke softly. “I can’t wait till we introduce Ruby to anal play. Watching you both makes me ache, I long to be with you both together to feel each of you against me.”

He pulled away briefly grabbing lube and a condom, he spoke softly as he rolled the latter onto his hard member. “Just think of all that we’ll be able to do together.” He coated his fingers in the lubricant and teased them over Qrow’s asshole. “We’ll just have to make do for now I think. I remember having a day dream about this. Taking you like this while you were within Ruby.” He pressed two fingers gently inside. “Look Ruby, doesn’t he look beautiful?”

Ruby looked over her shoulder as Qrow moaned, his fingers dug into her hips. She thought he looked very handsome, moist lips parted eyes partly closed. “Yes he does.”

“I heard that.” Oz said removing his fingers and applying lube to his erection. He pressed slowly within Qrow reaching past Qrow’s hips to Ruby’s and pulled her back, forcing the smaller man back into him. Qrow could only moan, how had Oz known about his dream? “Mine.” Ozpin growled into his ear, lengthening his strokes. He moved Ruby’s hips in time helping her establish a rhythm with him.

Listening to Qrow moan and shout, made Ruby feel like she was on cloud nine. She matched Oz’s pace, throwing her weight back against Qrow. Impaling herself on his member as hard as she could. Her large breasts slapped together as her insides clenched over and over. She could feel Qrow’s pleasure seeping through the bond they shared, not as strongly as when they had an Aura object but it was there. Driving her higher and higher. The slap of their hips impacting echoed in her ears and she loved it.

Still Qrow came first, which came as a surprise to no one. It sent Ruby and Ozpin over the edge with him. Ruby came with a high cry in contrast to Oz’s low groan. Oz guided Qrow down to rest over Ruby as he withdraw then pulled them both gently down on their sides.

Ruby eased herself off of Qrow as Oz removed the condom and cleaned himself again. Qrow was out cold, in probably the most peaceful sleep she’d ever seen him. “Wow.” She whispered and rolled over to face him. She reached out and traced along the stubble of his jaw.

Ozpin laid down on Qrow’s other side. “He does look happy doesn’t he?” He started to pet up and down Qrow’s thigh but the smaller man didn’t even stir.

“He does, it’s so nice to see. But I guess you really do that for him, make him happy.” Ruby moved and snuggled up to Qrow, petting over his chest.

“I suppose so, I just know him every well. True sleep is hard for him to find, it’s hard for him to relax and trust.” Ozpin looked at the red ring on his finger. “How did you two make this?”
“Sex on the winter solstice in the moonlight. It was when I called him Murinn and could hear his thoughts.” Ruby said softly.

“Hmm how interesting.” Ozpin said.

“So what’s the plan when we get to Mistral? How will we find you?” Ruby asked.

“I have this ring now, I will call for you.” Oz said lowering his arm and wrapping it around both of them.

Ruby purred and snuggled into Qrow’s chest. “I think I need a nap.”

“Then sleep, I will be here.”

How Oz said it made Ruby’s heart warm and she knew deep in her soul that she was perfectly safe. She closed her eyes and sleep quickly came upon her. Ozpin watched her fall into slumber and leaned over kissing Qrow’s temple and Ruby’s cheek. “Sleep well beloveds.”

Eventually they extracted themselves from Harkness’s cabin not wanting to overstay their welcome. Ruby all but glued to Oz’s side half hidden under his cloak so he could hide her from Naga at a moment’s notice. Qrow lingering close at hand, the sun was high but dark clouds brewed on the horizon and lunch was being passed around.

Jack and Harkness came over, the former offering Qrow a bottle of mudders milk, while Harkness did the same to Oz. “Care to introduce us to your partners Oz?” Jack asked.

Oz took the bottle and gestured to the mostly hidden Ruby. “Ruby Rose.” He nodded over to Qrow. “Qrow Branwen.”

Qrow offered his hand and shook with Jack and Harkness in turn. “Thank you for looking out for Oz.”

Jack nodded sharply. “I would have never guessed he would cause me so much trouble.” He glanced over at the hiding Ruby. “Though between the two of you I can see why he’s been moping.”

Oz blushed but didn’t deny it as Harkness cocked his head trying to get a better look at Ruby. Her figure was almost entirely hidden under Oz’s cloak, he could just see the softness of her face and the soft shine of silver eyes. “Hello little one, Naga’s not here right now. Will and Lizzy are entertaining her.”

Ruby looked up at Oz and he lowered his arm slightly so she could step away if she chose. She didn’t preferring to stick close to Oz instead, but she moved in front of him so if need be he could grab her easily. She offered her hand. “Nice to meet you Sir.”

Harkness bowed and took her hand kissing her delicate fingers. “You as well, my lovely lady.”

“Harkness.” Jack facepalmed.

Harkness let her hand go and grinned cockily at Qrow. “You’re not too shabby either, I’m
feeling rather jealous of Oz right now.”

Qrow only just managed to abort a growl before grinning his cocky grin and looking Harkness up and down. “You’re not bad yourself.”

Jack rubbed his temples. “Gods save me from horny huntsmen.”

Oz laughed. “I don’t think the gods can help you with that.”

Ruby was blushing looking between Qrow and Harkness, the men watched her looking between them both back and forth a smile growing on her lips.

Harkness grinned he was starting to get a feel for the three. “You three should join me for dinner, I bet we could have a great deal of fun.”

Ruby looked up at Oz grinning, he saw it and couldn’t help but grin as well. “Don’t even think about it.” He said sliding an arm around her shoulders cloaking her again.

“But Oz~, wouldn’t it be fun to watch them?” Ruby said grinning from ear to ear.

Oz looked over to the pair, both still sizing each other up, that was a show he would enjoy. Especially if he got to bounce Ruby on his cock at the same time, yeah that sounded like an excellent idea. He watched Qrow lick his lips and show a little bit of teeth, Oz wondered how that would go down. Qrow didn’t submit unless you could beat him in a fight and he hadn’t seen Harkness fight. So he guessed it would be a bedroom battle, which would also be fun to watch. “Well~, maybe.” Oz said with a tone that said heck yes. “Qrow?”

“Shh busy.” Qrow growled eyes still locked with Harkness’s.

Jack didn’t know whether to laugh or cry, Valeïtes being the foremost thought in his head. He didn’t expected Harkness to step closer to Qrow and look down into the other man’s pale red eyes. He was taller by only a few inches but it was enough, not to mention being much broader.

Oz stepped away and took Qrow’s drink setting them both on a barrel for later, Qrow didn’t so much as look at him as he moved.

Everyone was too late to notice the black wisps of smoke from behind Ruby take the shape of dark skinned woman before it was far too late.

“Pretty pretty shiny silver eyes.” Naga cackled with glee grabbing Ruby around the shoulders and waist, then shifting her form bigger and stepping away.

Ruby screamed catching everyone’s attention, kicking and thrashing she reached for her Semblance only for Naga’s black Aura to settle over her. Oz and Qrow leapt into action, weapons out and extended in the blink of an eye. They prowled forward flanking Naga, both watching for a chance to grab Ruby.

Naga grabbed the silver eyed woman by the throat and posed her other hand over her heart. “Ah ah ah, I wouldn’t. I don’t need her to be alive to bind her in service. But you two do if you want your little young lover.”

They both stopped dead in their tracks, Jack approached Naga glaring. “Put her down.”

Naga snarled at her captain. “Why!? You tried to hide her from me, you should have known better I always get what I want.”
Qrow felt fear blooming in his chest, he had been afraid for Ruby before but never like this. She hadn’t been His before, his to love, his to protect, he could see the Goddess’s black Aura burn away at Ruby’s. He tightened his grip on Harbinger, his finger settled on the transforming lever.

“But not her Naga, she can’t even use her power. Just let her go.” Jack approached slowly hands raised trying to placate the Goddess.

Ruby cried out when Naga held her tighter the goddess nails cutting into her corset, they could see red blood drip down her nails. “No.” The Naglfar snarled, she hated it when her own captain hid things from her.

At the sight of Ruby’s blood something broke in Qrow, a chain shattered, a door blew apart his Semblance raged forth finally free for the first time in his life.

The grey sky cracked boomed clouds gathering at impossible speeds, rain started to pour in ice sheets that stabbed at the flesh. Alarms wailed as things deep within the ship broke, he didn’t notice his Aura flare up like a raging river cloaking him in red. A shiphand screamed seeing him as the source for growing mayhem, the shiphand ripped out his pistol and fired only for it to misfire and blow itself up and take the man’s hand with it.

“What is this?” Naga’s gaze snapped to Qrow but he was already moving, Harbinger unfolding into scythe form.

Ruby curled up just as the blade moved to neatly dissect the Goddess. Oz followed Qrow grabbing Ruby before Naga’s torso had finished hitting the ground and ripping the undead arms off of her.

Ruby barely had time to feel Oz, cup her cheek before she was flying back towards Patch thrown by the large man.

Naga abandoned the petty body and reformed at as skeletal wraith of a woman making herself almost as large as Oz, she screamed at them as the sea rose and smashed against the ship. Waves growing bigger and bigger with each passing moment. Oz looked over to Qrow, his breath caught in his chest when he saw his lover’s eyes were black pools with thin circles of blood red.

“Qrow!” He shouted moving towards him only for a huge wave to crash up over the deck knocking everyone flat save the goddess and Qrow.

Qrow felt his Semblance twist the moment before the wave hit and jumped into the air transforming into a crow and diving as the wave passed. He turned back swinging for Naga’s head only for her arm to block his scythe, she made herself even bigger, ten, twenty feet tall and slammed him into the deck.

“Die!” Naga snarled grabbing Qrow in a hand and squeezed.

Oz shook his head and jumped to his feet calling on the power he had only used to fight Cinder. Blurring with speed he leaped into the air, landing in the Goddess’s hand and stabbing at the skeletal hand. His blade skittered harmlessly off the bone and she flicked her wrist, sending him tumbling back to the ground.

“Ant!” She said darkly as smiled as Qrow screamed as his bones condensed.

Jack race over and raised his marked hand calling on its power. “NAGA ENOUGH! You are bound to me as I am to you and I order you to PUT HIM DOWN!” A black chain materialized in his hand and wrapped around the Goddess neck.
She roared an inhuman sound as lightning hit the deck, thankfully everyone’s Auras protected them. The storm rose into a raging gale, the sea buffed them from all sizes and alarms wailed.

Jack was only slowing her down, Oz could see her fingers continue to tighten around Qrow. He moved his fingers from the handle of his blade and pulled on the red leaf guard. He felt that rush of power as the world slowed. *Goddess met Relic.* He lurched himself up into the sky, his sword glowing gold and shifting to a much older style of blade. He arched though the air and drove the glowing blade straight through Nagas chest.

She SCREAMED, it made their ears bleed, but she dropped Qrow who was thankfully was caught by Harkness. Ozpin ripped his sword out of the goddess chest and jumped off her chest, landing by Qrow. Wasting not a moment he raced over to Qrow as Harkness put him down, he grabbed the smaller man by the back of the head and looked into those black and red eyes. “Qrow!”

“I’m fine!” He shouted, ripping his head from Oz’s grasp and bending to grab Harbinger, but he held his ribs tenderly.

Oz grabbed him and kissed him one last time before grabbing him by the waist. Qrow eyes widened as he felt what Oz was about to do. “DON’T YOU DARE!”

Naga roared her attention turning to them.

“Go protect Ruby, you’ll do me more good sending Aura then fighting by me here.” With that Oz threw Qrow after Ruby, he was relieved when he saw Qrow change into a crow and fly for Patch. He only just got his sword up in time to stop the Goddess from turning him into paste. Her fist smashed against the new golden sword, Oz’s body screamed against the force she brought down.

He let his sword give slightly and used the change of pressure to divert her fist into the deck of the ship. Jack tightened his bindings, Will and Lizzy racing to his side raising up their marks to help him. Naga snarled, screaming rage as she raised a hand and black fire raced for Oz.

He dropped to the ground and like with Cinder created his green orb shield, only this time red water like Aura flowed into him. It woven with his and enhanced his shield, first he could feel Ruby, but Qrow’s twisted Aura followed hot on its heels. He saw his own Aura darken as his lovers became interlocked with his, their power raging like the ocean around him.

He stood his eyes glowing dark red as Qrow’s Semblance leaked into him, and expanded out. Shield still active he raced forward sweeping his sword out in great empowered archs, waves of Aura twisted in red, green and gold lashing out at the goddess.

The Aura sliced through her undead magic flesh like butter, she fell to her knees with a horrible scream and clawed at him. Extending their combined Aura, he blocked the goddess’s hand with his free one twisted, then cleaved it off with his blazing blade. It turned into black ectoplasm and fell to the deck with a *SPLAT.* Again, Oz struck out with slicing waves of Aura, each lash ate away at Naga’s form. The Relic’s power eating away at her, while Qrow’s power, his will, his want to hurt her made it all the stronger.

As Oz hacked her to pieces Jack, Lizzy and Will tightened their hold over the goddess making her smaller and smaller, till she was human sized again.

Naga snarled at him, with only her thighs and torso left, hate burning in her eyes. Oz grabbed her by her head and brought his golden sword to her neck. Qrow’s Semblance shifted and flared, the rules bending for him in this moment. Oz took her head, the rest of her body falling to the ground.
with a thump turning into ectoplasm. The head though did not, Oz could feel Qrow’s Semblance turning and twisting into him, making what he wanted real. He saw Jack race over and offered the head, Jack grabbed and wrapped his black chain around it.

Oz stood and clicked the red handle of his sword again and the golden glow faded, it was in this movement that the roar of Nevermore's, Griffons and Sea drakes was heard. “Shit!” Oz snarled dropping the Aura shield and getting ready.

Lizzy roared out her voice empowered by her Semblance. “ALL HANDS TO BATTLESTATIONS! HARKNESS GET US MOVING!”

Ice turned into hail and Oz felt a frantic flare of worry from Ruby. He couldn’t moderate himself so high on adrenaline he sent his Aura through his Ring. **ENOUGH!** He roared through the ring, hoping that Qrow got the message, but nothing happened Qrow’s Semblance continued to pour through him like a raging river. He braced himself as the Grimm descended, another flare of Aura from Ruby this time it was fear. He spun on the spot, his heart near stopped as he saw a Nevermore descending on the beach. He ripped his Scroll out of his pocket and was very glad he had put all of his friends on speed dial. He barely waited for Tai to pick up instead shouting into it before Tai could finish saying hello. “TAI BEACH NOW!” Then hung up leaping out of the way to avoid getting eaten by a Nevermore.

He jumped up into the sky, impaling a Griffon then jumping off it to cleave a Nevermores wing off. He shot off the Grimm back to the deck and looked back to the beach just in time to see a blazing gold fire that could only be Tai. Relief flowed through him and he turned his attention to the battle at hand, moments later Qrow’s flow of Aura stopped and the sea quieted.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you too:darkvampirekisses, Celestialfae, Sportsfangirl815, Bucky_Barnes and Frapadingue70 for all your comments!
Qrow landed on the bench with a thump and raced to Ruby’s side, the rose cradled in her hands as she poured her Aura into it. He could feel his Semblance still running rampant, blood, fire, destruction all played out behind his eyes. His Semblance finally free and feeding on a lifetime’s worth of despair and pain. The way it battered around his mind and burst through gaps made from panic and anger felt like a damn and he couldn’t patch the holes containing his Semblance. He grabbed Ruby’s hands with his bloody ones and poured his Aura through to Oz. The storm he had created cracked and boomed around them, ice rain falling to stab at them.

He could feel Oz fighting Naga, heard a roar of Grimm, then he was in the middle of a town corpses all around him torn apart, Nevermores, Beringels, Griffons, Ursas, Beowolves. He could hear them, he almost reached back to grab his sword but instead clutched the rose so hard that Ruby’s fingers started to hurt.

She looked up to him and fear stabbed at her heart, her Qrow, wasn’t home. His eyes were near completely black, she could see just the thinnest circle of red, flickering around unfocused. Oh no.

Her worry must of flowed on to Ozpin, because she felt a sharp almost stab of pain from him occupied by a frantic emotion and the word “ENOUGH!” Ruby cut the flow of her Aura she didn’t have much left anyway and tried to let go of the rose, but Qrow’s hands held hers and he clearly hadn’t heard Oz. “Qrow let go.” Ruby tried again, nothing, his grip tightened and pain danced up her nerves. “Qrow let go! You’re hurting me!”

Qrow never felt his nails puncturing her soft skin or her small bones breaking. His hands slippery and smelling of death held on despite the coppery substance while his semblance reaped havoc and his ears rang with screams of pain and suffering. Blood, blood everywhere, he tightened his grip on his sword, his Aura blazed around him protecting him. His Semblance twisted with sick glee, fires raged higher, more Grimm were called to his despair.

Ruby felt a finger fracture shouting she tried snap him out of it. “Qrow PLEASE!” She let a desperate flare of Aura reach Oz, she leaned up and kissed him, but he didn’t respond, eyes wide black and unseeing.

He lashed out with his sword, clicking the lever unfolding out into it’s scythe form. “DIE!” He roared leaping into the fray, another whole village, burning lost to bandits and Grimm. If he ever saw Raven again he was going to kill her.

A roar reached Ruby’s ears and fear grabbed her, a Nevermore was descending on them. She snapped her gaze back to Qrow. “QROW PLEASE SNAP OUT OF IT!” She squeezed her eyes shut then a BOOM reached her ears with a loud crack.

Ruby had never been so happy to see her Dad before in her life. Tai’s blazing fist smashed into the Nevermore’s head shattering it like glass. He vaulted off the fading Grimm, landing beside them,
Ruby filled him in before he could speak. “He did something with his Semblance, now he’s lost and I can’t reach him.”

Tai knelt and pried Qrow’s fingers off of Ruby, her hands were purple and bruised.

“Shit.” He hissed under his breath and grabbed Qrow’s chin forcing the other man’s gaze to him. His brow shot up, he’d never seen Qrow’s eyes like this, they looked demonic. “Qrow!” He yelled, nothing he yanked Qrow to his feet and threw him over his shoulder. “Can you run?” He asked Ruby.

Ruby held her hands to her chest, rose still between them and nodded. They raced home, Ruby growing more and more worried when Qrow didn’t struggle over Tai’s shoulder.

Yang raced over when Tai kicked the front door opened. “Go get the med kit!” Yang ran to do as she was told, Tai put Qrow down on the sofa, the man hunched over and stared unseeing at the floor. Tai took Harbinger from him, before a memory made him grab it. Yang came back and Ruby sat on the coffee table letting her sister tend to her hands, while Tai grabbed Qrow by the hair, trying to get some reaction out of him.

“What happened?” Yang asked.

Ruby shook her head and sneezed, the cold getting to her, she was very thankful for the blazing hearth. “It’s a long story, and I’m not really sure.” she hissed and Yang felt along her fingers checking the bones. “They’re fine, just need a little Aura.”

Tai let Qrow go and stormed over to the liquor cabinet, grabbing a vodka that was barely drinkable. He grabbed Qrow by the back of the head and forced his lips open before pouring a mouthful worth down the black eyed man’s throat.

Qrow coughed and sputtered, blinking and coming around, he could feel his Semblance around him, tendrils of it shadowed the room. In the distant part of his mind he registered the sound of wood splitting as the table Yang sat on broke under her weight, a window cracked behind him and the fire roaring in the heath flickered sparks into the room. He panicked grabbing at it like water in his hands forcing it back inside and closing that door that had it had broken free of. His mind putting back locks that had held his Semblance back.

Qrow started feeling that same presence less as it went back quietly. The black faded from his eyes and the first thing he saw was Ruby’s purple hands. “How?” He rose to go to her but Tai shoved him back on his ass. “You’ve done enough.” Tai growled.

Pain and rage overran Qrow, he’d done that, he’d broken her hands, he didn’t remember when but Tai’s actions made him sure that it was his fault. “Ruby.” He reached out and his voice turned soft, Tai put himself between Qrow and Ruby. Shame and guilt seized Qrow’s heart, memories came unbidden, ones his mind had locked away so he didn’t have to face them. He fled from the three, grabbing the bottle of vodka and racing up the stairs to his room, kicking his door shut with this foot.

Qrow brought the bottle to his lips and chugged, the liquid burning down his throat.

He grabbed Sanguira’s arm twisting around behind her back hissing in her ear. “You sick bitch!”

She laughed. “Everyone knows you Branwen and your sister, you are no better than I.” She screamed when Qrow tore her arm from its socket. “You and I are nothing alike.” He snarled, discarding his sword and grabbing her other arm as he dropped the other bloody limb.
Sanguira knew she was about to die, she might as well burn this moment into his mind, she’d have
the final victory that way. “What you didn’t like the girl? I think she looked a rather lot like your
niece? Is that what pushed you over? You couldn’t bare the thought of your niece bending over
without a fight for a man, on her knees so willing and ready for a cock to be shoved down her
throat?”

Qrow roared and kicked the faunus square in the hip a loud crack filled the air as her hip shattered,
shoulder dislocated and she tumbled away. “Don’t talk about my Ruby.” Blood dripped off his
fingers as he prowled over to the dying woman.

Sanguira laughed with a pained wheeze. “‘Your’ Ruby? My my my, Qrow you do like them young,
maybe you intervened with the sale because you want a chance with my little girl. You only had to
ask, and pay a small fine.” Oh this was too good, she hoped someone was witnessing this. Seeing
the great Qrow Branwen tearing a woman’s body apart like a ferocious animal; and they call
Faunus animals, they had nothing on this man.

Qrow kicked her over and wrapped his hands around her head, she knew it was over but she would
have the last word. “Think of this when you fuck your little Ruby, think of this moment when she is
on her knees before you. Know that I was right, the only reason you saved that girl tonight is
because you want her. You’ll hurt her, you’ll give in one day and you’ll take her and you’ll hurt her.
Because that’s the only thing you know how to do.” Qrow tightened his hands shoved his thumbs
into her eye sockets so he would have to look at them anymore.

He stared at her as he tightened his hands more and more, listened to her screams with a smile
when her skull cracked and exploded brains and bone fragments splattering his face and slipping
through his fingers.

Qrow took another long pull and yanked the door open stumbling into the bathroom, he barely made
it to the toilet before he threw up, over and over till there was nothing left in his stomach. Qrow
distantly felt his Semblance flare back to life, push against the door he locked it behind. He lifted
himself just far enough away from the toilet to drink again, long deep pulls the bottle rapidly
emptying. Oh Oz where are you, make it stop! He thought in vain.

Qrow snarled, her words ringing in his ears, she was right damn her, one day Ruby would just be
too good to hold back from. He was a hunter, fighting and killing were the only things he knew, he’d
take her and he’d hurt her. Damn this bitch! He grabbed the remaining arm and ripped it from the
corpse, tossing it away carelessly. He wanted to kill her again, again and again, tears ran down his
cheeks, she was right, she was right. He balled his fists and smashed them down on her rib cage, it
splintered and shattered cutting up his hands. Over and over he brought his hands down, pulverising
the body. She was right, she was right, he screamed and lurched to his feet, barely aware he
grabbed Harbinger and fired at her, the shot shatter the remains even further.

He spun around seeing, keen eyes seeking any other threats, his eyes fell on the slaves, their wide
fearful faces snapping him out of it. He blinked once twice, finally starting to see the world around
him, he looked over to what he had done, fell to his knees and heaved.

The bottle shattered as Qrow drank the last of it and threw it against the far wall, the drink turned in
his stomach instantly and he grabbed the toilet again and threw up. Shaking, snot and tears ran down
his face as the memory replayed, he heaved over and over again. Sometimes it went further,
sometimes he chased down the buyers and cleaved them in half.

He could feel his hands slick with blood, sometimes the memory twisted and he let the girl be
bought, hunted her down and had her, a sorry replacement for the woman he couldn’t have. He
broke her just like Sanguira said, and he loved every minute of it. Over and over it cycled, Qrow’s
Semblance leaking out more and more.

He didn’t hear the bathroom door be smashed open, couldn’t feel Tai’s hands on him. Didn’t feel the needle go through his shoulder, but he welcomed the dreamless oblivion.

“Dad?” Ruby asked as she watched Tai clean Qrow’s face and picked him up again and carry him to his room.

“He was stuck, sedating him was the best thing to do.” Tai said soberly. He hadn’t had to sedate Qrow in years, but he recognized the cycle saw it growing in power, saw Qrow’s eyes turn black again. Gods they needed Oz, neither Ruby or he was equipped to handle this.

Ruby followed Tai to Qrow’s room and sat on the edge of the bed as Tai stripped Qrow. “I’ll stay with him.” She said.

“Ruby-.” Tai began, he didn’t want her staying with Qrow, there was no telling the state the man would be in when he woke up.

Ruby shook her head. “I’m not going to leave him, he needs help and I think I can help him.”

“Why?” Tai asked.

“I’ve always been able to help him dad and I’ve only been learning more with time.” Ruby said reaching out to pet Qrow’s arm. “Please let me help him. Just give us a few days alone.”

Tai rubbed his hands over his face, he knew that Ruby was right. That she did help. “Yang and I will stay in town for the next two days. If things don’t go the way you planned Ruby, don’t continue to try, Qrow will never forgive himself if he actually hurts you and I don’t think he would survive it. Just promise me you’re be careful.” He stared down his youngest with a look of desperation until she frowned and nodded at him. With that he got up and closed the door behind him.

Ruby let out a long sigh and looked over to Qrow, naked save his boxers and sleeping peacefully, she knew what wouldn’t last as soon as the sedative wore off... She pulled the rose from her hair carefully, a few of her fingers had only been fractured not broken. Her Aura was drained as she was so very tired, but she summoned up a whisper of Aura, the last few minutes of memory and sent them to Oz with a plea for help.

The response was near instantaneous, green Aura flowed through her mending her hands in seconds. Next were snippets of memories, instructions, guidance, emotions came last, fear, hope, pain, guilt and finally love. Ruby smiled and sent her love through the Rose, trying to communicate that she did not blame him for what happened. She pulled the bandages off her hands and set about following Oz’s directions, first she stripped then put the Rose back in her hair. Pulled off Qrow’s boxers as they would only get in the way later, then she laid down beside him and pulled him over so his head was on her chest. She sent the image to Oz and got a confirmation and another feeling that simply said to call for him if she needed help.

Qrow curled up around her in his sleep, snuggling his face between her breasts with a purr. Ruby petted his head, hoping she’d be a good enough distraction, she knew she was no dom. So she’d have to present herself as a distraction, till he was ensnared enough to do what he needed.
Ruby was moaning under him, as he snapped his hips to hers over and over, Gods she was so glorious. Qrow leaned down and kissed her chastely his heart stolen by her bright eyes and loving smile. “More, please!” Qrow chuckled and obliged her, speeding up going a little harder, he brought a hand up and woven it into her hair. She let out a yelping moan, “Harder!”

Qrow groaned and went harder and harder, oh she felt so GOOD! He reached down with a hand and grab her hips tilting them up for him, harder oh gods this was sooo good. He tucked his face to her neck and bit down gently on her neck. She moaned long and loud in his ear, hands crawling at his back leaving long red welts. “Please Qrow, Qrow more! Harder!”

He did as she asked, and a wet crack filled air and Ruby screamed pushing him away. He glanced down her hip was turning purple, he threw himself off of her his hands were red with blood…

“Qrow! Qrow! Wake up!” Ruby shook him as he started to thrash. “QROW!” She yelled at the top of her lungs, grabbing his chin and forcing him to look into her eyes.

Qrow blinked his vision blurry, slowly she came into focus. “Ruby?” He asked his speech slurred, he shook his head and pushed her away. He rolled trying to get away, no no no, he couldn’t deal with this, he needed a drink a lot of drinks. The memory leaped back into his mind, ohh he was going to be sick.

Ruby grabbed him and pulled him back to her chest, his hands fell to his sides he didn’t dare touch her. “Let go of me.” Qrow muttered against her chest, he could feel her breasts on his cheeks, she was soft and warm. He closed his eyes and subconsciously pressed his face into her chest.

“No.” Ruby said weaving her fingers through his hair, wrapping it around them. “What do you need?” She asked, she couldn’t make him submit but she had Oz’s memories to guide her through the tones to turn her voice too.

Qrow’s eyes widened, Oz had… shit, he tried to pull away but her fingers pulled at his hair. “Ruby no, I won’t, not like this, not with you.”

“Did I make it sound like you had an option? Tai and Yang are gone. What. Do. You. Need?” Ruby pulled his head back and forced him onto his back, slipping hands out of his hair to rest on his neck, holding him down almost painfully but not quite there.

“You’re hands are better.” Qrow realized, when the tiny things closed around his neck. Her touch was too light to really be a threat, but he could tell she was trying. He balled his fists he wasn’t going to touch her, he didn’t deserve to touch her. He’d have to end this, it would break her heart but she’d be safe, at least from him.

“Oz sent me Aura, you haven’t answered my question.” She squeezed his neck slightly, it was probably one of only two parts on his body she could use to hold him still.

Qrow narrowed his eyes and glared at her, the image of Sanguira’s girl behind his eyes, his hands were red. “I need you to get off me, I need a drink.”

“No. I know you. You’ll run.” Ruby shifted her weight pressing down on him.

Qrow grabbed her by her waist and tossed her off of him and onto the bed. He lunged to his feet
going for his clothes, as he yanked them on a voice he knew very well sounded directly into his mind.

“Muninn!”

The black swam into Qrow’s eyes though they now retained the red iris. He turned back to Ruby glaring at her. “Don’t call me that.” He yanked his trousers on and stormed over to the door.

“Then don’t leave! Please Qrow!” Ruby ran over to him and reached for his hand.

Qrow yanked it away before she could touch him. “Don’t touch me, we should have never done this. I hurt you, my Semblance could have killed you! I could have killed you and not even noticed!” He tried not think about how easily it had become to send thoughts directly to her.

“You would have! Qrow please it wasn’t your fault.” Ruby chased him down the stairs as he fled.

“I lost control! Of course it’s my fault! You were in danger and I lost it, I remember what happened Ruby! If Tai hadn’t come we’d both be dead and I would be the one to blame.” Qrow grabbed Harbinger from the living room table.

“Running away won’t help! I love you, nothing you can accidentally do will change that.” Ruby followed him hot on his heels. “I know you love me too, we are together and we should work this out like the partners we are.”

“Don’t delude yourself into thinking we are equals! I will always be stronger than you! Despite what I look like I am older than you, I’ve killed more than you’ll ever know. My Aura is stronger, darker, I could rip you apart with my bare hands. It doesn’t matter what I feel for you! You are better off without me! Safer...without me.” Qrow shuddered violently remember the last time he had killed someone with just his hands. His blood soaked hands had no right to touch her.

“That’s a lie! You’ve always protected me! Do you think I would have trusted you, loved you like I do if I thought you’d ever hurt me? One accident doesn’t change that.”

Qrow yanked the door open and frozen winter air invaded the house. Ruby recoiled and shivered as Qrow grabbed a thick woolen cloak. “It doesn’t change the fact that I almost killed you.” He transformed into a crow and flew off before Ruby could react.

“Qrow!” Ruby raced to the eve of the door and screamed for him. The wind picked up and she shivered, she grabbed her own winter cloak and wrapped herself up in it. There wasn’t time to grab any other clothes. “Qrow please come back! We can talk about this!” She raced out into the snow her feet screamed against the cold.

Qrow didn’t respond and Ruby activated her Semblance flying up above the trees, looking for him. She landed in the uppermost branches of a tree but couldn’t see him. “Qrow! Please come back! I know you can hear me!” She activated her Semblance again and flew towards Vale, she knew him well enough to guess where he’d go. She came back into her solid form upon the snowy beach. “QROW! Where are you?”

Ruby scanned the water between her and Vale, the black crow was almost impossible to see but she felt drawn to it. “Come back, please! Don’t do this, think of Ozpin! Losing you once almost broke him, don’t go to Vale come back. You can’t leave us like this over one accident!”

Nothing. Ruby looked out over the churning waves, her Aura was already tired. Ozpin hadn’t restored her completely but with every second Qrow got farther and farther away. She couldn’t do nothing. She took a deep breath and took a running start towards the water jumping into the sky and
calling on her Semblance.

“No Ruby turn back. You can’t follow me.”

The words drove Ruby to try, she wouldn’t let him go to Vale. It would be his death and they both knew it. The wind gusted and blew Ruby off course, she lacked the strength to fight back against it. Her petals came dangerously close to the waves before she recovered. She flew straight up after him.

Snow started to fall from the sky, heavy icen flacks that felt almost like hail. They battered Ruby’s poor petals and forced her back into her human shape… several dozen feet above the waves.

“RUBY!” Qrow screamed into her mind as she fell, he spun and dived after her.

Ruby had never felt like this before, to fall without Aura or Semblance protecting her. To see those dark clouds above her. She impacted full on her back into the freezing water. White and red blotches danced over her vision and her body jerked in shock. The cold made her skin burn and ripped a scream from her lungs which forced water into her mouth as she sunk into the water. Immediately she clamped her mouth and eyes shut. She tried to straighten her body so she could swim upwards but between the heavy coat dragging her down and the waves rolling her body round in circles she was helpless to take back any control. With nothing to grab onto and her lungs starving from oxygen Ruby made a desperate attempt at removing her coat as it was dragging her further down but the freezing cold made her hands clumsy and her movements went lax.

Qrow transformed and dived straight into the black water, his eyes danced around seeking her in the darkness. He caught sight of her pale body just as her chest jerked and the last of her air escaped her. He swam for her his Aura adding to his strength, he wrapped an arm around her chest under her arms and kicked up for the surface.

They breached the rolling waves just enough enough for him to catch his breath before a wave crashed down over them. He coughed the saltwater up and turned the woman in his arms around, her already pale face was blanched white, her eyes closed in exhaustion and shivering. The beach was still several hundred yards away from them and without the ability to fly he was forced to swim the distance, lugging Ruby’s near unconscious body with him. Every time a wave crashed over them it dragged him a few feet back, like the sea was trying to reclaim them both, pulling at them with icy fingers. The currents pull was strong but Qrow was stronger and eventually was able to pull both himself and Ruby from the waves and onto the wet sand.

Ruby’s body lurched to the side coughing and spewing water from her mouth, her body shivering uncontrollably, teeth chattering from the cold. Seeing her unable to stand Qrow scooped her back up, ignoring the blistering cold around his limbs and started running back towards the cabin. There was no thought in his mind other then to get them out of the cold and wet clothes before either of them caught hypothermia.

The house was dark when they finally got back and Qrow stumbled inside, practically throwing himself towards the hearth, almost dropping the soaking woman in his arm in the process. His knees caved forcing him down, his lungs heaving as he with care lay Ruby down on the floor. His hands shaking as he dripped water over all the floor, throwing kindle and wood in the hearth, his fingers almost too cold to work properly in starting the fire. “Come on, come on.” he chanted, twice the fire went out before he got a flame, quickly adding for kindling before putting the guard up.

Ruby was starting to come around, soft groans and coughs catching his attention. Qrow pulled her freezing body closer and began peeling away her cloak as quickly as possible. Cursing under his breath when he saw she wore nothing beneath it. She had been in too much a hurry to chase after him. Damn her feet are so cold.
He hadn’t even removed any of his own clothes yet, instead he was taking her hands and feet into his hands and blowing on them softly, trying to warm her up. The room started to warm up quickly and Ruby shifting around on the floor was enough for him to start taking his own clothes off, soaked as they were and had already dropped puddles worth of water all over the floor. Only then did he scoop up all their clothes and run to the bathroom, depositing them into the hamper and grabbing as many towels as he could before returning to Ruby.

Ruby was just attempting to sit up when he arrived back and Qrow immediately helped her, wrapping two of the towels around her body. Just as he was about to stand back up Ruby’s hand launched out and gripped his arm. “Qrow, please don’t leave me.” Her voice was hardly a thread of its normal pitch, sounding broken and sad. It pained him on a level he couldn’t describe and after fastening the remaining towel to his hip, covering his modesty he knelt back down. He carefully used the towel to rub the remaining moisture and cold from her skin. Ruby tried to reach out to him, to help him but every-time she made contact Qrow would stop, push her hands back to her and start drying again. By the time he got to her hair Ruby had grown warm again and worried her lip at the way Qrow’s body was still shaking with the cold despite the warm room and the fire blazing near them.

“Please let me touch you. I’m okay.” Ruby grabbed another towel and started on his arms as they were closest to her.

“Why do you do that?” Qrow asked.

“Because I know this way you have to hear me.” Ruby sent.

Qrow sat putting his back to the fire. “I always hear you.”

“Fine. Then listen to me.”

Qrow huffed at that and chose to speak aloud. “That was stupid, following me.”

“Not as stupid as going to Vale right now.” Ruby reached up and dried his hair. “If the storm didn’t down you the Grimm would have killed you. You aren’t invincible.”

“Says the one who ran out of here almost nude.” Qrow grumbled.

“If you had stayed I wouldn’t have needed to chase after you.” Ruby said.

“See being in love with me is bad for your health.” Qrow said and pulled the towel out of her hands and set about drying the rest of himself.

They both warmed quickly now. Ruby glared at him. “It wouldn’t be if you didn’t keep trying to run away whenever you are afraid.”

“For goo-” Ruby cut his words off with a kiss.

“Here is totally a bad place for this.” Qrow sent into her mind as she occupied his lips.

“Then take me back to bed.”

The mix of love, lust and sheer yearning for him had him obeying without thought. He picked her up and carried her up the stairs. “You are going to be the death of me.”

“Seeing as you’re immortal I find that unlikely.”
Qrow broke the kiss and dropped her onto their bed with a scowl. Ruby grabbed his hand and hooked a foot behind one of his knees pulling it out from under him and him down upon her. The red eyed man just barely caught himself as Ruby took advantage of his momentum and flipped them. Ruby pounced onto him straddling him with her hands on his chest.

“You know sex doesn’t solve everything.”

“You’ve got to see the irony in that statement coming from you.” Ruby traced over his chest to play with his nipple piercings. “These must feel cold.”

Qrow hissed and bit his lip rather then respond, Ruby smirked and dipped her head down and teased over the chilled metal with her tongue. “Fuck Ruby!”

“Will you please tell me what had gotten you so upset? You never used to run so darn hard from me, what changed?” Ruby sucked gently on a nipple.

“No, I can’t say that.” Qrow’s fists balled in the sheets.

“Then send it to me, like this.”

“I...” Qrow let out a strangled moan. Ruby had wrapped a hand tight around his growing erection his hips bucked up into her hand, his gaze fixed on her.

“Show me. Show me so this fear of yours, show me so we can face it together and move on. I love and trust you.”

“You won’t love me after you see.”

“Let me be the judge of that.”

Her words, her soft voice called to his soul. He let the memories flow, let her see what he did. Images like a slow moving film showing countless young girls, all standing in a line as they were appraised and sold, beaten and raped. His wanted to gag from them, to pull back and drop shields over every part of himself but he didn’t. He wanted Ruby to see him as the monster, sending her the images of the things he had seen, done. His hands coated in a red, hot flowing blood and fearful eyes staring back at him. A monster.

The movements upon his cock stopped as Ruby braced herself over him pressing their foreheads together. The images were horrific, seeing her Qrow so angry, watching through his eyes as the Faunus tormented him, burrowing into his brain with poison and clawing into into his never forgetting memory.

“You are not the monster Qrow, you saved those lives, even in the midst of anger and desperation, they would never have been safe and so many others would have suffered had you not done what you did. Does wanting a monster to suffer make you one? No or we would all be monsters. What are you afraid of?” Ruby asked.

“You, she was right. I’m afraid I’ll hurt you.”

“No you won’t. Let me prove it to you. Let me guide you for once.” She took him in hand and stroked him tightly till he was erect again.

Qrow’s eyes snapped open at her choice of words. He still wanted to leave but as Ruby smiled at him and moved farther down straddling his legs she watched him as she leaned down and kissed the thick head of his member. “Stop Ruby, you don’t have too. I don’t want you to, ever.” He added
softly, he didn’t want to see her like that, but he couldn’t voice that, the words got stuck in his throat.

“I want to, I need to feel you, all of you.” Ruby asked and kissed his member again, drawing her tongue over the sensitive smooth head, licking the little slit at the top. She couldn’t quite determine the taste, she recognized flavours and scents she always associated with him. That male musk, the scent of a forest after rain, she moaned and traced flat of her tongue over and around his head. He was rapidly hardening, till he stood at attention throbbing in her hand and demanding her care. She looked like he was torn between aching his back and crying out. She decided to give him a helping hand and wrapped her mouth around the tip of his member, stroked it with her tongue and giving a soft suck.

Qrow let out moan and arched squeezing eyes shut, the memory behind his eyes and somehow it got from there to his lips. “Fuck!” He moaned when Ruby took more of him into her mouth and sucked harder for a moment before pulling off. “Tell me Qrow, do you like this?” Ruby peered up at him from between his legs, his eyes blown and heavy with desire, dilating as she slowly took more of him into her mouth, she had to relax her jaw to take him even then it felt like a stretch. She hummed sucking softly, Oz’s memories were very helpful but required more skill then she had, well she’d keep it simple for now.

Qrow looked down to her and couldn’t help the twitch of his hips and he forced himself not to buck. “Oh Gods Ruby, your killing me.” He yelped when Ruby sucked harder, her tongue stroking the underside of his cock. “Fuck, fuck, fuck, damn you Oz, damn you for teaching her your tricks.

“Qrow? Please talk to me, Muninn I want to understand, I need to. You won’t hurt me.” She dived back down, something about this was arousing. His taste was growing on her, he felt hot in her mouth, she dipped her head and bobbed, a little moan escaping her as her core started to leak. She also liked having him at her mercy like this, he had done this to her many times it was fun to reciprocate. She only wished it was under better circumstances, she needed to prove herself, prove to him that he wouldn’t hurt her. That he had nothing to be afraid of.

Qrow opened his eyes and stared down at her. “Ruby I-.”

He was torn, part of him wanted to tell her to move, get off of him. The other wanted to see just what she would do. Ruby rose up and crawled back up his body posing herself above his member. Slowly the silver eyed woman lowered herself down, slowly taking him inside of her. “Ohh.” She moaned softly, as his bulbous head spread her folds, carefully she lowered herself onto him. Qrow’s stare fixed on her spread sex, how slowly but steadily she took him into her. He could feel her walls spread, she wasn’t as wet as she usually was, the muscles in his jaw twitched when he realized that she enjoyed sucking him off. He growled, he wanted to grab her pull her down and fuck her. However she asked to lead so he would try to let her but she was going so slow he kneaded the bed in an effort not to touch her.

Ruby jumped startled when he punched the bed and arched his back, she narrowed her eyes something occurring to her. She shifted her legs and dropped herself down onto him all at once, letting out a moan of her own falling forward slightly and bracing her hands against his chest. She had gone too fast forced herself to take him, but she needed him, needed him to understand. Needed him to get so worked up that he took what he wanted, with as much force as he dared. “Oh Qrow.” She breathed out in a moan, as her walls tightened and released around him, it hurt, but also felt good, she was tighter as she wasn’t really prepared.

_Fucking damn_, he wanted to grab her, she wanted his attention and she most definitely had it. He could feel her flutter around him, she hadn't given herself enough time, _It must hurt_. He thought as she moaned “Qrow,” she decided to test her theory. “touch me.” Qrow glared at her as she rose a
little then dropped back down, leaning forward on him and partly closing her eyes. She was so beautiful, he would taint her, he didn’t deserve to be inside of her. “No.” He growled out and let out a shuddering breath when she rolled her hips tightening around him. “Why?” She asked, maintaining her rolling grind, it was hard to rock her hips back and forth on him, almost dancing. He brushed up against all her most sensitive spots, it was draining her ability to think very quickly.

His hands were red, because he was a murder, because she wasn’t some nameless bar maid or whore. He loved her, he loved her with every fiber of his being, he wouldn’t taint her, he wouldn’t touch her, he’d let her have her fun and then he’d be gone by nightfall. He’d hurt her twice now, in almost as many weeks, he should never have let her into his bed, should have kept her at a distance, kept her safe. He grit his teeth as she rocked on him, working herself up, getting wetter and wetter, he could feel it, the things he had never let himself do to her rose up in his mind.

Ruby reached down and grabbed his hands, again empowering herself with Aura, pulling them up as he resisted. “What do you see?” She asked, she had to work so hard to keep the moan from her voice she was rocking more for him then for her.

Her hands were so small on his, soft, delicate, fragile, he clenched his tighter but the words slipped from his lips as she rose and slide back down in a slow rolling movement. “My hands are red. I am a murder.”

Ruby brought his hands up and kissed his knuckles. She wrapped him up in the feel of her, lips, her warmth wrapped tight around him, as she rocked up and down on him. “These hands are clean. You are clean my love.” Qrow’s fingers loosened without his input and Ruby pressed his hands to her neck. “These hands are never red, these are the hands of my love, the keeper of my heart.”

Qrow closed his eyes had let out a soft shuddering whine under her, he couldn’t understand how she could do this. He had hurt her badly, the very hands that had crushed hers, she now wrapped around her neck. She was so small, his hands tightened around her neck, it would be so easy to just twist, how could she put this faith in him? Literally put her life in his blood stained hands, he could feel her pulse hammer under his hands. Still she rocked on him, he could hear the little sounds she tried to muffle in the back of her throat, feel the little vibrations under his hands. All of it helping distract him from the memory, he tightened his hands marginally. Ruby let herself fall slightly forward to his abs, bending forward and pressing herself into his grip.

She spoke softly a gentle sound that soothed his nightmares and he could feel the muscles under his hands move. “I love you, we all make mistakes, on the beach wasn’t your fault. You were afraid for me, you lashed out and lost control but thanks to you we got away. Oz is okay, somehow he won, maybe it was your Aura that tipped the battle in his favour. Some very temporary bruising is a small price to pay for Oz’s life.”

*Oz is okay, my Semblance finally did some good.* He moaned when she rocked down and lifted his hips gently up to meet her. Ruby smiled at that, finally she was making some progress. His hands slide down from her neck to her breasts as he opened his eyes, he pushed her back up straight and started to roll his hips in time with her movements.

Ruby couldn’t help it she moaned, long and loud near all of her weight was on their joining and it felt so intense she could feel him pushing up firmly in her. His movements only made it feel better as he filled her over and over with soft deep strokes, she pushed her chest into his hands. “Qrow.” She moan out softly, his name a blessing on her lips.

With every movement the memories faded, her image the only one he could see, her hair pushed back, eyes fluttering between watching him and closing when he rolled up into her just right. He liked the feel of her breasts in his hands nice full perky orbs, he massaged them. She wouldn’t last
much longer, than she’d probably want to sleep and then he would go and never come back. These thoughts made his eyes darken and a frown form on his lips.

“Qrow?” She asked, catching the look, she ached every movement pushed her closer and closer, she was trying to draw this out make him finish with her but she knew he wasn’t there.

“How did she always know the right thing to say? Qrow pondered that as he pushed her hair over one shoulder and leaned down over her, carefully weaving the fingers of his right hand with hers. Ruby didn’t even flinch, she just leaned her head against his and moaned softly when he kissed her neck. His other hand he braced on the bed so she wouldn’t have all of his weight on her.

“Please do what you need too, please let go, you’ll never hurt me. It hurts more when you shut me out, when you run away.” Ruby’s eyes fluttered shut, as she moan softly, to his slow testing thrusts.

He squeezed his eyes shut, it was so tempting to just give her what she wanted. He didn’t think she really understood what it would be like to be with him, with no restraint.”Moonlight.” He whispered against her shoulder. “My safeword is Moonlight.” There, he said it, he’d give her what she wanted and gave her a way to control it at the same time.

Ruby smiled,  

finally ! She had figured out that Qrow and Oz practiced BDSM, but Qrow had never said a word about it. Telling her his safe word, finally he was letting her in.
Qrow moaned and picked up a speed and rhythm that had her moving with him under the force of his movements. Her breasts slapping together with soft *pats*, as she rocked forward with his thrusts. He’d give her this, then he’d leave, one last embrace and then he’d go. He listened to her moan in his ear, the sharp shouts when he slapped their hips together. He squeezed his eyes shut, biting down on her neck. To him it felt like he was using her, he moved his hand from the bed to her hips holding her in place as he moved harder faster. Ruby let out a pleased wail, falling into ecstasy under him her mind blanking, but he just kept going, his fingers tightening over hers again. He waited for his word to fall from her lips, he held her tighter, drove in harder and harder his own soft moans slipping from his throat. Her hip bruised under his grip and her moans turned into impassioned screams. She wiggled her legs further apart, giving him more room.

Ruby loved this, this Qrow trusting her and letting her feel his need for her, the feeling that he was finally giving in, the knowledge made her heart warm. It felt good to be needed, she knew she helped hold him together but this feeling was new. The weight of him on her, the swinging slap of his hips, his balls slapping against her clit with every pounding thrust. “More, more please.” She said breathless, she felt so sensitive as if one orgasm made the others sweep up all the faster.

He didn’t dare, not when she wailed under him and came again, not when she pushed herself back on his member. She begged him, pleaded singing out his name, spread her legs farther for him. “QROW!” She screamed under him, and he closed his eyes again, tucking his face into her neck, his tongue darted out and then he bit down again, slamming his hips to her one last time. Groaning as he came his member throbbing, sending out one hot pulse of seed after another.

Ruby collapsed with another moan, she didn’t bother grabbing a pillow as another climax flowing through her as he came groaning above her, she could feel him finish, spill his hot seed inside of her and let out a little whimper. Oz had told her she would have to make him finish at least three times before Qrow would stop needing more. She only had one down and she wasn’t sure she could go again, she whimpered when he pulled out of her, her tired legs falling to the bed.

“I told you I’d hurt you.” Qrow growled lowly looking her over and spotting her bruised hip.

Ruby summoned up the brain power to roll over, barely controlling the need to wince and look down at her hip, the purple hand print a stark contrast to the pale white of her skin. She called up her Aura and it vanished, grabbed him when pulled away from her.

Qrow glared at the little hand wrapped around his wrist, he felt her use her Aura to pull him back to her. He fell behind her, she slide her hand over his, wove her fingers between his and held tight. “I have Oz’s memories of the last time he did this. I know you are far from finished and I told you to do what you need to.” She said softly not looking at him, only drawing her legs up so he could be inside of her again.

“It’s not the same with Oz, I won’t use you.” Qrow tried to pull his hand away, but her grip tightened, he could feel the Aura under her skin and knew he’d have to use his to break free.

“It’s not using us when we want to help you, I get it. Sex is practically therapy for you, especially with Oz, it gives you an outlet that isn’t drinking or getting into a fight and it keeps sharp objects away from your wrists.” She let go of his hand only to reach back and pull his hips to hers. “Please Qrow, I know you well enough to know you’re still hard, so get inside of me and do it again.” In any other circumstance these words would have her blushing scarlet, but right now she was too tired to care. He needed her, and she’d give herself to him till he was sated.

Qrow was having a quiet war with himself, on one hand that was an order he never turned down. On the other he didn’t want to use her to chase his demons away, he just didn’t want to. He didn’t know how else to explain it, or how to voice it, he knew if he was with Oz right now the man would be
driving into him. Regardless of how Qrow felt about it, Oz knew and now Ruby knew too. He didn’t want sex with her to be about him, he’d been so careful to always put her first. Ruby reached up to her Rose and Qrow felt the memory of the last few minutes replay, what was she doing?

He found out a moment later when Oz’s Aura slammed into him, the feeling of Oz being down right pissed at him. “Shit!” Qrow yelped, as Oz chased the feeling up with a maelstrom of arousing memories and feelings. He grabbed at Ruby’s Rose and poured his concerns and feelings through it.

Ruby moaned as Oz’s Aura danced over her skin, she was tired but her insides were already throbbing aching for him to come back inside. It was official, she was never going to abuse her Rose, if this was what Oz could to do them… She grabbed a breast and started to massage it while wiggling herself forward and arching her back, presenting herself for Qrow for when Oz got the better of him.

Oz’s response was quieter the second time, he wrapped Qrow in love and shared how it felt to him to help Qrow. That just because they used sex to keep him from giving into his demons, used to to draw out what was bothering him out of him. Didn’t mean that was only what it was, he could fuck now and make love to her later.

While Oz explained this, he sent a completely different collection of feelings to Ruby, being much more skill in Aura he could. He worked her up with his fantasies, guided her hands to play with her nipples, his Aura ghosting like a soft fire over her skin.

Ruby moaned and yelped, she thought she understood what it was like to be aroused, Oz was correcting her of that assumption. Qrow’s gazed snapped down to her, Oh Oz you manipulative bastard! “Qrow, Qrow please! I-, I-.” The words caught in her throat, she needed him and she needed him right NOW!

Oz whispered in Qrow’s ear, “You’d never leave her wanting would you? I can keep her like this till you take her.” Qrow tucked the Rose behind his ear, so he could keep in contact with him and grabbed Ruby hip and pulled her back onto him, she came the instant he was sheathed himself. She screamed bucking, he had to grab her hip to hold her still, else he’d slip out. Oz slid more feelings over Qrow, stirred up memories of the pleasure they had shared in the past. Qrow moaned, Ruby under him he grabbed a pillow and lifted her chest to put it under her, lifted her folded legs, tucking another pillow under her hips.

His mind went pleasantly blank, when Oz pulled up a memory of Qrow under him as he fucked him. Qrow fell into the feeling, pushing back into her and rammed into Ruby in time with the fantasy Oz constructed. He didn’t think, just bent over her grabbed the sheets and fucked, slamming into her without a care of how fast or hard he was going. He could feel Oz shift his attention to sweep over both of them, the whispered threat of what he would do to them when he found them again.

Ruby screamed and screamed, high pleasured wails, she couldn’t comprehend what Oz was doing to them. The image of Qrow fucking her like this, while Qz ploughed into Qrow’s ass, came into her mind. She jerked and her walls pulsed around him, her clit throb at the scene. She grabbed the pillow and bit down on muffling another wail as Qrow picked up his pace, throwing his weight behind his movements as well. Her legs were starting to hurt, their fluids leaked from her dripping down her swollen pearl, Qrows ramming drives within her taking on a wet sound.

Oz eased off, he quietly coxed their Aura’s up, partly to protect Ruby, partly so he could share in on the experience. Call it selfish of him but he didn’t want to miss out on this, as the Rose was in Qrow’s hair he was limited to Qrow’s perspective, but that would have been his preference anyway. Oz called Qrow’s Aura into the Rose, providing him with a steady stream of images. He kept a smooth flow of feeling and memory into Qrow, blitzing out the other man's mind too much for him.
to think. Qrow came with a shout as Ruby tightened around him, but Oz drove him onward, within
the next few thrusts Ruby scream again louder a long “Ahh!~”, her voice was starting to hurt. Her
eyes rolled into the back of the back of her head when he didn’t stop, even as he forced wave after
wave of seed deep into her.

Oz whispered a suggestion into Qrow’s ear, the red eyed man didn’t even think just followed. He
pulled out of Ruby, flipped her over onto her back, moved the pillow under her butt and grabbed her
legs and force them up, spreading her wide. Oz appreciated that sight, she was so open that Qrow
could see into her and his milky white seed leaking out of her. Qrow slide his hands down her thighs,
tipping her up and holding her open, he shifted, leaning over her and drove back inside.

Ruby arched, throwing her head back and screamed at the top of her lungs reaching up to grab at his
hands. It felt like there was less room for him now, but he made her body give him more. He
pounded into her panting as he watched his member possess her over and over, he could feel himself
hit her cervix, took note of the extra loud scream that strangled her throat. He let her thighs go and
planted his hands by either side of her head and shortened his strokes, hard deep and fast. He let out
a moan, as she tensed and keened under him, why had he put this off? Ruby held her legs up for
him, her fingers biting into her own skin, she panted around her cries. Holding her legs in place gave
her a place to put her hands and made him drive harder into her.

Qrow looked down between them, no bruising, just a willing and wet woman, one who professed
love for him, stretched around his member. Qrow smiled a goofy grin and looked back up to her, the
keening beauty, her skin drenched with sweet, breasts bouncing, he licked his lips and bent down
and kissed her neck. He slid his knees back resting his weight on her for a moment before driving
into again, hips barely raising, and he panted and grunted against her neck.

Ruby came again, it felt like he was trying to ram through her and she tightened up like a vice around
him. She heard him moan above her and felt the pulsing throb, as he emptied his balls in several hot
gushing waves right up against her cervix.

The room resounded with their blended breathing as Ruby and Qrow panted for several long
minutes, trying to catch their breath. Ruby’s body quivered with the over-stimulation and she was
eternally grateful when Qrow shifted her form on the side so he could cuddle up to her, not having
the energy to do anything other then breathe. Just as they were starting to get comfy there was
another feeling from Oz, this one relaxed and stated. Good, now sleep. He whispered to them and it
only took the space of a breath for them both to fall asleep as they lay.

Qrow woke up with a groan, he was sore in places he forgot he had and pulled an arm under him
and pushed himself up. He blinked a few times before Ruby’s features came into focus under him,
she was still out cold, sweat stuck to them both and her hair was a mess. “Oww.” He groaned out his
voice gravelly, throat dry, he was soft but still in her.

He pulled out with a wince, he was very sore, he flopped over onto his back stretching out his legs.
His groin was sticky and he was sure she was worse, he took a deep breath and let his head flop over
to look at her.

Ruby woke when he did, but willed herself to be still when he pulled out, she was soo not going to
be able to walk today. She felt him turn to look at her and slowly opened her eyes, smiling her soft
little smile and stretching her own legs out. “Hey.” She said softly.
Oh how could he have ever thought to leave her? “Hey.” He said softly then rose a brow when she giggled.

“Nothing.” She blushed and continued when he cocked his head interested. “Was just thinking if I wasn’t protected, I’d so be pregnant by now.”

Qrow shook his head to banish that image he wasn’t the fathering type. “Don’t even joke about that.”

Ruby giggled and rolled over to him. “What? You’re not getting any older, Oz isn’t, we have a long future ahead of us. Would it really be so bad to sire a baby or two in a decade or two?” She reached out and petted his chest, tracing her fingers along the firm muscles.

“I’m fine with the siring bit, clearly.” He gestured to her nude, well fucked state. “It’s what comes after that I want no part of. Summer almost lost you twice, after that I stopped coming around. There are way too many things to go wrong with a pregnancy and I am never risking you like that.”

Ruby blinked, she had never known that. “What do you mean?”

“What do you mean almost lost me? Twice?” Her Dad had never mentioned that, her mom had a rough time carrying her.

“Tai never told you?” Qrow couldn’t believe that, but then maybe he had wanted to shield Ruby from that mess. “Love, you weren’t Summers first child, she had a silver eyed boy first but he was near two months early and didn’t make it to the end of his first day.”

Ruby’s eyes widened, no one had never mentioned she could have had a big brother. “Why didn’t Dad or Yang say something?”

Qrow reached out to her and brushed her hair back then resting on her cheek. “Sweety, we barely named him before he past on. Yang was barely a year old, I doubt she knows either.”

Ruby closed her eyes covered his hand with her own. “Why haven’t I seen a grave?”

“You see it every time you look out the window.” The red eyed man said softly, Ruby opened her eyes confused. “There’s only an Ash Tree…”

“Summer named him Ash, she didn’t want to put him in a cold grave instead she choice burying him out back and Tai got her a seed. Now Ash, gets to keep living as a tree.” Qrow stroked her cheek. “Summer liked to be poetic like that.”

“I’m I anything like her?” Ruby asked.

“Who?” Qrow asked knowing fully well who.

Ruby shook her head slightly with a smile. “My mother.”

“No, not at all, you have her hair and eyes, but everything else is a pretty even mix of her and Tai. You’re short like her, but you’re only seventeen and you are way curvier and bustier than she ever was. Personalities you’re poplar opposite.” Qrow shifted closer to her, so their faces were level.

“So you don’t think about her when you look at me?” Ruby asked, as Qrow slid his hand free of hers and down the curve of her body to her waist and pulled her to him. “Never.” He kissed her lips
softly. “You stopped being anything like her when you demanded I teach you how to use a scythe.”

Ruby giggled and smiled at that, leaning forward to kiss him again, a hand finding its way into his
hair. Qrow let out a purr and held her as they kissed softly, they parted and Ruby asked softly. “Will
you tell me about it, well why did Mom have trouble with me? I know Jaune has seven sisters, but I
haven’t really looked into any of that stuff beyond passive stuff.”

“I’m not sure whether or not to be relieved.” Qrow said with complete honesty. “Why the sudden
interest?”

“You and Dad don’t talk about mom, and you did just fu-, well you were very thorough. I am so not
moving for a while yet.” Ruby blushed and wrapped a strand of his hair around her finger.

“You pick the weirdest pillow talk.” Qrow said, which wasn’t completely true, she wasn’t wrong
given their youth and his flavour of frequent sex. Yeah she would totally be with child by now if she
wasn’t protected, well that wasn’t entirely true either. He took a deep breath. “After Ash, your mom
went to Oz, him being the authority on lore in Vale. There aren’t many silver eyes in the world, one
would think that would be because most of them die in battle, but you know with festivals like the
Wylde Hunt. One would think their numbers would be a bit higher, as best as Oz figured out. Silver
eyes only passes on down through the mother, a silver eyed father won’t have silver eyed children.
At least that was one theory he had, no actual proof of that. But for some reason, silver eyes are also
less fertile than what would be considered normal. It of course varies from woman to woman like
normal, but your mom had trouble conceiving Ash and you took a whole year after. That’s a bit odd
Ruby, normally after giving birth a woman normally can’t get pregnant again till she stops
breastfeeding. That never happened with Ash, your Mom should have been been able to
conceive you within a few months. Eventually after a great deal of effort on Tai’s part.” Ruby
scrunch up her face, that was a thought she didn’t need. “You mom caught you, she miscarried
twice beforehand, always blaming it on stress or her work. I stopped visiting after her first
miscarriage and only stopped by after confirming she wasn’t pregnant yet. She almost lost you once
about two months in, we never found out why but Tai got her to the hospital in time to save you. The
second time was five months in, and again to the hospital she went and was put on bed rest and
watched like a hawk. At eight months you were determined to come into the world, the doctors
managed to hold you back for a week but you were still premature. Tai called me to come and look
after Yang while he stayed with Summer, he lost one child he wasn’t going to stand by for two.”

Ruby thought that over, she had never known and she couldn’t begin to imagine what her mother
went through. “I get that puts the baby at risk, but you said you’d never put me through that. What
else can happen?”

Qrow scoffed and looked up resting his head on a pillow. “It’s a long list, beyond miscarrying, an
agonizing experience so I’ve been told. Just in the act of birthing, if the baby is facing the wrong
way, well that can kill mother and child. If the cord gets wrapped around the child’s neck again, your
baby dies. Shit can just go wrong, you can hemorrhage and bleed to death. In a city, sure there are
doctors, but if you’re just in a town or worse between towns, well the birth rates aren’t good. Then
there is the pain involved, it’s not uncommon for a family to hire a extra huntsman to linger nearby.
Labours can last days sometimes, especially first ones, the mother is bound to attract Grimm from just
being in pain for so long. Pregnancies are a risky business, and there are many many things that can
go wrong.”

Ruby hadn’t known any of that, the romance novels she had read made it look like a happy go lucky
affair. While they did teach about it at Signal in science class, again they didn’t talk about all the
things that could go wrong. “Wow.” She said softly, now understanding why Qrow refused to sire
any children, she knew he got around enough that she would have been surprised if she didn’t meet
at least one of his bastards some day. Now she understood why he took protection into his own hands when he messed around, he didn’t want to force that onto any woman. Ruby hummed playing the bell of one of his piercings.

“What are you thinking?” Qrow asked petting up and down her back.

“Nothing really, just working it all over in my head.” She kissed the middle of his pectorals. “I think someday we should try, I bet we’d make a very pretty baby and silver eyes are rare. If anything ever happens to me, I’d be happier knowing I extended a Silver Eyed line.”

“Nothing is going to happen to you.” Qrow kissed her forehead.

Ruby purred pulled away and moved up so she could kiss him again. “You know you can’t know that right?”

Qrow kissed her again. “Doesn’t mean I can’t try.” Ruby purred into the kiss and parted her lips, let his tongue slide into her mouth. Qrow’s hand came up into her hair as he leaned forward deepening the kiss and rolling her onto her back. She broke it with a soft moan, feeling a familiar twitch against her thigh. “You can’t seriously be wanting more.”

Qrow chuckled, “No, even I’m sore, but you do look extra lovely on your back.” he kissed her neck and she blushed, he grazed his teeth along her neck. “Also love, never underestimate the sex drive of a huntsman in his prime. When we get back to Oz we’re going to have to work on your stamina, because then you will have two huntsmen in their prime at your beck and call.”

Ruby melted at that idea, if their previous round was any indicator she wasn’t going to last long. Qrow smiled against her skin, before shifting to the side and scooping her up.

“Hey!” She protested, wrapping her arms around his neck as he stepped off the bed carrying her.

“Come on, you said Tai and Yang were gone and we’re both desperately in need of a shower.” He shifted her to hold her in one arm so he could open the door then strode out into the hall bold as brass.

“I don’t think I want to try and stand.” Ruby said, then giggled at another thought. “Nude Day!”

Qrow chuckled pushing open the bathroom door with a foot and went straight for the tub. He set her down on the edge and set the shower running, making sure that it was warm enough before letting the spray hit her. He offered his hand and Ruby took it and very very warily stood up, or attempted to. Qrow caught her before she fell more than a few centimeters, moving a hand to the small of her back to support her as she leaned on his front, warm water pouring down over them. She purred wrapping her arms around his waist, she could feel his seed leak from her and was a little surprised it took so long, but then he had pretty much folded her over, he couldn’t have gotten any deeper if he tried. They stood for a few minutes just enjoying the water before Qrow kneeled before her, being careful to hold her the whole while.

Ruby grabbed both of his shoulders as he gently coaxed her legs apart. “You okay?” He asked, reaching over to the soap and turning it over in his hand a few times. Ruby nodded and let out a little gasp as he very gently washed her core, starting at her pearl and moving back. He could feel that she was still a little swollen, but considering what he did to her she was in excellent shape. She wasn’t torn anywhere, and didn’t appear to have any bruising. He washed the soap off his hand and looked up to her and asked. “You do mind if I check inside? I want to make sure you’re not hurt anywhere and just not noticing it yet.”
“I’m fine, but go ahead.” She gasped, her legs wobbling when he slipped a finger inside, gently pressing in till his last knuckle, he slowly made a complete circle, feeling for any irregularities before gently removing it. “You seem fine.”

“Told you you wouldn’t hurt me.” She reached over and grabbed her wash cloth and offered it to him. Qrow took it and kissed her belly, “I just wanted to check.” he took the cloth and rubbed the soap into it before putting the soap back.

Ruby ran her fingers through his hair. “Well if it makes you happy, you can check as much as you like.”

Qrow pressed a few more kisses to her belly, he instantly liked that idea, it wasn’t that he didn’t trust her to say something if he hurt her. It was just having open ended permission for whenever he liked did ease his mind a great deal. “That will help.” He muttered pressing more kisses to her belly.

Ruby giggled as his scruff rasped against her belly. “I thought you were washing.”

“I am, I’m just using my lips first.” Qrow turned his head and rubbed his cheek against her stomach, Ruby giggled and stroked his head. “Puddy cat.” He drew away and kissed her belly again. “I prefer panther, thank you very much.” He rumbled out and started washing her stomach with the cloth.

“Mind if I do all of you?”

Ruby leaned on his shoulders and parted her legs a little more, feeling more steady now. “Go ahead.” She bit her lip when he pressed the cloth between her legs again rolling it gently, it was harsher than his hands had been. He gently slid it back between her butt cheeks and rubbed in little circles, knowing their fluids would have dried there.

Ruby shivered in his embrace as she felt the cloth against her, this felt very intimate, she wasn’t sure why but the simple act of letting him clean her... Qrow removed the cloth and shifted closer so she could lean on him more easily as he started with her ankles and worked his way up. Warm water poured down over them, collecting on their lips and skin, he took his time, making sure he got every millimeter. She liked the feel of his hands on her, these weren’t teasing touches, just firm cleansing strokes. He couldn’t help but pause at her breasts, wrap his arms around her and feather kisses along them. He heard a “Hmm.” from above him. “What?” he asked kissing her right breast. “What about my breasts do you like so much? You mentioned liking breasts, but why?”

Qrow paused at that, he had never thought about it. “Don’t know, I just do.” He nipped at her nipple before drawing it into his mouth. Ruby drew a long shaky breath, moving her hands from his shoulders back into his hair. “Why do you like doing that?” She asked, she felt him shrug, letting her go long enough to speak. “It’s calming, feeling you trembling and listening to the sighs is just a bonus. If you didn’t cover them up all the time, I’d probably play with them all day. You could probably just walk by and I’d pounce on you.”

Ruby giggled, she liked that idea, watching a movie with a breast massage, now that sounded like heaven. “I’d be completely okay with that.” She could see him smile as he shifted his attentions to her other breast, sucking softly on the nipple. “If you just want to do that for a while, you could pass me the shampoo, I could do your hair then.”

Qrow grumbled, he was quite happy where he was thank you very much, but he drew away, reached back and grabbed the bottle handing it to her before returning his attention to her breast. He rubbed the flat of his tongue back and forth over her nipple, tightening his grip when she wobbled in his arms.

Ruby gasped softly, give her another hour and she’d be aroused by the action but for now her body
was still recovering. She poured out a small dollop of shampoo into her hand, set down the bottle and rubbed the lavender scented cleaner between her hands before massaging them in big circles through Qrow’s raven hair. He tilted his head back slightly so they wouldn’t have to worry about it running into his eyes and purred. Ruby kept petting him long after his hair was clean, thinking he was so utterly cute like this. She smiled thinking she had a new tool in her kit for the next time he needed help getting out of a hole. “Come on you.” She said fondly. “You can play with them all you want after we are clean.”

Qrow cupped her breasts pushing them up and burying his face between them. “But I have them right now.” He whined softly, he was tempted to water board her but he didn’t want her squirming.

“And the water is going to get cold and you still need to wash.” Ruby said with a smile, he was just too adorable.

Qrow sighed she was right and he could get his snuggles in later, she just oozed calm and he loathed to be fair from her. He carefully stood up and they finished washing, he let her clean him and they finished just as the water temperature started to dip.

Ruby let Qrow wrap her up in a big fluffy towel much too big for her, before drying himself and picking her up again. “You know, I’m sure I can walk now.” She snuggled up to his chest and made no move to move.

“While I am sure that is true, this is more fun.” Qrow smirked and put her down on the bed, moving to get dressed.

Ruby watched him pull on slacks and pick out one of his tailed shirts. “You know you don’t have to put a shirt on.” She dried her hair a devious plan forming in her mind.

Qrow raised a brow. “It’s cold though.” He licked his lips when Ruby dropped the towel and stood up, she carefully walked over and took the grey tailed shirt from him and pulled it on. She buttoned up the shirt while Qrow watched the wheels turning in his mind, as she paused doing a button right between her breasts but no more. Qrow stepped over and picked her up and set her on the dresser and kissed her soundly.

Ruby let out a little merp and grabbed his shoulders, the kiss was slow and chaste. When he drew back she asked. “What was that about?”

Qrow shook his head. “Nothing, just you being you.”

Ruby moved her hands cupping his jaw, she petted through his scruff. “Are you really better now?”

Qrow nodded and closed his eyes. “When I really sleep I can put the memories away, lock them up. I just need a distraction so I can get to that point, being sedated never works right for clearing them away.” He gently took ahold of her hips sliding his hands under the shirt, “With Oz half of it giving into him, knowing he’ll protect me when I can’t protect myself.” he petted her with his thumbs.

“Some of it is touch, just to feel something outside of the memory to fall into different sensations. Oz is so good at just casing it all away...” He trailed off.

Ruby leaned up and kissed his lips softly. “Go on.”

Qrow rested his forehead against hers, it was easier to talk to her now. Like some wall had been torn down between them, she’d proven him wrong, he wouldn’t harm her and she could help him.

“Those memories had been what caused me to fall out of touch while you were at Beacon. But I didn’t remember them, my mind had repressed them, then Naga threatened you and...”
“Hey shhh, it’s okay. I’m okay you okay, there is no one here but us, we are both safe.” She spoke softly petting him as she felt his hands tighten on her hips.

“I don’t know what happened with my Semblance, that’s never happened before but when it did, I remembered things that I hadn’t before. Memories repressed and not dealt with and then I hurt you and that just brought it all crashing down.” Ruby parted her legs so he could stand between them, she lowered her hands and pulled him into a hug, resting her cheek against his collar. Qrow squeezed her tightly, wanting to never let go again. “And you saw the rest, thank you for stopping me. If you hadn’t been there I’d probably be halfway to Beacon by now and very drunk.”

Ruby closed her eyes and took a deep breath letting his scent fill her. “I’ll always be here for you.” Qrow closed his eyes and tightened his embrace, sharing the same sentiment.

Chapter End Notes

Ardy: Thank you too:Bucky_Barnes, darkvampirekisses, lillithschild, Sportsfangirl815
Oz drew his cloak in tight around him, he was exhausted, the Grimm were finally all gone and Harkness had gotten them moving. He didn't dare retire though, he hadn't had a chance to speak to Jack yet. Thankfully the captain came to him, calm and almost happy.

“I don't know how you did it, but Naga won't be recovering from that for a while, tomorrow we're going to get some work done. Normally I knock out the mortal crew but I'd like you to see what we do.” Jack leaned on the rail beside him, his own heavy winter coat hugging him.

Oz debated what to say, he expected more repercussions for harming Naga, he chose to stay on topic. “You ferry the dead? That's what Naga said.”

Jack nodded. “We don't need her to do that though, the souls will come to the ship. It's not fair to ask this of you as you will likely see people you know. Many died at the Fall of Beacon, that can cause things to be a bit… busy on the other side and I can’t have the whole crew awake, they would question their sanity.”

Oz swallowed part of him wanted to know who had been lost, but he also knew it would likely harm him in the long run. He traced over his new ring thinking it over, did he really want to know who he had lost? Did he want to know what there was after life? That place he'd never get to go? “I'll help.” He said softly, guilt and curiosity getting the better of him.

“Thank you Ozpin, now go get some rest. It's been a busy day.” Jack looked out over the ocean as Oz nodded and departed, he had just gotten to his cabin when Ruby's first little message of Aura came.

Fear and worry rose in his heart in equal measures, he sent Aura to heal Ruby the called up bits and pieces of memories and sending them to her as guidance and instructions and he hoped that would be enough. Ruby sent him the image of Qrow at her breast, the image calmed him and he sent one last whisper of Aura telling her to ask if she needed help, before his exhausted body pulled him into sleep.

He woke slowly and rolled onto his back, his clothes were cold and clammy as he had forgotten to strip. Getting slowly up he sighed, he was sore and still exhausted, whatever happened between Ruby, Qrow and the Relic, it had really taken it out of him. Forcing himself to his feet with a groan he pulled a warm change of clothes out of his bag and staggering out of his room to the showers.

The showers were mostly without any semblance of privacy but it was late and the few with curtains were empty. Pausing outside of one he peeled himself out of his filthy clothes, his skin was chafed from the salt. He stepped behind one of the curtains and turned the water on letting it pour down over his battered body.

The fight with Naga had drained him more then he wanted to admit, he still had lingering Aura from the pair, water red to his green flames. He had a hard time figuring out if that hurt or felt good. He
had never read anything about Aura sharing like this, Ruby was doing something very new with Qrow. Ozpin rubbed his chest with his left hand the ring warm against his chest. Qrow’s Semblance had flowed through him, yet another thing that he had never heard of before. Sure Semblances could affect other people, but manifested enough to go through another person, that was new. He braced his hands against the wall leaning into it and bowed his head the water sliding down over his neck.

He groaned and relaxed, beyond the strange use of Aura. He had also used the Relic, it tapped into his Aura as well and drained him. As a mortal of flesh and blood using the Relic hurt him, had he not a great Aura it would have reduced him to dust. He cursed quietly, using it had been stupid of him but he had been going up against a Goddess. It was a good thing he had deactivated it before the Grimm showed up. He didn’t need any sort of signal that a Relic had been used getting back to Salem. He reached up and poked at his right shoulder and winced then glanced over at the shoulder and sighed at the huge purple bruise. Mortal bones weren’t good at holding up against supernatural forces, unless he could find someway to densify his muscles and bones. Well regardless of Aura, going up against forces like Naga would be very unwise.

He hoped that after whatever Jack had planned the Grimm wouldn’t be too numerous, as he was far from a hundred percent. Rather than washing he just stood in the water letting it ease his many aches and pains. After a while he felt Aura from Ruby, coupled with memories.

Oh Qrow you idiot. Oz thought and set about setting Qrow to rights, when given the opportunity to share in on the experience he jumped at it, at the end of it all he thought. I’m getting much too familiar with my right hand.

He turned the water off and stepped out drying himself and getting dressed in his thickest clothes, layering an over shirt on top of his usual dress shirt. He took extra care strapping his armour on tightly this night, when he arrived on the deck the sky was clear and Jack was at the helm with Will and Lizzy.

“Just in time.” Will said. “You’ll be on the deck with me.”

“What are we doing exactly?” Ozpin asked crossing his arms, glancing around the room, he didn’t come in here often.

“You’ll see in a moment.” Jack took them helm and closed his eyes.

Ozpin’s eyes popped out of his sockets as the ship dove down between the waves, water rushing up in a torrent. Will stretched out his hand and the waves crashed over them, passing through them. He looked down at his transparent hands, watched the water move through him. “Wow.” Oz said, even he had never seen anything like this, he might be a folklore expert but he had a feeling he was just about to get a much more hands on education. Even with Will’s Semblance allowing the water to pass through them, Oz felt a bone chilling cold and he started to feel drained. In the back of his mind a siren’s song slowly started to whisper to him calling him deeper deeper. He could ignore it for now, it was just a little voice a sweet song of temptation.

It felt like they were diving but suddenly they were bursting up out of the ocean onto a new sea. Oz felt the cold enhance and as he exhaled he could see his breath curling in the air. He looked out the window, there was no sun or moon, the sky was covered in grey clouds that made everything appear grey a mist as far as the eye could see.

Jack spoke. “There are nine gates of Death each with its own Precinct, the first is where the newly dead gather, some managed to find their way forward without help, but not many. This is a form of the In-Between an aspect of Berath’s wheel existing at the end.”

“I’ll head out and start singing.” Lizzy said heading outside Will gesturing for Oz to follow.
While Lizzy tied back her hair and got ready, Oz looked over the edge of the boat. The water appeared shallow but with a gentle current always flowed in one direction, if he didn’t know better he’d say they were on a river. Then Lizzy started to sing, a old song wordless but it called to all, it needed no words to be understood. It rang in Oz’s ears and he felt strange, drawn to Lizzy.

Out of the mist flowed ghosts, Oz backed away as several passed through him, chilling him to the bone. None of the ghost looked at him, they all stared blankly to the horizon, though a few more solid looking ones looked at Lizzy.

More and more came, soon there wasn’t room for him to walk without walking through them. His hand fell on his sword, he was suddenly really glad he had a magic of his own. Jack started to move the ship slowly forward, Lizzy’s siren song gathering the dead to them.

Oz backed up and Will moved beside him putting a hand on his arm to calm him. “We’ll be okay for now, the first Precinct is pretty dull, things don’t interesting till the fifth.”

“They’re so many.” Ozpin said softly, his heart twisted in his chest, these were his people.

“Don’t let it get to you, there was nothing anyone could have done. You couldn’t have kept Cinder and Salem away, or the Grimm. People die, without death there is no meaning to life.” Will said firmly, he understood that Oz needed to see this but he wasn’t about to let him think it was his fault. “Lizzy will call the dead till the fourth gate, after that it gets too dangerous. We haven't been in Vale for a while.”

“Grimm?” He asked, he didn’t think Grimm had souls.

They could start to see a massive waterfall in the distance, more dead collected Oz was starting to get used to the constant chill of having one or two overlapping with him. Will shook his head. “Greater Dead, ones old enough and strong enough to think for themselves, ones that want back into life. The Naglfar is the only way out so they collect together in the fifth Precinct for attempted ambushes.” Will explained, readying his Semblance again. “I’d hold onto something.”

Oz moved over and grabbed the rail as the Naglfar tipped over the edge of the waterfall and plunged down into the second Precinct. The song in the back of Ozpin’s mind grew just a little louder, his heart started to ache and he longed to find the source of the song, it was so beautiful. His heart rate slowed as the cold of Death sank deeper into him and they passed through the Gate.

The Second Precinct was much like the first, only the current was faster and Jack had to navigate them through whirlpools. The Gate for the second Precinct was a massive whirlpool, again Will called upon his Semblance and made them as incorporeal as the ghosts that swayed on the deck of the ship.

They launched out of the water and Ozpin was starting to lose track of up and down, it all seemed irrelative in Death. Again the song gained strength, it whispered of freedom to be free of pain forever. Oz leaned against the rail his blood chilling as his Aura started to wither. He didn't feel this though, no Death was careful to ensnare souls, no instead he felt calm and ready for a fight. After they crashed back onto the water, Oz noticed the Third Precinct was much warmer than the latter and calmer, a slow current with no obvious dangers. So he was surprised when he felt the engines roar to life beneath his feet.

Will spoke up explaining again. “The Third Precinct has waves large enough to capsize this ship, we won’t be lingering.”

The third gate was a vale a mist, which parted from them, Oz could feel Naga’s soul stir in the ship.
The mist licked over the ship and the song grew in strength but it remained in the back of his mind, calling out softly gently with honeyed words to his subconscious.

The Fourth Precinct was very like the first only the current was faster. The gate was another waterfall, though Oz still wasn’t used to water passing through him. He still didn’t notice that Death ate away at his life seeking to possess him, a soul that had so long evaded it crawled hands.

Now in the Fifth Precinct, here both Lizzy and Will unsheathed their weapons. The light of the previous Precincts was gone, it was dark with no stars and the air was cold enough that frost started to collected along the ship. The mist was dark and oppressive limiting sight in all directions, in the middle of the Precinct was the long Dark Bridge which Jack sailed alongside.

Oz ready his sword when long wailing moans filled the air. “Are those Greater Dead?” He called up his weak Aura, he didn't notice Death eating away at his soul, he figured it was just the lingering exhaustion from the fight with Naga. He could hear something come out of the dark deep black waters. He backed away from the edge of the ship, sword out and ready.

Lizzy moved to flank Will, saying. “Don’t use your Aura on them, it only makes them stronger. You have to rip them apart the old fashioned way.”

Oh joy. Oz thought, tightening his Aura and coiled it around his skin, why had he agreed to this again? The massive amount of ghosts filling the deck started sinking below, afraid of the Fifth Gate Resters, as one crawled up over the rail and fell onto the deck with a splat. It remained a puddle for a moment, then it oozed up into an almost humanoid shape. Oz could see a black human skeleton under it but its flesh was constantly rotting, falling off and being replaced. He could see long black claws and when it opened his mouth row upon row upon row of shark like teeth.

He barely had time to take the in monster before Lizzy and Will filled it full of bullets. Each one shattering the vile thing till it fell apart and tumbled back over the side. “Less gawking Oz more fighting!”

Oz shook his head and ducked just in time for Lizzy to shoot at one that had snuck up on him. He spun and cleaved the monster in two, only for the top half to crawl across the deck at him. Ozpin punted it off the ship, This isn’t so bad. He looked up when he heard Lizzy and Will firing rapidly and his heart sank. What in the name of all the Gods? Oz backed up as a monster that was not one dead creature but many.

It was a horrible conglomerate of bodies, all twisting and turning under a huge black cloak of slime. Black skulls making up a head, a single white commanding one with a collar of more black ones. The thing heaved a huge bone sword, the hilt guard made out of rib cages, the blade a huge thick curved bone. It bellowed a huge gust of rancid air, and lowered itself to the ground, skeletal arms slid from the mass and pulled itself across the deck.

Will and Lizzy backed up firing all the while, the monster rose and cleave down at them.

Oz moved forward parrying the blade, his shoulder screamed at him, the bone blade sliced into the deck as Oz slid under and away. Lizzy and Will broke apart flaking the monster, but their bullets were ineffective.

The Greater Dead bellowed again and yanked its sword out of the deck and cleaved at Oz again. He jumped back out the way landing by the helm he shouted. “Uh, Jack hints?!”

“Don’t get cleaved in two!” Jack shouted turning the ship away from the Dark Bridge. They hadn’t been in Vale for a while and this was what happened when they didn’t ferry an area quickly enough
after a war.

Oz lept straight up into the air as the monsters sword cleaved into the helm, the ships Aura flaring black to protect itself. The Greater Dead raised its arms and a wave of black energy ate away at his Aura and threw him far from the ship. Oz twisted in the air just in time to see the black waters rushing up to meet him. **OH SHIT!** Oz thought and braced himself.

His eyes jerked open as the raging river pulled him into it, everything looked like it was condensing, twisting and changing all around him. There was no light and he twisted around trying to find which way was up. He kicked out swimming but he never seemed to get anywhere, the water pulled at him, his Aura withering away. It kissed at his skin, a cold loving embrace, nibbling at his flesh. Oz felt his lungs scream and then he couldn’t stop himself from taking a breath. The song sang out loudly in his mind **Rest, sleep, come to me, haven’t you had enough just give in, no more pain no more loss just give in.** He struggled and kicked out afraid as he grew more and more tired.

He jerked once back arching, his eyes slid shut as inky black water filled his lungs as his brain slowed he thought **Wouldn’t it be nice to just drift away?** Death had a way of luring its captives deeper, it felt strange even as it wore away at his soul, as his skin froze and heart slowed. Oz found he lost all desire to reach the surface as Death whispered sweet nothings in his ear, even as it carved away at his soul. **Sleep dear Ozpin, your time has long been over. You’ve nothing left to live for, you are not Headmaster anymore, you failed. You look in the mirror and you don’t know who it is that stares back, you don’t even know why you are here. It’s time to die, no new body. Just let go my dear Ozpin, just give in and I will grant you peace.**

The voice had been whispering to him since the first gate, weaving these ideas into his mind. Even as his brain was starved for oxygen he couldn’t help but feel the voice was right, he had nothing left anymore. He had failed, time and time again, he fought for a life that wasn’t even his to live. He remembered looking into the mirror after getting his tattoos and wondering just who was looking back at him. How his hands had changed, how he had changed. He wasn’t Professor Ozpin anymore, Headmaster of Beacon. He was no one, just one sad old soul that kept fighting because it was the only thing it knew how to do.

Oz went limp as he thought, **Time to stop.** The water pulled him deeper as his life washed away and his soul with it.

The next moment he was on the deck having his chest beat on till he convulsed and coughed up the water. He looked up his vision blurry. “Get your head in the game!” Will shouted, water dripped from his hair and he leapt to his feet to help Lizzy with the Greater Dead.

Oz blinked trying to clear his eyes, he was so tired, he didn’t feel like he had a spec of Aura left. He pushed himself up and coughed again shivering he was so cold, cold down to his very soul. **Why? Why had he been pulled from the water?** He had finally found peace, finally he had found death. Oz staggered to his feet only for the monster to bellow again, black fire washing over the three of them.

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Oz threw himself to the deck and wrapped himself up in his cloak, activating the shielding dust. **Get a grip!** He yelled at himself and leapt to his feet, thankfully he still had his sword. **Right.** Now he remembered why he was here and raced at the monster, without Aura he had to jump up to avoid the sword and stabbed the Greater Deads crown heads. His sword shattered them but it didn’t seem to have much of an effect, and he barely had time to blink before the thing spewed black fire at him.

Oz threw himself back as the flames burned his clothes, his pauldron metaled entirely, thankfully his cloak protected him from the heat. Lizzy and Will jumped and stabbed at the thing, carving off lesser souls. Oz gathered his wits enough to roll out of the way when the bone sword came down attempting to slice him in two, but the force of it still sent him tumbling way.
He got to his feet and stared at the monster, it shifted forwards arms coming out of inky oozing mass as it crawled toward him. He panted a few times, his skin itched and hurt but the thing kept coming. He glanced over at the massive scythe like sword, an idea popping into his head. Then brought both hands to hilt of his sword, without Aura he had no chance of standing up to this monster strength, but if he could deflected and disarm...

He approached the Greater Dead slowly and as it raised its blade to smash it back down he threw himself forward rolling under the blade, he spun out driving his blade through the monster's hand. It wailed throwing its head back, spewing black fire, Oz yanked on his sword only to find it stuck. Shit! Seeing no other option he grabbed the bone sword, it was as big as a scythe. He wrenched it from the monster, twisted on the spot and swung the weapon straight up into the monster's chest cavity.

Another echoing BELLOWS! And the thing crumpled inward for a moment, then EXPLODED! Bits of black ooze and bone flying every direction, Oz at ground zero was blasted so hard he blacked out as his head hit the deck.

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Sleep, sleep time to rest, come to me, leap into my waters and I will grant you peace. Give in, hear my song and rest, you've nothing left to live for everything you know is gone. It will all fade away to dust. The voice sang out in his mind as Ozpin woke up slowly blinking, I'm making a bad habit out of this. He groaned and looked down, a distressingly familiar sight greeted him. "Ahh Fuck." He let his head flop back, his chest was covered in bandages, again and he had left forearm wrapped in a black bandage. He looked up again, why was there bits of what he guessed were ribs woven into the bandage? He reached up to poke at it when a voice sounded.

"I wouldn't." Harkness said walking over and helping Oz to sit up.

"What happened? And I think I hit my head really hard, where am I?" Oz asked, he didn’t remember this part of the ship. The room was small with only four beds and a obsidian black wall to the left.

"You are in Naga’s chamber as for what happened, a Greater Dead exploded in your face. There was a reason Will and Lizzy were keeping their distance and they are much more durable than you.” Harkness helped him up stand.

Oz felt strange, he should be hurting a lot more and yet… “Uh, I’m not sure how to ask this but...” The song was quieter now that he was awake, did he mention it to Harkness? Longing rose in his chest, longing for it all to end. His eyes dropped for a moment and he swayed on the spot, he was so tired he felt like there was nothing left to him. He was nothing, just the battered remains of a soul that didn’t know how to die.

"Naga’s supporting you.” Harkness said offering Oz’s his sword.

Oz blinked again remembering why he was here and took it then asked “Why?”

“Lets just say you’ve earned her respect.” He shrugged, “she not always a cruel bitch. You’ve gone from pretty soul to useful warrior, she’ll support you on her Aura till we’re out of the In-Between.” Harkness looked him up and down. “I wouldn’t bother with your clothes. Greater Dead are very hard on them.”

Oz reached over to his wrapped up forearm, but Harkness grabbed his arm. “I really wouldn’t.”
“Why?” Oz asked Harkness hand felt warmer than normal.

“Greater Dead are all about consumption and decay, you got oozed by one. Your chest, I could save, but if you don’t leave that forearm alone. You won’t have it for much longer.” Harkness said with a very steely voice.

Oz snatched his right hand way from the arm and felt very green. “Why are bones in the bandage?” He asked his voice thick.

“Those bones are holding your arm together and they are from the Greater Dead, I think Lizzy has named it Nito. She likes to banter with Will when fighting, when this is over we’ll celebrate it as your first Greater Dead kill. As for the bones, always take something from what almost kills you, you never know when it might be handy. Now get back up there, Naga will give you Aura and hold you together.” Harkness said, leading the way out of the little room.

They went to the helm, where Jack still steered the helm, Lizzy and Will were hacking through waves of Lesser Dead. Oz noticed that this Precinct was brighter than the last one and the water shallower, there was just a lot of Dead. He could see a line of fire on the horizon growing steadily closer. He nodded to Harkness and unsheathed his sword and headed out onto the deck, neatly stepping in with Lizzy and Will to smash the human like corpses.

Naga’s Aura twisted inside him and rose up to defend him from the clawing grasping hands. These Dead were much easier though more numerous than the Greater Dead of the Fifth Gate Resters. Oz felt ill as the foreign Naga’s Aura filled him, but it did its job and he fell into an almost mindless act of killing or re-killing as the case was. The song grew louder and louder, strangely it guided him through the waves of dead, as he ripped them apart and cleaved them into small pieces. Come, come to me, no more pain no more suffering, just peace, you’ve nothing left to live for.

In no time at all the Seventh Gate parted for them and they sailed through a wall of fire. Will pulled Oz back into the Helm as the fire poured over the ship, cleansing it of any lesser dead stragglers. The song swelled in strength, it started to consume him, he believed its words, he didn’t think anymore. If it wasn’t for Will’s grounding presence he would have thrown himself overboard and allowed the water to carry him away.

The Eighth Precinct was a oily ocean with fires flaring out of nowhere, Jack steered them through and called on the Eighth Gate. A wall of oblivion covered them and Oz couldn’t feel anything, see or hear, it was as if all external stimulus had been cut off. Thankfully it was only for a moment and they were finally at the Ninth Precinct.

This Precinct was different from all the others, it was calm and still the river trickled and as Oz stepped out into the deck the air was warm. There was no mist and looking up Oz could see a universe worth of stars, the Precinct felt wide and immense.

The stars, Oz found himself staring up at them, he could see many galaxies more than should have been possible in the sky. Great bands of white and gold, with clusters red and blue, more stars than he had ever seen in his life. His gaze was only broken when the ghosts they had gathered in the First Precinct floated up out of the ship heads back rising up into the sky and disappearing beyond the Ninth Gate.

Ozpin was enraptured by the sight, the stars called to him a true death, it awaited him there. Death’s song consumed him, here was peace here was an end to his many lives. Mind devoid of thought as the Ninth Precinct sang a most beautiful wordless song to him, he raised his arms and found himself floating up towards the gate. Freedom, true freedom called to him, free of pain, free of sadness, free of endless cycle of being the King, free of life, a true perfect death. His soul soared with joy, he
wanted this, he wanted it to end.

A hand stopped him and pulled him back onto the deck before he could get far. He turned his head slowly to look at the culprit keeping him from finding peace. Harkness held him down softly saying, “You can’t go that way yet, think of Qrow and Ruby. Their waiting for you back in Life, you can’t abandon them.”

Slowly the stars cleaned from Oz’s eyes as he remember them, Harkness was right he couldn’t leave them. Death’s song sang louder and he covered his ears, he tried to grab at fuzzy memories of his lovers. He let Harkness take him inside as Jack turned the ship around and they started the long trip back. Harkness did not leave his side for the rest of the journey, they made two more trips to gather the dead. Thankfully Oz didn’t not fall into the water again even as the Gates as Death, took nibbling bites out of his living soul the whole while.

The moment they returned to life, Oz crumpled as if all his strings had been cut like a puppet, thankfully Harkness had been expecting this and caught him. When he woke again next he was back in Naga’s chamber, all the bandages removed from his body, his clothes and armour sitting on a table beside him.

“You’re awake.” A soft voice said.

Ozpin looked over in the dimly lit room and saw Naga sitting beside him on a bed, she looked thinner and frail but she still wore her womanly shape. He wasn’t sure what to make of this, the last time he saw her she had been trying to kill him, now she sat calm and patient. She was almost caring in her tone, Oz was very confused he raised his left forearm and found that there wasn’t even a scar. “How long was I out?” He asked and realized that the song was finally gone, his mind was clear and his memories crisp.

“Four months, we come upon Mantle soon.” Naga said her voice smooth and eternal.

“What?!” Ozpin lurched upright, how had that happened?

Naga raised a hand. “Calm yourself Ozpin, your soul was worn thin by Death, it has taken me this long to encourage what embers remained back into a fire. You fought well and needed time to recover.”

Oz pressed a hand to his temple, he didn’t remember much after the seeing the Ninth Gate. They had made more trips right? He thought, his head didn’t hurt but his journey was all blurred into one. What about Qrow and Ruby? They must be worried about him, he needed to contact them, he reached for his Aura.

“Yes. Vale is cleansed, the Grimm will lessen now. You fought well and long for me.” She rose and pressed a cool hand to his forehead. “Be calm your lovers were informed of your condition.”

Oz calmed, his Aura had refused to rise when he called, like it was tired as well and needed to rest. It was strange where once Naga had terrified him now she calmed him, she stepped away from him and gestured to his armour. “A gift. For a job well done.”

He stood and looked over his pauldron had been replaced, only now it looked to be crafted from black bone, it was larger thicker than before. He picked it up, but it was much lighter the bone was
cool the touch and rather than just protecting his shoulder it had more plates what would protect his arm as well. Beside it was a matching gauntlet of black plated bone, all for his left side. “Thank you.” Ozpin said, he wasn’t sure how he felt about wearing bits of Nito.

Naga smiled sensing his confusion. “Always keep something from those that almost kill you. These will be stronger than any metal upon Remnant.” She picked up his sword and extended it. “I also worked the edge of Nito’s sword into your blade.”

Oz put the pauldron down and tested the edge sure enough it was edged in black bone. He looked over to her. “Why? I got the impression you hated my guts.”

Naga laughed sweetly. “I did not hate, I just did not respect. You bested me in combat and then you protected me, going above and beyond to safeguard my crew. You’ve earned your place here little King, you are no longer just another body Jack picked up.” She paused and sat down on the bed across from his as if the conversation was exhausting her. “I would offer you a fair contract.”

The copper eyed man’s first instinct was to tell her to shove off, but she was being nice and so would he. “Oh?” He asked collapsing his weapon and sitting down across from her.

“A hundreds years bond to me and my crew, then I will ensure you get a truth death. No moving your soul into a new body, I will escort you to the Ninth Gate personally and see you go beyond it. Your soul never properly dies in your current situation just be body, I will change that, I will break your curse.” Naga spoke with finality.

Ozpin stared at her, this was an offer to good to pass up but one thing held him back. “I’ve promised my lovers to stay with them, Qrow is immortal as well. He has waited for me, I will not abandon him and Ruby.”

“Then they are welcome as well, I will see you all to Ninth Gate together when you wish it. Just have your Qrow learn to control his Semblance better, it caused me great pain.” Naga still wanted him, more now than before for he had proven himself.

Oz bit his lip thinking it over, he needed to talk to Qrow and Ruby. “Under one condition, I’m not ready to spend a hundred years upon this ship, when I’m ready I’ll seek you out. This is not no, this is give me time.”

Naga nodded happy with this, “The offer will remain.” with that she faded way to rest.

As Oz got dressed he found the new armour fit even better than what he had before and despite how cool it felt it was still very pleasant to wear. Rather than his white cloak a new one had been put in its place, as black as Nito’s flesh had been but heavy fuzzy and warm. Putting his sword on his belt he headed out, pulling the new cloak tight around him.

Chapter End Notes

Ardy: Not a whole lot changed here but there are little things. In other news their will be more changes in the upcoming chapters. While this story will always be about Ruby, Qrow and Ozpin. I want to show Yang some love.

Kry: Thank you too: darkvampirekisses, Bucky_Barnes, Sportsfangirl815 and Silenaislife for your comments.
Growth and Change

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

As Glynda Goodwitch walked down the muddy path, the thaw slowly setting in she could hear laughter from the Xiao Long household. She knocked lightly on the door before entering, removing her shoes. She was quickly spotted as Jaune, Ren and Nora all sat on the couch chatting with Yang and Taiyang.

“Glynda!” Tai got up from the loveseat and zipped over to her opening his arms.

Glynda smiled and stepped into a brief hug. “Hello Taiyang, winter has been kind to you.”

“It has, would you like something to drink? Hot chocolate maybe?” Tai asked.

“Yes please.” Glynda said.

“Make yourself comfy.” Taiyang gestured a the living room and headed to the kitchen.

“Hi Professor!” Nora bounced off her seat. “How’s it going?”

“Slowly. Grimm are still a constant problem. Without Atlas help we’ve given up retaking Beacon.” Glynda sat down.

Yang pursed her lips as pain ghosted up from her missing arm. Even just thinking about Beacon… she squeezed her eyes shut. Her memory of that night had become twisted and flawed. She wasn’t even sure she remembered what happened properly anymore.

“Miss Xiao Long… Yang.”

Yang’s eyes snapped open when Glynda reached out and squeezed her knee. It took her a moment to realize she had started to hyperventilate. “I’m okay.”

“No you are not and that is nothing to be ashamed of.” Glynda said.

Yang forced a smile. “I know, my uncle has been helping me.”

“Qrow’s here?” Glynda asked, equal parts surprised and wishing to rip the dusty old crow a new one for abandoning Beacon.

The floorboards creaked and everyone’s heads whipped around. Qrow winced his Semblance having struck again, Tai had mentioned that Glynda was coming to visit to check on Yang and he had planned to avoid her. Only Ruby hadn’t wanted to brave the professor, so it had fallen to him to go hunting for cookies. “Glynda.” He said with a pained smile.

Glynda stood up sharply balling her fists. “Where have you been?”

“Uh, here?” Qrow smiled sheepishly rubbing the back of his head.

Glynda narrowed her eyes. “Bart, Peter and I have been working to restore Vale for months and you’ve just, been here?! Did it never occur to you to come help!? Does Ozpin’s legacy mean so little to you? Was he the only thing you cared about? And you don’t even have the decency to come and help us restore what he loved?!”
“He’s not dead Glynda. You know that.” Qrow said inching his way towards the kitchen. The remains of team JNPR all stared at Qrow in shock as he continued. “And for the record I’m doing what he wants of me. Staying out of trouble, keeping Ruby safe and expanding her education. We are going to Mistral and while I won’t be able to go with the kids right away, I am going that way too. We all know Cinder mentioned being from there and Leo has been oddly quiet about it considering he didn’t report anything for months before the Vytal festival. Furthermore Glynda, that is where Oz is headed. So yea, not helping with Vale. I’m following orders and going after the real problem not medicating the past.”

“The White Fang is based out of Mistral.” Whispered Yang looking down at the floor.

“Exactly, it’s the perfect place to start on trying to figure out what is really going on out there.” Qrow said and sighed his shoulders slumping. “Look is there anything else?”

“How long do you want the list?” Glynda glared at him.

Taiyang returned holding a steaming cup for Glynda. “Look I get you two have issues to sort out, but can we not do it now?”

“Qrow what’s up? You sounded tired.” Ruby bounced down the steps and stopped seeing Goodwitch. “Professor.” She dipped her head respectfully and asked Qrow mentally. “What’s going on?”

“Profs not happy I haven’t been in contact. I told her Oz is alive and that seems to have knocked the wind from her sails.”

“Right okay? Want me to say anything?”

“Na, though Yang looks like she could do with a hug.”

“Would you two stop doing that?” Tai asked as he watched Qrow and Ruby stare at each other.

Ruby giggled as Qrow rolled his eyes and walked over to Yang bouncing over the back of the couch to sit beside her sister and give her a hug. Yang had that look on her face that she was more used to seeing on Qrow. “You okay sis?”

Yang was staring the stub of her arm. Her flawed memory replaying the battles they had with the White Fang over and over. She shook her head and forced a smile. “It’s nothing really.” She giggled. “I’m not the one that somehow has mental conversations with Qrow. Watching you two stare at each other is pretty funny.”

“She deflecting again.”

Ruby tired not to show it when Qrow’s voice sounded in her head, after talking with Oz about it. She left the bound open almost all the time, it had become rather calming to have him always so close. “Well it is pretty handy, you wouldn’t believe the combat maneuvers we plan out when we’re bored. It’s so much easier when you can just send exactly what you’re thinking to the persons head.”

Yang giggled and snuggled into her sister.

Glynda and Qrow stared off for another long moment before she turned away and took the mug from Tai. “Thank you.”

“So you’re not coming with us Yang?” Nora asked.
“No.” Yang said softly looking at the floor again.

“Oh.” Nora said dejected.

“I just need more time and I don’t have anything to replace…” Yang trailed off.

“May I speak privately with you Yang?” Glynda asked seeing as it seemed to be a good time to bring up why she was here at all.

“Sure.” Yang got up and walked into the kitchen Glynda followed her.

Glynda put her mug down on the table and sat gesturing for Yang to sit with her. After a moment’s hesitation Yang sat down looking at the table. Glynda sighed deeply. “Yang you know most causes of PTSD should begin to resolve or at least reduce in severity of the symptoms several weeks ago. Your father asked me to come and assess your progress, he’s not in a good position to do so himself. If Vale was still standing he would have taken you to a psychiatrist by now… What I’m trying to say is your father and from what I have seen, I agree with him. You need professional help.”

Honestly at Glynda’s words, Yang felt a little bit relieved. Qrow had been helping her, being intimately acquainted with the topic himself, but he was opposite to her. His memory was perfect while hers was all over the place. Aside from the small army of psychology books Tai kept in his room they didn’t really have another source for help. “I’d like that. Dad, Ruby, Qrow they do their best but I don’t really feel any better.” Yang finally looked up from the table. “Will you be my stand in psych? Till I can get a formal one?”

“Yes.”

Since visiting Ozpin, Ruby noticed a change in Qrow and she wasn’t sure what to make of it. On one hand he talked to her a lot more, would tell her about the memories that just wouldn’t stay away and about his unofficial work. She had been shocked but she was more glad to finally know what bothered him so much. So that was good she thought, he was treating her a little less like a glass doll and more like an equal. On the other hand he rarely let her out of his sight, she noticed very quickly that he got angsty for lack of a better word when she was out of sight. She was also sure that Tai and Yang saw it, this presented a problem, they were getting ready to leave and Qrow wasn’t going to travel in plain sight with them. Sure they had the bond to talk through but Qrow dependence on her was potentially very dangerous to both of them. He couldn’t afford to be distracted.

The night before then set out Tai put on a huge supper, the family plus Ren, Nora and Jaune had a wonderful night. At the end of it all Ruby, when Ruby joined Qrow for bed she decided to finally bring up his new behavior. He was laying in the middle of their bed nude, he smirked when she came in and she knew what he wanted to do with night.

She smiled and crawled into bed and straddling him he grabbed her hips and licked his lips an eager smile making its way onto them. Ruby held up a hand for pause. “One thing first. You’ve been different since Naga, which is good, I’m really happy that you are finally really talking to me. But beyond that you’ve been really… protective as well, more than normal. We are going to have to part tomorrow and it seems like that will be really bad for you.”

The smile fell from Qrow’s lip but his grip tightened slightly on her hips. “I know, I’ve just been working at separating past from present. Just reminding myself over and over that you are safe and
that no one will grab you.”

Ruby relaxed so he was trying to deal with it, in his own way. *At least he sees the problem and is facing it.* “Okay, I just wanted to check.” She wiggled her hips. “We have this one last night, I vote making use of it.”

Qrow smile said he had the exactly the same idea.

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He made love to her again that morning, with that desperate edge of not wanting to let her go. Then when she headed out with Jaune, Ren and Nora he stayed back, watching her walk away from a window half hidden behind the sil.

Tai came up behind him. “You are going after her?”

Qrow nodded silently.

“She hasn’t told her friends?” The other man leaned on the opposite side of the window watching Qrow arms folded over his chest.

The red eyed man shook his head side to side very slightly in a silent no.

“Why?” Tai asked, he figured Ruby’s friends knew.

“They know we are together but not that we have become physical, she also hasn’t told them about my Semblance and won’t tell them about Salem. It brings up too many questions we don’t know the answers too.” Qrow’s tone was almost mournful, a little truth and he’d be able to travel with them, even if they hated him for it.

Tai could understand that, it always sucked to have questions thrown at you when you didn’t know anymore then they did. Tai looked out the window and saw the four teens disappear, he practically felt the shift in Qrow. “She’ll be fine, you’ll have to let them fight some Grimm or they will figure out something is up.”

“I know and I know she can take care of herself.” Qrow said, his brain knew it was his soul told him to get the heck out there and keep an eye on her. He ached to be near her, even though she was only around the corner.

Taiyang smiled sadly, he knew what Qrow was going through all too well. He reached into his pocket and pulled out Qrow’s flask. “Just water mixed with some peach vodka, just enough to flavour it.”

Qrow’s brow shot up, but he didn’t take the flask it had both caused and alleviated so much pain. “How do you know I won’t relapse?”

“The thought of Ruby being disappointed in you, you were very responsible over the solstice. You enjoyed without getting drunk and you stopped when you felt the need. There is nothing wrong with imbibing so long as you stop.” Tai wasn’t blind or stupid, the Qrow that came to spend the winter in his house and this one weren’t the same person. He knew he had Ruby to thank for that, making Qrow be better, to finally address his flaws and move past them. He had never known someone to make Qrow want to be better, not Summer, not him and certainly not Raven. He thought
perhaps Ozpin tried but something there hadn’t worked out and it was Ruby that managed where everyone else had failed. He was happy for the two of them and he knew these next months were going to be rough for both of them.

Qrow hesitantly took the flask, all the edges, knicks and the familiar weight of it. *Just water, it’s just water with a little bit of flavouring*. He put it on his belt beside Harbinger and was struck upside the head with nostalgia, all the lonely years of his life he spent equipped like this. He shook his head and looked back out the window, he didn’t want to go back to that. He was better now, stronger, wiser… and hopelessly in love.

Tai saw Qrow frown and chuckled. “Get going, before you start to molt with the stress and depression.”

“I take a crow form, I am not a crow.” He walked away from the window and picked up his backpack, pulling it on under his cape.

Tai opened the window. “Scat, you already said bye to Yang.”

Qrow smiled took two running steps and transformed flying out the window after Ruby.

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Team RNJR picked their way down through the forests eastern side of the mountain range defending Vale. It gave way to a the ruins of a village and Ruby looked around. She had read briefly about this place in history class while skipping ahead in the text but seeing it was another beast altogether. Qrow whispered into her mind that abandoned settlements like this were common across almost all the kingdoms. However this was not abandoned due to Grimm.

“We should really go around.” Jaune said pulling out a face cloth and holding it over his nose and mouth.

“Jaune’s right Ruby.” Nora edged her way closer to Ren looking at the dilapidated houses.

“I just want to see the monument.” Ruby said as dirt gave way to the occasional paved stone.

“Fine, but I’m going around. You two coming?” Jaune asked Ren and Nora.

“We’ll go around.” Ren said and the three split off from Ruby.

“Okay, see you on the other side.” Ruby said and started jogging deeper into the town.

The atmosphere was oppressive, doors creaked as the wind gusted through the buildings. Rat’s appeared at the edge of her vision, the scent was thick with rot and decay. The homes were tightly packed together many falling in on each other.

A crow flew down beside her and Qrow transformed landing gracefully beside her. “Don’t touch anything.” He reached into his backpack and pulled out two face masks.

Ruby took and pulled it on, making sure the seal was tight over her face. Then hit a little button that would activate an additional filter on the high grade device. She was a little bit amazed when Qrow pulled razer from his bag and quickly removed about half of his beard before donning his own mask. Qrow’s mask made a little sucking sound as it sealed tight.
“Are these really necessary?” Ruby sent mentally to him.

“Plague bacteria can live for centuries after an outbreak. There is a reason we had two of the same type of plague break out in the last two centuries. Here.” He handed her a pair of thick black gloves, they went up the middle of her forearm and had the same tubing and octagon pattern as her face mask. “I got these for you when you decided to go to Mistral. I found it likely we’d run across a place like this. At least Jaune has the sense to avoid it.” Qrow pulled on his own pair of gloves. “Even with these don’t touch anything.”

Ruby put them on. “I wasn’t going to go into any of the houses, I just want to see the monument.”

“Just be thankful what went through this town wasn’t airborne. Or I would have warned you off it last night.”

Ruby could hear Qrow grumbling even as he Sent to her. “Well thank you for looking out for me.”

“I’d kiss yah if it wouldn’t be a stupid idea right now. Come on let’s get to the monument and out of here before those rats get bold and keep your Aura up. Accidents could kill you here.” Qrow started walking down the fading path.

“Do you often run into places like this?” Ruby asked as they walked. “I mean, you already had gear.”

“Sometimes, the first plague of the Old City spread from Vale to Mistral. Even hit parts of Vacuo, Mantle only was spared because it closed its borders. So towns like this crop up all over the continents, there are even a few where people tried to reclaim them, but that never ended well. Mostly now they are just used by bandits, slavers and other like minded people when they want a very private deal.” Qrow said looking through the buildings again. He hated places like this, they reeked of death even with the masks. “Didn’t Bart teach you this in class?”

“We hadn’t gotten that far in the syllabus yet, the oldest we’d gotten to was Mount Glenn.” Ruby reached out and held Qrow’s hand. “I’ve read about it in my books, but it was mostly fiction. They never mentioned needing masks and gloves.”

“Stupid fiction.” Qrow groused. “There look your fill and let’s get out of here before my Semblance acts up.”

Before them was an obelisk only it was three long pillars twisted together, the black shined a dull grey. Each individual obelisk faced one of the major streets of the town. Ruby picked her way up the steps to it and reached out.

“No touching!”

She winced as Qrow shouted into her head, she bent and looked more closely at the grey that covered the stone. “Are these names?”

“Yeah, everyone who died in this region. Can we go now please?” Qrow said glancing around, he was getting a bad feeling about this place. “Look you’ve never read about rat Grimm, and I REALLY don’t want to continue pushing our luck.”

“Alright alright, let’s go.” Ruby walked around the monument and started to jog down the western road Qrow right beside her. Qrow would here rustling and skittering from the houses and grabbed Ruby’s shoulders. “Rose petal burst us now!”

Ruby followed the command instantly blasting them out of the town and then several minutes walk
down the road. “Are we good now?” She asked as they reformed, carrying Qrow in her Semblance had become second nature and almost effortless.

“Hopefully, if those were what I think they are. They’re lazy.” He pulled his backpack off and yanked a yellow tinted plastic bag off the side. “Put your mask and gloves in here. gloves first make sure to turn them inside out and do NOT touch your skin as you go.” He removed his gloves and mask as he Sent showing Ruby how and putting them in the bag. As Ruby took off her gloves he reached up and removed her mask. “Never rely on Aura in a place like that. As Aura lets oxygen through and carbon out there is no reason to believe it doesn’t also let bacteria through.”

“Good to know.” Ruby put her gloves in the bag after Qrow put her mask in them he sealed it up tight. Then put it back in it’s place. “Are you going to go now? We could just tell them you know.”

“Na, I’ve been keeping the Grimm of your guys back. Staying away gives me a excuse to scout.” He reached out and pet over her cheek with a thumb. “I’m used to this Rubs, I’ll be fine. Plus we can talk whenever we like.”

Ruby leaned into the touch. “It’s not the same. I’ve… been getting nightmares again. About Pyrrha, I don’t understand why they are showing up now.”

“You’re away from home, sleeping alone for the first time in months. I know you always like to appear happy, but sometimes stuff just creeps up. It’s just like the Breach Ruby, it happened and it’s okay to feel it. You know already how to keep it from controlling you, let it happen, processes it. Let it become just one little piece of you and move on.” Qrow bent down and Ruby lifted her head, they kissed slowly and chastely before he withdrew. “I can hear your friends coming, Send to me if you want to talk.”

“I will tonight, stay out of trouble.” Ruby said.

Qrow grinned and backed away and grinned. “You know me.” With a snap of magic he transformed and flew up into a tree.

Jaune, Ren and Nora pushed their way through the bush. “Wow, I figured a history nut like you would take longer Ruby.” Nora said bouncing over.

“Lingering seemed stupid, I made sure not to touch anything and just went straight to the monument and out.” Ruby said and then pondered for a second. “That said we should find someplace to wash all of our stuff. Even going around the town I saw some rats, we should be extra careful.”

Jaune shuddered. “Good idea.”

Team RNJR made good time traversing Vale and didn’t stop near another plague village. Qrow’s urgency to leave it was not lost on Ruby. Her nightmares persisted but having been through it once before she knew how to handle it again. Her mental conversations with Qrow continued when she was sure her friends wouldn’t notice her staring off into space.

One night Ruby woke with a start, the image of Cinder reducing Pyrrha to ash behind her eyes. With a sigh she sat up and rubbed her eyes, cold nipped at her skin. She looked up and saw Qrow sleeping in a tree, his head tucked under a wing. D’aww. Ruby thought, then looked around the camp. Jaune’s sleeping bag was empty. With a hum Ruby got up and put her boots on then stopped
to listen.

She could just make out the sound of Pyrrha’s voice, curious she followed it. Quickly she found Jaune practicing to a video of Pyrrha in the torchbug light. She watched Jaune drill over and over before stepping out from behind the tree. “Jaune, you should be sleeping.”

“Ruby!” Jaune almost jumped out of his skin surprised. “Uhh, yeah. Sorry did I wake you?”

Ruby shook her head. “Na, nightmare. You?”

“Yeah.” Jaune said and scabbard his sword.

The silence that fell was awkward, after a minute Ruby said meandering over with her hands behind her back. “Soo, you’ve got that form down. Maybe you should try some new ones at some point.”

“That’s the only one I have.” Jaune said walking over to his Scroll and closing it after looking at Pyrrha for a long moment.

“Oh. Uhh.” Ruby walked over and reached out touching his arm. “Maybe we could practice with sticks? Or something? Qrow was teaching me over the winter.”

“No thanks, I mean thanks for the offer but I find this helps clear my head.” Jaune said finally looking over to Ruby.

“Okay… Have you talked to anyone? About Beacon?” Ruby asked softly.

“No. Ren and Nora are great but they don’t really get it. They have each other after all.” Jaune said.

Ruby worried her lip, she didn’t even want to think about where she would be if she hadn’t talked to anyone about what had happened. “Would you like too? I mean I was there, I know what happened. I even talked to Pyrrha about become the Fall Maiden.”

“You knew?” Jaune clenched his fists. “What did you say to her?”

“Just that I knew what was going on. That she was the perfect person for it, that Ozpin probably at least had an idea of what would happen to her. That she would make a perfect Maiden that because she didn’t want the power, she’d be responsible with it. We couldn’t just like it go back to it’s other half, and Oz couldn’t safely reclaim half without the worry of it going to Cinder.” Ruby said hugging herself.

“SO YOU KNEW! It hurt her when they tried to move it! You encouraged her to through with it! It was her life!” Jaune yelled.

“Yeah her life, her choice.” Ruby said.

“Not much of a choice when someone like Ozpin says it! Become our Maiden or a lot of bad shit might happen!” Jaune snapped at her.

“There were other options! Ozpin could have tried to take the power out of Amber, or heck if Pyrrha said no. I would have done it!” Ruby said looking up at him. “Ozpin was just worried about my Silver Eyes. He didn’t know how the two magics would interact. Pyrrha could have said no.”

“But she wouldn’t, everyone knew you and Ozpin were involved. She wouldn’t force you to do
something he thought could harm you. She do it just not to risk you, she was just that kind of person.” Jaune growled softly glaring at Ruby.

“I-.” Ruby stepped away, she wasn’t sure what to say. She guessed Jaune had a point, she had told Pyrrha that she was Oz’s second choice and that she loved Oz and Qrow. That they were worried about what becoming a Maiden would do to her. “I hadn’t thought of that. I’m sorry.” Tears welled up in her eyes and she rubbed at them.

“Get out of here. You’re as much at fault for her death as Ozpin and the rest of them.” Jaune turned away from her effectively ending the conversation.

Ruby all but ran back to their camp, sniffing and trying to keep quiet. Qrow’s voice was more then welcome in her head. “Do you want to talk about it?”

The silver eyed woman shook her head and sat pulling her boots off and hiding in her sleeping bag. “Not right now, go back to sleep.”

Ren and Nora noticed the tension between the two team leaders right away. However as Jaune and Ruby did there best to ignore each other, they figured it would be best for now just not to say anything. The last major stop they made in Vale was the fishing village Grata. Which was built only a few meters away from the remains of the first village. Where the Great War had started.

The old village was not restored but instead had been persevered. Arrows, bullet holes, swords, buildings in ruins. All had been kept the same the only thing that had been added was another obelisk monument in the centre. Unlike the plague monument, there was only one obelisk and it towered ten meters high. It held that same dull grey as the names inscribed into it failed to reflect the dull sunlight.

The team stood before it in awe, the Vytal festival was one of remembrance and the joy of coming together. This place, held none of that it was a clear reminder of where it started and the cost of war.

Nora walked up to it and put her hand on the cool stone. Erosion hadn’t touched it, it stood impervious to the elements. She leaned forward and rested her head on it for a moment before stepping away. Ren walked up and reached into his backpack pulling out a small stick of incense. At the bottom of the Obelisk was a small altar, Ren put the stick into the awaiting stand and lit it before setting in a meditative position before the great stone and closing his eyes. Nora sat down beside him in the same position.

Ruby looked over to the setting sun. “How about we stay in Grata for the night. We’ll find a ship to take us to Mistral tomorrow morning.”

Ruby left Ren and Nora to their mediation and Jaune followed her out of the ruins back to the fishing village. She glanced at him out of the corner of her eye, they hadn’t been talking much since their falling out and even now he avoided looking at her. The town was quieting down for the night, shops closed and people going home for dinner. It felt almost oppressive if not to the same extent as the old village. Eventually they came upon the Inn who’s sign declared it to be the ‘Drunken Rat’ and headed inside.

The air smelled strongly of fish and Jaune had to fight not to gag. Sweaty travelers huddled in groups over bowls of thick fish stew. “Qrow?” Ruby inquired tentatively.
“It’s the best you’ll find here. This town isn’t big enough to have Huntsmen Hostels, the innkeeper decent. The traffic is just so high through this port keeping things clean is… difficult. Just say Qrow Branwen is your uncle, he’ll make sure you’re treated fairly.”

“Influential much?” Ruby asked holding her head up high and walking across the muddy floor.

“Love, you’ve no idea. I’m feared in almost every Kingdom, at least by those who know of me. However I actually helped Veetro out once, a murder went down here and I cleared things up.”

Ruby approached the innkeeper a surprisingly young man with brown hair and green eyes. “Uhh Hi. I need a rooms for four and my uncle Qrow Branwen mentioned you’d be able to take care of us.”

Veetro’s gaze went from passive to completely focused on Ruby. He looked her up and down. “I don’t believe you.”

“His favourite drink is whisky on the rocks.” Ruby said with smile.

Veetro chuckled. “Nevermind. For four?”

“Yeah, Ren and Nora are praying at obelisk. We can double up if that helps.” Ruby said.

“No all my available rooms are singles.” He walked over to a book on the end of the counter and pulled four keys out. “That will be twenty thousand Lien.”

Ruby made a face but pulled out her wallet, endlessly glad that Qrow had taken to slipping Lein cards into it when Nora, Ren and Jaune weren’t looking. She pulled out two blue cards and handed them over. “What’s the special for dinner?”

“Cod stew, it’s all we’ve got. Grimm hit the deep sea lines, ate the days catch and wretched most of the boats and a lot of the equipment. With Beacon down, there are fewer and fewer Huntsmen answering their Scrolls.” Veetro said ringing up their purchase.

“Do you want a bowl of stew Jaune?” Ruby asked. “I’m buying.”

“Sure.” Jaune said crossing his arms.

“Right away then.” Veetro finished with the til, handed Ruby back one of her cards half full and four keys.

“Thank you.” Ruby bounced up on a bar stool and Jaune sat beside her. The red head looked over to him as he traced the grain of the wood. “You okay?”

“I’m fine. It just sucks that even places like this are feeling the Fall of Beacon.” Jaune said not looking at her.

“Well there are only so many Huntsmen and with the CCT down, long distance communication is shot. I’m sorry we can’t stay but we are just students.” Ruby said.

“I know, I just guess it hadn’t really hit me just how much the Kingdom would change without Vale and Beacon.” Jaune said softly.

Ruby had no answer for that, their stews came and they ate in silence. Ruby grabbed her key and hopped off the stool. “I’m gonna go to bed, will you wait for Ren and Nora?”

“Yeah goodnight.”
Ruby sighed, knowing she hadn’t gotten anywhere with Jaune and looked at her key. “Room twelve.”

“Meet you there.”

The stairs creaked in an onerous manner as Ruby climbed the steps to the top. When she opened her door Qrow was already sitting on the window sill. She giggled and walked over opening the windows and stepping back. He jumped off the sill and transformed, rolling his shoulders. “Guezz too much time as a bird lately.”

Ruby leaned up on her toes and threw her arms around his neck. “Agreed!” She sniffed and leaned away without removing her arms. “Ugh and you stink!”

Qrow chuckled and returned the hug. “Well you aren’t your usual bouquet either.”

Ruby dropped away from him. “Hey I do not stink!”

The red eyed man just lifted a brow. Ruby scowled at him. “Fine!” She turned on her heel and yanked her backpack off and dropped it on the bed. Her hands quickly going to her corset. “You can help me wash.”

“Ohh you’ll get no complaints from me.”

Much later they were sprawled out on the little single bed as much as possible. Ruby snuggled down into Qrow’s chest, she missed sleeping with him. In more ways than one, she half wondered if he had some sort of kink for shower sex, not that she minded at all. A foreign Aura washed over them, it felt wrong to the both of them. “Ozpin was injured, he will be unable to speak with you for what I feel to be several months. He will be fine and will meet you as in accordance to your plan.” The woman’s voice and Aura faded away and they both shivered. At least now they knew why Oz had gone silent. Ruby tried to force herself to sleep, tomorrow they would find a ship.

Qrow continued to tail them through Anima and found watching them fight the Geist was agonizing for two reasons, one it took them forever to figure out how to beat it. Two it was taking all of Qrow’s restraint to keep himself from leaping in and helping them. Though he was proud Ruby had gotten good enough with her Semblance to carry Nora in it, the two had been bonding over the course of the trip. Though listening to the village leader say that they hadn’t been able to find a Huntsmen to deal with it sooner planted a seed of worry in his belly.

Qrow could barely keep himself in check when they stumbled upon the bandit attacked village. He knew Raven wasn’t far and it was only a matter of time before she approached him. He shivered and fluffed his feathers, fall was creeping closer the teens had decided to race for the next town. The hope was to get there for Ruby’s eighteenth birthday, Jaune’s had been on the boat and Ren and Nora were winter babies so Ruby had missed that. His had come and gone, he didn’t count it, he was going to be twenty four forever, just the same way Ruby was probably going to settle in her mid twenties forever.
It was also fun watching her grow both physically and mentally over the course of the trip. Even if it ached when he couldn’t just fly down and soothe her nightmares. Physically, well he had to work hard not to laugh when Ruby asked Nora for help adjusting her corset, apparently it had gotten too tight across her chest and hips. The boys had blushed scarlet when Nora and Ruby had gone clothes shopping because one of Ruby’s skirts busted a seam. Thankfully over the trip the team got used to adjusting each other clothes as they grew much faster than they hit up towns, being teens and all.

Watching her fight was fun as well, very slowly Qrow got used to the idea of her going into battle on her own. He watched her take on a Beringel all on her own and felt his chest swell with pride. She really could take care of herself, slowly that fact cemented itself in his brain and he stopped worrying when he left her to scout ahead. Didn’t mean he didn’t kill most all the Grimm he came across, but he did start leaving a Beowolf or two for them.

He found it less entertaining to watch the others, he’d put money on Jaune’s Semblance being some sort of damage reflection. Ren and Nora only grew closer and got better at what they already did.

Eventually on the pouring night of Ruby’s birthday they found themselves in the village of Higanbana. Qrow watched from the bar across the inn as team RNJR set about getting rooms. He hoped Ruby managed to get a private room this time, it was her birthday and he’d bet his sword she had plans. He really hoped so, it had been near three months and chasing bar maids had lost all its appeal, not when he had her to look forward too.

A waitress set down a glass of whisky before him, Qrow looked up the fair skinned dark haired woman. “Oh, I didn’t o-"


Qrow looked up to the balcony but couldn’t see beyond the edge. *Thanks Raven, what is it that you want now?* “Thanks.” He said dryly annoyed at the prospect of having to converse with his sister.

“But I went ahead and gave you top. Lucky you.” The waitress said with a wink, then she walked away.

Qrow couldn’t help but watch her go, a year ago he would have been all over her, but now… Now she was just a pretty distraction, he’d rather wait. He got up grabbing the glass and headed up the stairs. Raven was the only one up there.

She greeted him from her table, her white fang mask sitting on it. Red eyes keen as she wore a little purring smile. “Hello, brother.”

Qrow stared at her for a moment, *She wants something*. Well no duh, Qrow pursed his lips this was his sister, one of his least favorite people on Remnant. He made his way slowly over pulling out a seat. “Raven.” He paused looked at the mask and raising a brow.

Raven rolled her eyes and moved her mask, her brother could really be so petty at times.

Qrow sat down and ease himself back in his chair, as far away from *her* as he could get. “So, what do you want?”
Raven smiled and shrugged setting her hands on the table. “A girl can’t just catch up with her family?”

“She can, but you’re not. Now how ’bout we get on with it?” Qrow asked, he drew a finger around the top of the cup. He had been good, only drinking water from his flask spiked with any number of different things but the base was water. He didn’t like the temptation top shelf was presenting him, he didn’t look at her. Raven always knew when something was up with him and he didn’t want to give her an opening.

“Does she have it?” Raven said softly.

Qrow debated, a little truth here or did he divert? He looked up at her annoyance creeping into his voice. “Did you know Yang lost her arm?”

“That’s not—” Raven started exasperated.

“Rhetorical question, I know you know. It’s just obnoxious that you’d bring up family and then carry on like your own daughter doesn’t exist.” Qrow watched her closely.

“I saved her.” Raven partially stood, her brother always knew how to press her buttons.

“Once. Because that was your rule, right? Real “Mom of the Year” material, sis.” Qrow said sarcastically, raising his hand gesturing one lazily.

Raven leaned forward and grabbed Qrow by his forearm. “I told you Beacon would fall and it did. I told you Ozpin would fail and he has. Now you tell me. Does. Salem. Have it?”

“I thought you weren’t interested in all of that.” Qrow said calmly.

“I just want to know what we are up against.” Raven hissed.

“And which “we” are you referring to?” Qrow asked smirking slightly, he let her hold his arm he could break it at a moment’s notice. He’d always been careful to make sure his dear sister never found out who he had become. Raven glared at him and let him go, sitting back down with a little growl.

“You should come back, Raven. The only way we’d beat her is by working together. All of us.” Qrow played with the glass again but didn’t drink, watching the ice cubes swirl around only looking at her with his last word.

“You’re the one who left. The tribe raised us, and you turned your back on them.” Raven said softly.

“They were killers and thieves.” Qrow said deadpanned.

“They were your family.” Raven said almost whispering.

*No they were your family, never mine sister.* Aloud he said. “You have a very skewed perception of that word.”

Raven stood up annoyed, her chair sliding back loudly before she calmed herself. “Mother and father miss you.”

Qrow stiffened. “No they don’t.”

“Yes they do. You’ve grown so strong… in spite of your Semblance. They do everything in their power to ensure the survival of our tribe.” Raven said proudly. “Even welcome you back.”
“I’m not interested and I saw what they are capable of.” Qrow said coldly. “The people of Shion saw, too.”

“The weak die, the strong live. Those are the rules.” Raven said back to her soft demeanor.

“Well, you’ve certainly got someone strong on your side. I’ve seen the damage.” Qrow said.

Raven turned away and crossed her arms. “We couldn’t have known the Grimm would set in as quickly as they did.”

“I'm not talking about the Grimm.” He wondered if he guess was right, if they had the Spring Maiden. “And I'm not talking about you, either.”

Raven’s eyes widened at his words. She looked away from him and took a moment to compose herself then she turned back. “If you don’t know where the Relic is, then we have nothing left to talk about.”

She reached for her mask but Qrow grabbed it, one little half truth maybe that would be enough. “The Relic is safe. I don’t know where it is right this minute but She doesn’t have it.” Raven paused her cocky bluster rapidly fading, so her brother did know things. Qrow continued. “I don’t know where the Spring Maiden is, either, but if you do, I need you to tell me.”

“And why would I do that?” Raven pulled her mask out of Qrow’s grasp.

“Because without her, we’re all going to die.” Qrow said with complete seriousness.

Raven smiled, she had been paying attention after all. “I doubt that. Ruby hurt Cinder, badly from what the rumors say. I don’t think the Maidens are as invincible as we’ve been lead to believe.” She watched her brother freeze. “That’s interesting,” she thought.

“Leave Ruby out of this.” Qrow growled. “She can’t go up against Cinder, she fried Ozpin, Ruby doesn’t stand a chance.”

“Not former.” Qrow corrected her, “As I said, the Relic is safe. You really need to tighten up your spy network sis, they didn’t get it all right.” he grinned cocky at her.

Raven’s brain stalled as she worked that through. Ozpin was alive, but where was he?

Qrow spoke again. “I trust you can keep that to yourself? The longer that stays under wraps the more time we all have.”

Raven nodded, this changed everything. Ozpin was alive and he had the Relic. “You have my word.”

The red eyed man relaxed at that, for all her faults Raven was true to her word. His sister spoke again. “I’ll think about the Spring Maiden, you’re never hard to find.”

It better than the fuck off he had been expecting, he watched as she got up and picked up her sword. “See you around brother, we should do this again sometime.” Raven opened a portal and stepped through.

Crash. Qrow turned around to find the waitress knees wobbling. “Sorry about that.” His pocket
buzzed.

: The window to my room is open, it’s the one with a candle in the eve. Happy Birthday to me, my birthday present better be quick or I’ll start without him.: Qrow read the message twice in rapid succession, then was up and heading out. Qrow headed out a side door and transformed into his crow shape, taking flight to find his lover.

The waitress had been very helpful, Tyrian found himself a room that had a perfect view across the street and into a little red hooded girl’s room. He sat in the eve of his window pants undone pleasuring himself as he watched Ruby do the same the large bed framed her beautifully. The rain had let up and the moon shined through the clouds giving her skin a lovely luminosity. What he saw next shocked him and he greatly looked forward to reporting it to his Goddess, the damage that they could do…

Qrow came out of the shower, drying his hair but otherwise completely nude. Tyrian could see him stop shocked before tossing the towel aside, moving between her legs with a Huntman’s speed and replacing her fingers with his tongue.

Tyrian could just barely hear a few very lovely moaning cries before she managed to quiet herself, but he could still see the very pleasant image of her writhing on the bed. Even from this distance he could see the moment she came, how she arched against the bed and her toes curled. Qrow paused after a few moments clearly asking something, almost a full minute later he flipped her over and lined up.

Another sweet scream as the Branwen drove inside, he grabbed her by her shoulders and pulled her up and back onto him. A hand on her hip the other on her breast as his hips picked up a quick deep tempo, that had her singing out loudly for a moment before she covered her mouth.

Tyrian took mental notes she was just so responsive, he smirked and with the way her uncle was going at her she must feel pretty damn divine. He licked his lips, he’d find a way and sample her charms himself, the pair went at for almost two hours. Clearly venting some pent up energy and desire, the faunus watched through it all. After all if he was going to really break her, he would need to know what she liked.

Chapter End Notes

Kry: Thank you too: Bucky_Barnes, Sportsfangirl815, darkvampirekisses, Silenaislife lillithschild for your comments.

Ardy: So there are only four chapters left to this arc. That said I don't think I'll meet my goal of finishing Emerald Rose before Volume 6 comes out. Mistral is gonna have many HUGE changes as I've started to hint at now. Expect some serious slowing down with the Mistral arc and if anyones cares. I'm writing out a complete ER: World of Remnant document. All the lore, magic, timeline(s), world building, city outlines, gods and cultures that I've created for this story. When it's complete and probably at the end of Emerald Rose, I'm considering releasing it. I'm not sure if I will but I've noticed quite a few compliments on my world building so I was going to ask if people were interested.
Anyway have a good day everyone!
Weiss tried her hardest not to fidget as she sat on the couch but it had been HOURS since James had gone into surgery and she had run out of things to keep herself occupied with. Despite living her life with servants at her beck and call the last few weeks and even the year at Beacon had taught her to be self sufficient. Learning to cook and clean hadn’t been pleasant but now she was thankful not to be considered incompetent in simple and mundane tasks. Unfortunately even the lengthy list of chores she had given herself wasn’t enough to eat up the remaining hours James had been under for and she found her concentration flimsy at best when she practiced her Glyphs.

There was a single knock and Weiss shot up from the couch, it was their sign that he was back and alone. Weiss had just made it to the door when the key turned and James stumbled inside, leaning heavily on his left leg. Careful as to not be seen by anyone lingering outside she shuffled James in and locked the door behind them. “James?”

“It’s okay. I, I just need to sit down.” He got out before his leg went out from under him, Weiss barely able to catch him in time. As it was he was too heavy to stay standing and she was forced to lower the General to the floor as gently as possible.

The pain was clear on his face and Weiss’ eyes widened. “You were suppose to call me to come help you. Winter was going to pick you up with me.”

“I didn’t want you getting spotted so I discharged myself.”

“Are you allowed to do that?!” Weiss exclaimed.

“Technically no but the Doctor wasn’t going to fight with me on something he wasn’t going to win and I refuse to spend any more time in a hospital then necessary. I can’t go back to work obviously until I go back and the doctors sign me off as able to work but that’s going to be a little down the road while I relearn new aspects of my prosthetics.” James used the time whilst sitting upon the floor to test his new motors and catch his breath. The new fingers and toes in his right foot mimicked human much more closely. The feeling of gears and plates shift wasn’t too foreign to him but there was a big difference between these and his older ones.

Weiss tucked her hair to the side and bent at the knee besides him. “Come on, let’s get you to the couch.”

“I can do it!” James snapped and immediately clamped his mouth shut.

His partner only raised a brow and wrapped his bandaged metal arm around her shoulders. “Alright, get you knee under you and when I pull up, stand with me.” It was awkward with their height difference but Weiss was a Huntress and the muscles Beacon had built in her were strong enough to aid James in standing. Once he was up they slowly made their way to the couch, the whole time Weiss felt the difference in her General. His limp was more pronounced and he refused to lean further on her. She tried taking more of his weight onto her but he just pushed off again and bit his lip, sweat beading on his forehead as the pain of grinding metal in flesh tore at his body.

Ironwood almost groaned when his body fell back onto the couch taking Weiss with him. “I’m sorry Weiss.” Now that he was sat down the most livid pain had dulled.
Weiss took a handkerchief from her pocket, gently dabbing it over his sweating brow. Trying to not look too closely at the embedded octagon shape that had replaced his neutral band. “I’ll get us a drink. Then you need to take for pain relief or you’ll never sleep.”

James didn’t even argue with her as her lithe form disappeared into the kitchen, only leaning his head back and resting his eyes. His brain was so tired that he almost dozed off before the bright lights of the living room dimmed. Sitting back up he almost winced in pain looking around for Weiss.

“Here.” Weiss held the glass of iced tea in one hand and two small white tablets in the other. “Take these first.”

He thought about fighting her on this but he was in pain and knew Weiss’ concern for him was genuine. Taking the tablets in his flesh hand he quickly dry swallowed them and took a long draw of the cold beverage. The icy drink soothed his heated face, refreshing him. “Thank you Weiss and I’m sorry for snapping at you before.”

“That’s okay, I got worse waking Yang up in the morning at Beacon.” She giggled, leaning into the couch. “So what’s the plan now?”

James lifted his metal arm raising it to rest over the back of the sofa. He almost melted in happiness when Weiss leaned into his side, her head resting on his metal shoulder so lightly she might as well not have been there at all. Most people were afraid of prosthetics, they could even be counted as a weapon in some eyes. So seeing and feeling her gentle weight lean into him, comforting him without so much as a word meant the world to him. “Well most of the physio is the same as the first time, gentle exercises, keeping a diary on how they are functioning. I have a list in the bag of how to keep them maintained and clean, nothing I didn’t already know but for the first few days into next week I am not to lift anything more the a pound with new limbs. Nor am I to walk more than a mile on the leg.”

The next few weeks proved, challenging for all parties involved. James disliked needing help and while Weiss had become a rather patient sort the occasional snap James did get on her nerves. She knew it was just the pain and fatigue and nothing personal. So she endeavored to take it in stride and continue being the chipper support he needed.

Today however Weiss was on her own, the bullet train jostled back and forth as she stood in the tight cramped space. Her hair was dyed a light orange and she wore thick leggings and a green blouse. Her coat was the same color, Vale’s colours. It was her quiet way of showing support to the fallen kingdom that had shown her her first taste of freedom. Even if it earned her the occasional funny look, though traveling as a common person reduced the looks significantly.

“Metrotown at Atlas.” Chimed the prerecorded train announcer voice.

Weiss tightened her grip on her shopping bags as the train slowed and was the first out when the doors rolled open. The station was warm and busy, she picked a quick pace to the stairs and escalator, the latter was so packed she opted to take the stairs, racing up them two at a time. It wasn’t that she was in any hurry per say, it was just that she hated going out. However with James apartment bound, shopping trips fell to her.

A news pylon made her pause outside the grocery store.

: “With the Dust embargo finally put into place Dust prices across Remnant are soaring. Heating
prices are expected to rise fifteen percent.”:

The news channel changed as the next story played.

:Vale’s refugee crisis continues to spiral out of control, Vacou is struggling to meet the basic needs of the refugees. Grimm attacks are on the rise across all of Vale and Vacou. Huntsmen are spread thin and their numbers are in a clear decline. The situation in Mistral is quickly spiraling out of control, dozens of Huntsmen have gone missing and are assumed dead. The bandits of the Liyr and Penaddun tribes make blatant attacks on the villages around Mistral and even are rumored to be moving into the lower regions of the capital. With so many Huntsmen going missing what will that mean for our neighboring Kingdoms? James Ironwood was unavailable for comment leaving us well to wonder what is happening to the world? Are we seeing the war that was started at Beacon? Will the Huntsmen be the first victims?:”

“Creepy isn't it? To think that the Huntsmen are vanishing?”

Weiss looked over a young woman stood beside her dressed in fine if not overly expensive clothes. Though the huge fur coat was a bit overkill and did scream money. “It does make me worry, something is really wrong out there.”

“Well we don’t have anything to worry about. General Ironwood was very intelligent in closing our borders, we’re safe to let this so called ‘war’ sort itself out without us. If you ask me it’s all Beacon’s fault, it was their students actions that caused the Grimm attack.” The woman said in a alof tone.

Weiss clenched her fists. “I’m from Vale, I knew both of those girls. They were good people who didn’t deserve what happened. It was all clearly a set up. Good day to you.” She stormed away and into the store.

A few people stared at her clearly having overheard the conversation and whispered to their friends. The icen eyed woman had to fight not to wince, maybe claiming to be from Vale hadn’t been the smartest thing. She pulled her green coat tighter around her making her way to the meat section of the store. After finding enough of various products to last them the next few days. She ended up waiting in line as the cashier rang up the person before her’s purchases.

Weiss shifted back and forth it still felt odd to be wearing boots over heels but then she had gotten rather good at blending in. She glanced around, the man behind her was looking her up and down with his lips pursed. “Can I help you?” She asked.

“You’re from Vale right? I heard you arguing with my sister.”

Weiss did wince this time. “Difference of opinions, we aren’t acquiescence does it really matter?”

“Yeah it does, you fucking tree humpers don’t have any place in Atlas. You’re so lucky you got in before the borders closed.” He sneered down at her.

Weiss took a deep breath. “Look, I am just here to make my purchases. I’m not looking for any confrontation, you can believe what you like. I won’t argue with you, I agree that I was very lucky.” She turned away from him but made sure to watch him from the corner of her eye.

“You Valeites are little better than those animal faunus.”

Don’t react, don’t react just get your stuff and go. Weiss chanted it over and over in her head. She really wished Blake was here right now, together they’d set this stupid man straight. Weiss smiled at the cashier and offered her bags. “Sorry about this.”
The elder woman just smiled slightly pained and said beginning to ring Weiss’s items through. “It’s alright.”

“Hey I’m talking to you!” The man reached out and grabbed Weiss’s shoulder.

She spun grabbing his hand and twisting it back, he let out a pained hiss. “And I do not wish to talk to you. Do not touch me again.” She shoved him back causing him to stumble and quickly grabbed her wallet pulling out the required Lien cards.

“Sorry.” She said again handing the money over and grabbing her full bags.

“How could you be so polite to that Valeite bitch, she hurt my fucking hand!”

Thankfully no one called her back as she opted to ride the escalator back down to the train station. She couldn’t wait to get home this had turned out to be an exhausting outing.

James opened the door when she arrived home, smiling ear to ear. “You’re back!”

Weiss smiled and offered one of the bags to him. “Miss me already?”

“Yes, it was too quiet without you.” He took it and lead the way to the kitchen.

Weiss giggled and put her bag on the table as James did the same. He looked over to her and saw how downcast her gaze was. “Hey are you okay?”

Weiss shook her head and forced a smile. “I’m fine.”

“Weiss.” James could plainly see she wasn’t.

“I just stopped by a news pylon which was a mistake all on its own and got into a conversation with a woman. Mistake two, then I claimed to be from Vale when she started attacking it. Then later her brother wouldn’t leave me alone in the line, called me a ‘Valeite bitch’ no better than a faunus. Is that really what people think of Vale?”

“Atlas and Vale have always been at odds Weiss. What happened is just another excuse for them to hate.” James walked over and pulled her into a hug.

“I just don’t understand it anymore. Vale was wonderful, Yang and Pyrrha it wasn’t there fault. Yang would never lie about what she saw, something else had to have been going on.” Weiss sniffed pushing her face against the flesh side of James’s chest.

“I know that now. I regret what happened at Vale and probably will to the day I die. I should have listened to Oz, the presence of my forces only made a bad situation worse.” James said softly.

“I miss my friends.” Weiss squeezed him tighter.

“I know.” James kissed the crown of her head.
Weiss signed as she refilled her transit card, the price was steadily climbing week by week, without Vacuo Dust mines Atlas mines were hard pressed to meet the demand thus prices soared. She pulled her card out of the machine and adjusted her coat. The usual crush of people was very slightly dwindled, she had taken to traveling when most other people were at work.

The train came into the station with that all to familiar hum, Weiss along with many others made their way onto the train. She glanced around the train, it was just empty enough that there were seats available and in one corner trying to make themselves as small as possible was a fox faunus holding her makeshift right bandaged hand carefully. Weiss walked over and sat beside her, glaring at a human who sneered at them.

Weiss looked at the young woman's hand again, the binding was clearly makeshift, not even coming close to what she had been taught as a Huntress. “If you don't mind me asking, what happened to your hand? I've some first aid training and I can see that binding is very poorly done. Have you been to a doctor?”

The fox woman looked up clearly startled by the question. “Oh uh no. I don't have a family doctor and finding one who will treat one of my kind well is hard.” Her fluffy orange tail twitched.

Weiss pursued her lips and the train started to move. “Well that's just plain wrong. I'm going to get a medication prescription refilled and have to visit a doctor for it. You could come with me and all make sure your hand gets a proper look.”

“Thank you but why?” She asked confused.

“One of my best friends is a faunus, I know there is no truth to the views so many here hold… and she'd kill me if she heard that I didn't at least offer to help.” Weiss said. “What is your name?”

“Ivy Green.” The fox faunus said. “I take it you're not from around here?”

“No, Vale. The faunus views are very different there… at least the majority are.” Weiss said.

“I wish I could have lived there before the fall, it sounds so nice.” Ivy said her big green eyes downcast.

“It had it’s problems like any kingdom but I do miss it.” Weiss said and the PA system called out the next station. “Come on, this is our stop.”

The two woman rose and Weiss put herself on Ivy’s right side, shielding her from the bustling people. A cold wind blew through them and Weiss offered her side to the smaller Ivy they huddled together as they left the station heading above ground. They came out into a medical sector, high buildings surrounding Atlas’s major hospitals full of specialists of various types.

Weiss however led Ivy to a small clinic, still very fine though. The faunus shrank away from the glares as Weiss tried to smile and comfort her. They walked up to the counter and Weiss pulled out a card, handing it to the receptionist.

“Here for your refill Miss Elmwood?” The woman said with a smile, Weiss had been coming here since escaping her father.
“Yes and my friend here needs her hand seen too.” Weiss said taking back the card.

“Please have a seat, Doctor Freedman will be able to see you shortly.”

Ivy squirmed but settle a bit when they sat together. “I’ve never been in a place like this, it’s nothing like the faunus sector.”

Weiss pursed her lips at the mention of the place. “The Doctor is a friend of my… partner. He’s a good man and is from Vale too. You don’t have to worry about him treating you well.”

“Thanks for this.” Ivy said.

“It’s nothing.” Weiss said and the nurse called for them.

Once in the private room they didn’t have to wait at all before a large dark skinned man with a trimmed black beard came in. His eyes was a warm brown and his smile was very kind. “Weiss!” He beamed as he closed the door behind him.

“Hello Doctor.” Weiss got up and shook his hand. “How are you?”

“Very well, you’re here for your refill? How is James doing?” Doctor Freedman asked grabbing his favourite rolling stool and sitting down.

“Yes I need a refill and James is doing better. He walks on his own now and I think he’s gotten the hang of the new neural implant. He’s started doing stretching and testing his balance. I think the pain still bothers him but the neuropozyne seems to be working well. I study how everything on his exterior has been healing every night and made some notes.” She pulled a diary and handed it to him, then pulled out her Scroll and brought up a gallery of pictures and gave that to him as well.

Ivy struggled to collect her jaw up from the floor, she reached behind her and brought her tail forth and hugged it to her chest. “You’re Weiss Schnee but you said you’re from Vale!”

Weiss giggled. “I am from Vale in every way that’s important.”

Doctor Freedman spoke up. “The tissue is still redder than it should be. Have you been checking the temperature for possible infections?”

“Everyday.”

Doc took another look at the pictures. “Then perhaps he is escalating his physio beyond the stage he ‘should’ be at. Please try to make sure he isn’t overdoing things. Just as much damage can be done by phasing through the fundamentals as doing them incorrectly. He’s taking his taking his neuropozyne orally still?”

“Yes, he hates it. I know he’s using his Semblance to control the healing.” Weiss said sitting back down.

“I don’t want him doing that. I know he’s always had a high resistance to neuroprosthesis rejection syndrome but that’s no excuse to not let his body heal on its own. I’ll give you a prescription for three months of neuropozyne injections to be place along his spine.” Doctor Freedman turned his Scroll around so she could see it. “Place them here, here and here.” He pointed to three of the reddest spots. “It will hurt but I’m worried about how his spine is taking the new grafts. And don’t forget, no more Semblance.”

Weiss made a note of the spots in her diary. “I will try to get him to stop, it’s just hard cause I usually
can’t tell when he’s doing it.”

“Tell him I won’t let him go back to work for an extra month if I see he’s still using it.” Doctor Freedman said with a smile.

Weiss giggled. “That will work, I need a birth control refill too.”

“Right.” The doctor pulled out two pieces of yellow paper and wrote out both prescriptions. He handed them to Weiss. “Now then, let me look at your hand please.” He rolled his chair over so he was in front of Ivy.

The fox faunus let go of her tail and offered the hurt hand. Doctor Freedman very carefully removed the binding and checked the purple hand over. “Why didn’t you go to emergency? This is broken in at least two places.”

“I’m a faunus, I’d be lucky if anyone paid me any attention in the next day.” Ivy said.

The Doctor got up. “I’ll be right back. I’m going to go get a splint, I’ll set your hand and get you a painkiller to tide you over.” He left with a swish of white lab coat.

Ivy looked on amazed after him. “He’s so nice.”

“I told you he was good.” Weiss said folding her hands in her lap.

“So you’re Weiss Schnee the one everyone’s looking for. Aren’t you worried about your family?”

The icen eyed woman shook her head. “No, my father is a bad man I don’t want anything to do with him. If mom has even noticed I’m gone I’ll be surprised. I said my home was Vale and I mean that. I miss my team, they are my family more than anyone but my sister who bares the name Schnee. I left home of my own accord. The General opened his house to me and is hiding me till I find a way to return to my team.”

“That’s so sweet of him.” Ivy said.

Doctor Freedman returned. “Here we are, now lets get that hand set.”

Weiss and Ivy left much later heading to a drug store where Weiss bought all of the medication for herself, James and Ivy, after a short argument. Weiss rode with Ivy to the faunus sector, it was the closest thing Atlas had to slums and the difference in living quality had never seemed so large to Weiss. While there wasn’t people lying in the streets or between bins the houses were tiny, stacked haphazardly together and in most areas almost ruined. It reminded Weiss of towers made from poorly stacked cards, one stiff breeze and the whole thing could come crumble in an instant, ending so many futures.

They stood on Ivy’s doorstep a small thin house built up against the others around it behind them. “Thank you for walking me home.” Ivy said.

“I didn’t want to risk anyone hurting you again.” Weiss said and them shrugged. “Plus I can take care of myself.” She bit her lip and said. “Would you like my number? I need to get out more and having a friend would really help.”

Ivy beamed and hugged Weiss. “I’d love to be your friend.”

Weiss returned the hug and pulled away, Ivy pulled out her Scroll unlocked it and brought up her contacts list. “You do mine, I’ll do yours.”
They traded numbers and hugged again. Over the next few weeks the girls would meet many times, for lunch or as Ivy’s hand healed she would help Weiss with her shopping. They became fast friends.

James knelt in his training room, his legs under him as he mediated. He wore only the black pants of a gi. Looking inward with his Semblance correcting scar tissue making sure he healed as perfectly as possible to the new prosthetics. His spine hurt where the neuropozyne injections were applied but he was being good and not dulling the pain, only monitoring how his spine was healing. He opened his eyes and stood, stretching his hands out before him between weaving the fingers together and raising them up as he stretched.

The tall man relaxed and looked down at his hands, the new metal one was formed almost exactly the same way was his flesh one. The plates and formed metal mimicked his human side very closely. If he covered them no one would be able to tell he was half metal. His heart warmed at the thought, he also had so much more sensation now. It has been distorting at first, but that had been several months ago now.

He moved into a low horse stance and then with a deep breath worked his way through a kata. His balance was vastly improved, he was faster and lighter on his feet.

One kata after another, moving through different martial arts, a few of which Ozpin taught him. He spun, kicked and punched almost dancing about the room. The fluidity he had lost after his accident was slowly returning to him the more he healed and practiced.

After several more kata he stopped sweat dripping down his human skin, he looked down at his mirrored hands and burst out laughing. The pain was nothing now, he felt so much more whole then he had felt in years.

“It’s nice to see you so happy.”

James spun to find Weiss standing in the doorway. He chuckled and shrugged, offering his hands to her. “I don’t know. I just feel… whole again. Like a normal person.”

Weiss walked over and took his hands, the metal was even skin temperature. “You’ve always have been to me.”

Deep blue eyes gazed upon her, he raises his right hand and brushed a lock of her hair back. “I know, but I feel it now.” He watched as Weiss tipped her head into the touch of his metal hand.

“I’m glad.” She said softly.

Weiss woke up to something soft and sweet in her ears. Turning over in the bed she shared with James she found the side he mostly slept on empty and cold. The door to their bedroom stood ajar and a faint soft glow of light emitted from the gap. Atlas was always cold but Weiss was still use to the warmer weather of Vale and shivered as her body left the warm bed. Quietly she pulled on a thick woolen housecoat and padded with bare feet towards the door.
Out in the library James sat on the piano seat with only a single candle shredding light into the room. The heavy curtains had been drawn tight, keeping the heat in and the soft notes Weiss had woken to played out from the man sat alone. The piano notes were jerky and inconsistent, there was no melody or rhythm to his hitting the keys. Weiss drew closer, ensuring she made just enough noise so as to not startle him. Edging to the side of the piano Weiss’s hand hovered over the keys. James face was pinched in concentration, his metal hand poised over the keys. He used only one finger at a time pressing a note before moving on. It was like he wasn’t sure how to use all his fingers in conjunction with one another.

Remembering a simple song she knew Weiss rested her hand on the keys, fingers picking out the melody. It started soft and light, the notes almost too quiet. James had stopped playing when she started, watching the way her delicate fingers played over the notes. His own hand repeating the pattern. Weiss felt each note like a gentle stroke and added more, her other hand coming up. James followed, the fine motors of his fingers finding the melody and accompanying her higher notes with his own. The song was one he knew and the music played in his head whilst he found his fingers unconsciously seeking out the right keys. So caught up as he was his metal hand found hers on the piano, her warm skin startling him into missing a note, jerking the song to a halt.

Weiss frowned as James seemed to turn into himself away from her presence and her hand sought out his. Feeling the cool plates of metal she drew his hand closer to her so he turned back. Once she had his attention she started playing again, finding a new song, something slightly more cheerful and upbeat, her eyes hardly looking at the piano and she played nimbly.

When the first few chords didn’t arouse a response from him she tried another, this time calling back to when they had been at Beacon. The night they had danced together for the first time, Halloween. When they had both gone into the night with their faces hidden and danced to the sweetest of beats. It took a moment to get the song in her head but once it was her hands found the notes easy. Playing them brought a smile to her lips and moments later James’ hands joined hers. Obviously he recognised the song and its significance because the slightest of smirks played over his face as he played with her. His hands chasing after her in playful melody. When his hand tickled her, nearly causing her to miss her cue she giggled and wasn’t that the most beautiful thing James had ever heard before.

They laughed together and played some more, somehow forgetting everything outside of their playing. It wasn’t until the candle that James had brought out went out that they finally stopped. Both had grown accustomed to the dark and James let his arms wrap around Weiss’ form. She kissed his cheek softly, lingering at the corner of his lips. “Come back to bed James.”

Weiss slid elegantly from the bench drawing him up with her. She turned away pulling him back to their bedroom. James admired the flirty smile she wore and had a feeling she hadn’t met to sleep. They came to the bedroom with the spotlight still filling it. “Weiss.” James asked his voice soft and thick. “If you’re thinking what I think you are. I’m not sure I can… you know.”

Weiss pulled off her housecoat, letting him see the white lacy panties. “Well if you’re alright with it, I think we’d be fine if I topped. You stand to attention in the mornings without any difficulty. We’ll just have to take it slow.”

James breathed deeply taking in that pale skin, reaching for his own house coat. “Well I am not going to tell you no.”

Weiss smiled shyly and reached to him undoing the knot of the warm robe and pulling it undone. He was nude underneath and her insides did a little flip as he was already rising to attention for her. She reached out and trailed over the cooler metal and warm skin, watching the two work together had
become of her favourite things.

James reached out to chin and tipped it up gently with a finger. He dipped down and kissed her slowly, shrugging his coat off. His other hand moved to her waist and he walked her back to sit on the edge of the bed. He drew out of the kiss slowly and pet down her sides, taking her panties in hand and drawing them slowly down her legs. He knelt before her and kissed the inside of her knee.

Weiss giggled softly admiring how the light collected on his muscles, the shine of it upon the black metal. “Come up here and get comfy.”

“As my lady commands.” James stood and Weiss shifted as he moved a few pillow around pushing them up against the headboard before relaxing against them. Weiss returned to him straddling him unsure of what to do for a moment before leaning up and kissing him.

James gathered the duvet around them before petting up and down her spine with a gentle touch. He felt Weiss shiver in pleasure the little mew she made into the kiss. “Are you sure?” He whispered softly moving a hand to pet her stomach, his thumb drifting lower.

“Yes, I’ve mostly just been waiting for you to heal.” Weiss traced along the dulling red scaring. “You’re sweet and kind, had our positions not been so… different I think I would have been very lucky to have you for a partner. Hehe, I am very lucky to have you for a partner.”

James kissed her again. “As am I.” He let his hand drift lower and stroke over her sex. She mewed softly into the kiss grabbing his arms and shifting spreading her legs more for his gentle teasing fingers. Slowly he explored and readied her, till she was mewing with soft sounds before him.

Weiss drew his hand away and took his erection in hand and positioned herself. Very slowly she lowered herself and ease him into her. Both drew deep breaths, James resting a hand on her hips to steady her, the other petting up and down her back. Her eyes lidded as she moaned softly, petite hands grabbing James’s collar as she sank lower taking him completely within her.

They shared another deep breath before kissing deeply. Weiss picked a slow little roll of her hips experimenting with how he felt within her. James moved in small lifts of his hips, helping her along. Bit by bit Weiss moved into longer more fluid actions that had them both gasping for breathe before long. She arched her back and moaned softly rising and falling on him with constant actions. She wove her hands into her hair and pulled at it.

James could feel it as she fell into ecstasy, he took her hips in hand and guiding her to a faster pace. He found she mewed very prettily as he chased his own pleasure. She looked gorgeous above him, he followed her over swiftly and held her tight as they relaxed together.

Weiss lay on her front purring contently, the sheet that had been chucked off now spread over her legs leaving her ass mostly uncovered. James on the other hand sat with his back against the headboard watching his partner shift slightly on the bed, small quiet whimpers sighed from her upturned lips. “Are you feeling a little sore Weiss?”

Weiss wiggled around a bit till her head was turned towards him and sighed happily. “Only in the best way.”

He couldn’t take his eyes off Weiss’s barely covered back side, shaped like a peach and utterly
flawless. While she didn't have the bursting bosom of her teammates in the chest department her ass was deliciously shaped, enough that he almost wanted to bite it. Weiss's giggles brought his eyes back up, his young partner blushed so prettily as she stared up at him. “What?”

“If I ever see Yang again, I'm going to have to tell her she was right. They don't call you Iron'wood’ for nothing.”

The pair dissolved into giggles, James pulling Weiss back into his arms and petting down her back. “Please don't, I'm not sure I can bare the teasing.”

“I'd say your already pretty bare.” The thought of her teammates saddened her slightly but it didn’t reflect in her voice as she teased him.

“That was terrible Weiss, you should be ashamed!”

“She's worse! I think she's corrupted me!” Together they fell into a pile of limbs, kissing and chuckling until the sun chased the night away.

The petite woman pet along his neck, her thoughts turning back to their nightly conversations. “James, could we maybe… try some of those things you draw? Like what Qrow and Ozpin do? I'm curious.”

A smile bloomed over James’s lips. “As much as you like.” He purred and nipped her ear. “For now, get some sleep.” Turning Weiss in his arms holding her to his chest they fell asleep.

Ozpin leaned on the rail ship looking up upon Mantle’s nearing dock, in his hand he held his scroll. Looking down he slowly punched the number in, he wasn’t sure about this. Finishing the number he hit call and brought the Scroll to his ear.

“Hello?” James Ironwood’s voice sounded clear on the other end.

Oz took a deep breath. “Hello James.”

There was a long silence and Oz heard a door being closed. “Oz?”

Ozpin smiled. “Long time no see.”

“Are you alright? Where are you? Where have you been?” James asked in rapid fire.

“ Mostly, just outside of Mantle, Vacuo and then traveling by water.” Ozpin answered with a little smile, he could hear James fall into his office chair.

“You going to Mistral?”

“Yes, but it didn’t feel right not to contact you.” Oz said. “Secrecy is paramount.”

“Of course.” James sighed. “I’ve been restricting Dust trade out of Atlas, Oz I don’t know what to do.” He was so very glad that he had Oz back to talk too, he messed up so very badly at Beacon.

“I am just as in the dark as you are James.” Ozpin confided, he didn’t know what to do either, he rubbed his temples thinking. “Be on standby, it will take time for Her to make another move, so we
gather intelligence and ready ourselves as best we can.”

James was relieved to have some direction. “Alright.” He paused thinking he still had Weiss hidden away in his flat. “When are you docking in Mantle?”

“In a day why?” Ozpin asked.

James cursed under his breath. “Are you staying for at least the day?”

“Yes.”

James took a deep breath. “Listen, long story short I pulled Weiss from the Schnee manor before her father could do her any… ill. She’s been staying with me for the last seven months, I haven’t been able to get her out. Think you can take her with you?”

Oz could help but smile and he purred out. “Staying with you for the last seven months James? Why do I get the feeling her virtue is no longer intact.”

James blushed. “Err, just answer the question.”

“If you can get her here, I’ll have a word with the captain. It will likely be fine, shall I meet you at the docks?” Jack wouldn’t mind, he’d love to have another Huntsman on board or Huntress as the case was.

“That would be easiest.” James conformed. “We’ll talk more then?”

“Of course see you then.” Ozpin could tell James wanted to talk face to face.

“See you then.” James hung up, then went to find Weiss.

Jack had been thrilled at the idea of taking on another huntsman and Naga was fairly easily convinced. So while the Captain offloaded goods and restocked, Oz went to the local tavern to wait for James and Weiss. Mantle was a cold dower place, regardless of its season and since Atlas became the capital of the region Mantle had never recovered.

This reflected in the people and places, grey toned buildings with people who strained to smile. Oz hated it, as he glanced around the mostly empty tavern it depressed him. He looked up when the door open, he rose recognizing James instantly despite the casual clothing. It was Weiss that caught his attention, she was taller by several centimeters and all but hiding pressed against James right side. Her dress was a cool blue and thick, but it was the hair that escaped from her hood that caught his attention. Pale orange, like leaping flames, when she looked up to him Oz decided that she made a lovely redhead. He got up and moved towards them, “Hello James.” he offered his hand.

James was staring slack jawed at Oz, he reached out and clasped his hand, when they shook their was no doubt that this stranger before him was Oz. He looked so young, black hair so dark it looked like it absorbed light, thick black tattoos masking his features. He could see armour on Oz’s left arm but he kept it hidden under this equally black cloak, he dragged his gaze back up to Oz’s face, his eyes were green. He pulled Oz into a hug. “Good to see you again.”

“Likewise.” Oz returned the embrace and pulled away. “Do you have time for a drink?”
James shook his head. “I borrowed a ship to get here in time, I have to get back.”

Oz nodded sadly understanding. “Good luck.”

James drew away and said, “Likewise.” then turned to Weiss.

Oz moved back to his table and sat back down letting them have this moment as private as possible.

Weiss bit her lip and looked at the floor, the emotions she’d been struggling with for months rising up in her heart. James drew her chin up with a finger making her look up at him. “I-.” He started before stopping and pursing his lips, he sighed and dipped down and kissed her softly. “Goodbye Weiss.”

Weiss threw her arms around his neck and deepened the kiss before he could draw away. She tried to pour what she was feeling into the kiss, her fingers tightened in his hair as tears slide from her eyes.

James drew her close and slid his tongue into her mouth, for all he knew this could be their last kiss. Eventually they parted and James cleared away her tears with his thumbs, he leaned forward and kissed her chastely once more then let her go and fled out the door before this became anymore painful.

*Oh those idiots.* Ozpin thought watching the pair as Weiss now stood alone a hand pressed to her mouth as she tried to stifle her tears. He rose, walked over and pulled her into a hug, she tucked her face into his chest as he wrapped his cloak around her shielding her from the world.

“Sorry.” Weiss whispered into his chest.

Oz tightened his embrace marginally. “Think nothing of it, would you like something to eat or to go to the ship?”

“Ship please, I want to be away from here.” Weiss said as he stepped away and they headed out back to the ship.

The Naglfar stunned Weiss and she stuck to Ozpin like glue after hiding out with James for so long, she had gotten used to having someone around. The crew bustling about was more than a bit overwhelming at first, but none of them paid her any mind. They picked a spot by the stern out of everyone’s way and slowly bit by bit Weiss drew away from Oz.

Ozpin found that the change of hair colour went a very long way to hide her identity. Schnee’s were famous for their platinum hair and without that, well she didn’t look much like a Schnee. He cocked his head to the side and pursed his lips, she was still standing to tall, to proud. Even without the hair her posture could give her away. “You know, appearance is only half a disguise.”

“Pardon?” Weiss looked over to him.

“You stand too proud, even for a huntress.” Ozpin said shifting his weight back adding a extra bit of swagger instead of his usual purposeful walk. “The rest is demeanor.” He spread his hands in a laid back welcoming pose, he twisted his voice out of the familiar tones she was used too. “You still hold yourself like a Schnee, you’re not going last long in Mistral if you don’t learn to build a new persona.”

Weiss jaw dropped, gone was her Headmaster in his place someone new and strange, the accent he had adopted was smooth yet gravelly. “How did you do that?”
Oz smiled a twisted his lips up at one corner. “Practice, you had to learn how to smile and parrot what your father wanted of you. Now you’ve got to learn how to use those skills in a new way.”

Weiss pondered on that. “Okay, how do you do that?”

He smiled, relaxing and leaning against the the rail. “Pick a place you know a lot about, I picked Vacou because its diverse enough that there is a lot of wiggle room in accents. My name Obsidian Volren, there is an island chain where that’s a pretty typical style of name. The trick is to weave just enough truth into the lie to make to feel real.”

“Are you from Vacuo?” Weiss asked.

“My memories are a bit distorted but I think so, at least at one point. The point is a little truth to this lie, with my hair black like this is believable.” Oz explained.

Just like that Weiss learned more about Ozpin that most students ever dreamed about knowing. She bit her lip thinking, she had only ever been in Atlas or Vale, while Ruby and Yang spoke in a much less clipped manor then her she wasn’t sure she could mimic that. “Well the only place aside from Atlas I know anything about is Vale.”

“Given how Valites have been scattered to the four winds, it would be easy to construct a identity out of that. With a little work you won’t even have to change your accent much.” Ozpin worked the idea through his head, she’d make a good Valite with a little work.

Weiss nodded thinking that over. “So you’ll teach me?”

“Of course.” The Huntsman said looking out over the ship, the crew was getting ready to depart. Jack nodded at him and his companion, then yelled out the order to set sail.

Weiss let out a relieved sigh and they departed Mantle’s dock shrinking away, she was finally free of Atlas and hopefully her father. She frowned sadly, every meter between her and father was one between her and James as well. She rubbed her chest with a hand, wishing she could stay and knowing she had to leave. It had been too dangerous to stay in Atlas, her father wasn’t going to stop until she went back into the cage and he simply had too much power here.

Weiss knew James would have protected her but it was stifling here and with situations in Vale not getting any better it was only a matter of time before something happened. She would never be able to finish her training in Atlas and the opportunity to go to Haven was too good to miss. Not to mention the people who had been a part of the attack on Beacon had come from Haven which meant that was where Ruby would go.

Leaving had been harder then she expected, being with James all these months had shown her what love was and she hadn’t wanted to leave. However James was going back to work now and wanted Weiss to be safe and away from her father's hands.

She hugged herself drawing her cloak tight around herself, tears threatened her eyes again. This was the next step of her life, she’d go to Haven and finish her education, it was a step towards being free of her father once and for all. Or so she rationalized her heart said she was leaving her future behind with James.

Oz stepped silently over and hugged her again, letting her hide in his embrace. Softly he spoke. “It won’t get any better, say something when you see him next. And you will see him again, I know James well enough to say he’s just as smitten with you.”

Weiss spoke through silent tears. “We- I just, I don’t think I was read to leave him. I know I’ll see
him again, I just wish he was able to come with us.

He sighed deeply. “We can’t pick who or when we fall in love, we can only choose how we handle it.”

“I wish I had told him.” Weiss whispered, pressing her face into his shirt.

“I get the feeling you should have, but you can’t change anything now.” Oz rubbed up and down her back.

Weiss cleared away her tears, she was better than this she was a Schnee! She drew away and straightened her dress, she wouldn’t let her emotions get the better of her.

Jack came over and offered a little bow to Weiss though she wasn’t an heiress anymore. “Welcome to my ship Miss Schnee.” He had a long box under his arm.

“Thank you for having me Captain.” Weiss curtsied.

Jack waved her thanks off. “Think nothing of it, it’s always handy to have another huntress around. Speaking of which,” he offered the box to Oz. “Watching you fight without a long range option has been driving me nuts.”

Oz took the box and opened the lid, his eyes popped out of his skull. It was a rifle, clearly custom made to take advantage of his stature. It was ornate and clearly designed after his currant gear, instead of a wooden brace it was all heavy black metal and chambered in .50 colt.

Jack leaned in and heaved the large gun out, “Its collapsible, custom extended magazine, with a feather trigger, should be more than enough to give you some much needed range.” He offered it to Oz.

“I can’t take this Jack, you’ve readily given me so much.” Oz’s eyes devoured the gun, it was so very much his style.

“Just take it Oz, as I said I was getting frustrated watching you without a gun. If it helps at all you can pay me back.” Jack knew Oz would.

Oz took the huge gun and tested how it felt in his hand, he instantly liked it. While Jack had to use two arms Oz could swing it with one, the grip felt perfect in his hand and he knew he wouldn’t have any problems with the recoil. “Thank you.” He said as Jack took the box from him, pulled out another bandolier that also had pockets. Oz slung it around his hips and pressed a little button just above the safely collapsing the weapon. The barrel folding in by half, as did the brace it still weighed a great deal but it was a good weight on his hip.

Weiss thought the rifle suited him well and it reminded her of James pistol, just silver metal to his new black. Her Semblance fixed her range issue, but she guessed that whatever Oz’s was didn’t allow for the same freedom.

Jack watched Oz with the rifle before saying. “There’s a rumour about a flock of Nevermores circling to the east, if we’re unlucky you’ll get to test it out.” With that he nodded to Weiss. “Excuse me m’lady I have a ship to command.”

Weiss nodded and Jack departed turning to Oz she asked. “Have you fought a lot of Grimm on this ship.”

Oz’s right hand wandered over to his left forearm with him noticing and gripped it tightly, even
without a scar. Sometimes it still twinged, Harkness had said it had almost rotted off, needless to say that feeling had stuck with him long past the mended flesh. “Not often but attacks do happen.”

Weiss glanced at his arm and pursed her lips, it wasn’t her place to ask. “Shall we work on my accent?”

Ozpin smiled grateful for the distraction. “Yes lets.”

Alarms blared all over the ship Oz lurched awake and upright grabbing his weapons but leaving his shirt and armour. He raced out the door buckling on his holsters and fixing his belt, he burst out onto the deck to the sound of cannon fire.

The sky was full of Nevermores, he even sensed a Sea Dragon lurking beneath the waves waiting for the Nevermores to soften them up.

Weiss eyes widened when she got on deck, she hadn’t seen so many Grimm since the Fall of Beacon. Her jaw dropped when she saw Oz’s back, he turned to her and grinned, it instantly reminded her of James. Not his “Honey I’m home.” no this was the “I’ve got the best Evil idea ever!”

“Weiss, how are your glyphs?” Oz asked grinned ear to ear.

Weiss already knew what he wanted, she smiled and set her rapier to wind dust. “Better then they were in Beacon, I can keep up with James.”

“Oh I bet.” Oz turned from her pulling out his rifle in his left and sword in his right extending both.

“I didn’t mean it like that!” Weiss blushed and activated a large white glyph under his feet, she was going to have to be quick to keep up with him.

Oz only laughed as the glyph launched him up into the air, he cleaved straight through the wing of a Nevermore, fired at another spinning around to land on another white glyph.

Weiss was practically dancing on the deck trying to keep up with his movement. He was hard to predict, but she slowly started to see echos of Ruby in him. How sometimes he used a shot to redirect himself, through the swarm. Black Grimm parts rained down from the sky as Oz let out a jublet shout.

This is fun! Oz ran down the back of one giant Nevermore leaping clear onto a Time Dilation glyph, he quickly glanced around taking in the positions of the Grimm closing in on him. He glowed green as he leaned on his own Aura working with Weiss Semblance he blurred through the air stabbing and cleaving his way through the Grimm before returning to centre landing on a white glyph. He could feel the power swell under his feet and jumped up in time with the glyph sending clear up above the swarm.

He twisted in the air with the moon clear up behind him, he pulled the lever on his gun with a finger ejecting the clip. He tossed his sword up and pulled a fresh clip from his belt and reloaded with a click, grabbing his sword out of the air before gravity started to take hold again. A white glyph appeared under his feet, as they landed on it the glyph turned and fired him back into the swarm.
Boom, Boom, Boom. Three Nevermore fell to the new rifle, another glyph appeared redirecting him into new prey. He twisted and leaped, slicing through the swarm of Grimm.

Weiss felt sweat trail down her back, he was much faster than James and she kept having to dodge the Grimm parts. Many of the crew had stopped their work to stare. While most had seen Ozpin in action, they hadn’t seen him with a proper Huntress support. The two were taking care of the Grimm faster than most of them could aim.

As Oz blew the head off the last Nevermore, his sword embedded in its chest and his rifle under his neck. He leaped doing a backflip off the bird, falling through the air twisting around to land before Weiss with a BOOM, legs splayed to take the force as the ship rocked under the impact. The body of the Nevermore fell before them with a pale thud in comparison, quickly dissolving.

Weiss watched him straightened up with fluid grace, flexing the muscles through his back and arms. She admired the way he flexed and rolled his shoulders as he turned to look at her panting form.

“Are you alright?” He cocked his head looking her over as she was wearing only her pajamas.

Weiss blushed as she realized her state of dress, the sweat making her nightdress cling to her skin. She swallowed trying to catch her breath. “Yeah, just never had to cast that fast before.”

“Well it is not over yet.” He pointed over the starboard down causing everyone to flow his finger.

A HUGE Sea Dragon rose from the water, it let out a bellowing ROAR that blew a few crew men over.

Weiss’s eyes widened, it was one of the biggest Grimm she had never seen. She didn’t have time to think as Oz was already moving.

Oz yelled up to the helm as Jack was still trying to wrap his mind around the Grimm. “JACK YOU’RE GONNA WANT TO GET US MOVING!” He raced over to the starboard side as Jack yelled at the crew to get them turned toward the beast. Oz holstered his gun and set a hand the black wood, reversing his sword and holding the blade up out beyond the side of the ship. “This is gonna hurt Naga, give me the power and I’ll slow it down.”

He felt the black Aura fill him as the Sea Dragon, spread its wings and reared its head back. As the yellow lighting fired towards them Oz extended his and Naga’s Aura in a half dom, like how he had in the fight with Cinder. The lighting cracked and spread over it, being dispersed by the combined Aura.

Weiss raced over to Oz’s side seeing him strain she asked shouting to be heard over the thunderous energy. “Can I help?!?”

Oz grunted as Jack started to turn the ship, he had to adjust the shield with movement. “We’ve got to clip its wings or Jack will never land a hit. I’ll draw it in, when it gets close think you can use the ocean and Dust to impale it?”

Weiss glanced over to Sea Dragon, it was maybe half a kilometer up into the sky. “You can make that?!”

Oz grinned and dropped the shield as the ship turned with a great sweeping arc, huge waves crashing away from them. He raced over to the helm of the ship, Weiss seeing what he had planned and created a line of white speed glyphs, she and Ruby practiced this. He coiled as the white run away appeared and launched into motion, fully empowering himself with his Aura.

A green blurr blasted across the deck and fired up into the sky, Oz grabbed his sword with both
hands and thrust it forward with all the combined force. It sank deep into the Sea Dragons armoured
nose, Oz had to spin around and stand on the dragon's nose to avoid getting blasted with lightning.

“READY THE LONG NINES!” Lizzy shouted as two huge three barreled cannons rose from the
deck and took aim.

Weiss race out to the stern and closed her eyes, readying a summoning, a huge white glyph appeared
before the ship on the hovering above the water.

Will raced to her side. “What’s the plan?!”

“We draw it in, you shoot it.” Weiss said and summoned a Nevermore.

Oz ripped his sword out of the monsters head and raced down its back as it twisted and turned trying
to throw him off. He fell and skidded down its back, he drove its sword into its thick black scaled
hide and let the force of its shaking cleave though its own skin.

The Dragon snarled and scratched at Oz, as Oz caught sight of his ride, he planted his feet and fired
off the dragon and landed upside down on the white and blue Nevermore with a tumble. He ripped
out his gun and fired shot after shot into the beast's maw. “COME AND GET ME YOU
OVERGROWN LIZARD!!”

Enraged the Sea Dragon took the bait and flew after him, it only took a few seconds for the
Nevermore to fly down over the ocean drawing the monster down. Oz flipped over, sheathed his
sword and grabbed the summoning, looking over his shoulder he continued to fire. Just as the
summon dissolved and he landed on the deck with a roll.

Weiss summoned the last of her Aura, changed the Dust on her sword to Ice and created a white
projectile glyph below the waves. The Dragon bellowed raising up to devour them when Weiss
flicked her fingers. CRASH! Huge spikes of dust and sea water BLASTED up from the ocean,
impaling the massive Grimm.

It ROARED in a twisted scream of pain, writhing and crawling at the ice. “FIRE!” Lizzy roared. Its
wings beat uselessly their power gone as the ice sliced them up the more it struggled, black blood
oozing over the blue crystal.

Oz and Weiss covered their ears as the Long Nines fired over and over, each barrel spinning to
reload while the other fired.

The Sea Dragon’s armour was thick but at the eighth shot it was finally torn in two, the top half
falling into the water with a crash. Weiss and Oz lowered their hands and looked to each other, Oz
threw his head back and laughed flopping onto his back exhausted.

After a moment of confusion Weiss followed suit with a musical laugh of her own. It took them a
minute to calm down, Oz rolled over to face her. “We make a good team.”

Weiss pushed herself up on an arm and tucked a wild lock of hair behind her ear. She just grinned
and was about to speak when Jack raced over to them. “THAT WAS BLOODY BRILLIANT!”

Huntress and Huntsman shared a long look and collapsed back into exhausted laughter.

Chapter End Notes
Ardy: FINALLY!
Kry: Woohoo! This was one heck of a chapter right?
Ardy: Yes, I’m so ready to be done with it. That will be the last James and Weiss chapter of Emerald Rose. Thank you too: darkvampirekisses, lillithschild, Bucky_Barnes, Silenaislife, QueenofSpades19, Sportsfangirl815 and Frapadingue70 for all your wonderful comments!
Kry: Yeh, Thank you for your support, it’s really appreciated and we hope you all continue to enjoy the story as we go along. Next up back to Ruby and co!
Kry & Ardy: BYE! :3
Ruby shifted on the balls of her feet casting a glance at her friends before rubbing her hip slightly. Qrow had given her a through loving last night and she was deliciously sore in certain areas. It had certainly been her best birthday present this year she thought with a secret smirk. Team RNJR was just passing through another burned out village when Ruby felt a shiver run up her spine. Halting in her steps she took a quick glance around, had the wind shifted?

Turning back to her teammates she saw Ren lift a hand out to them also stopping. Ruby drew out Crescent Rose when Ren pulled out Stormflower the rest of their team following suit. The feeling running down her spine came back again and her grip tightened, this wasn’t Grimm she could feel it, it was something else. “Qrow, someone's coming. Hurry up and get your feathered butt over here.”

A man with a long brown ponytail running down his back leaped high over the wall, whipping out his wrist blades, cackling as he raced to attack Ruby. Ren leaped in front of Ruby firing and attempting to kick the man, he easily dodged out of the way. The stranger laughing outmaneuvered Ren kicking him in the stomach sending him flying.

He raced for Ruby again but Ruby held back as he swung, spinning to slice her up, he was faster than her. Ruby had to drop back and twisted, swinging her weapon to deflect an attack and leaping up to dodge a kick to the stomach. This man started giggling, his eyes golden and wide peered at her as he forced her back a few steps. Ruby felt her stomach drop, there is something very frightening about him.

She whipped Crescent Rose around the man and dropped him to the ground, Ruby grinned switching Crescent Rose to war form and stabbed forward, slicing into the man’s aura and almost getting his shoulder.

He kicked her in the gut sending her tumbling head of heels, her Aura shimmering.

Jaune rushed over to attack but the man just leaped into his shield then onto Magnhild as Nora rushed in to help, he leaped up carelessly smashing into a tower. When the dust cleared team RNJR could see him casually holding himself up with his feet on the wooden frames on either side of him.

Jaune shouted up at him. “We’re not looking for a fight!”

“Who are you?” Ren asked.

The man grinned and leaned forward, dropping from the building with a front flip and landing with feet splayed. “Who I am matters not to you.” He pointed at Ren. “Or you.” Nora came next. “Or,” he paused. “Well… you do interest me.” He pointed to Jaune. “No, I only matter to you~.” He pointed at Ruby and the rest of the team looked at her.

Ruby pursed her lips and tucked a lock of hair behind her ear, using the time to contact Qrow. Need some help over here, I think this guy is with Salem. All a sudden she felt Qrow’s Aura wash over her as though he were checking her for injuries, she felt his worry and yanked Crescent Rose from the ground.

“Ruby?” Jaune asked, startled by her silence.
The man giggled with an insane smile, it stretched over his face showing a row of very white teeth. “So there is some truth to the rumours. Ozpin did tell you things.”

“Did Cinder send you?” Ruby asked growling, she had to buy time for Qrow to get here, for her Aura to replenish. “Or Salem?”

“Who?” Jaune asked, looking at her eyes wide.

Tyrian laughed a horrible cracking thing, bending over resting his hands on his knees for a moment before taking a step back in a almost drunk manner. “You haven’t told them?” He howled all the louder. “They just blindly follow?!”

Ruby flipped Crescent Rose back to standard, “Qrow said Salem might send someone.” then she smiled, she could feel Qrow’s Aura steady her like warm hands.

Qrow landed before her with a boom, dust blowing through the air in his wake. He reached a hand back to her, she grabbed it and he replenished her Aura. Quickly taking in the man before him, “You alright?” he asked softly, brushing his thumb over the back of her hand before letting go.

Ruby nodded and shifted getting ready. “Yeah, he likes to talk.”

“As I live and breath, Qrow Branwen.” The man bowed flicking coat off and revealing his scorpion tail. “A true Huntsman has entered the fray!” He looked behind to Ruby and smiled. “Stalling me little Miss Rose? My my there’s more to you than meets the eye, how did you contact him?” His golden eyes roamed back over to Qrow and he smiled, he wasn’t surprised to see Qrow after all the man had been putting it to the young woman just last night. He thought about taunting them with that little piece of information but no, let them think they were safe, he'd save it for maximum effect.

Qrow glared at the faunus, he rolled his shoulder and put Harbinger ready out to the side. “Look, pal, I’m not sure who you are, but you need to leave her alone.”

Tyrian chortled, “Why, friend, my name is Tyrian. And I’m afraid that is not possible. My assignment from Her Grace was to retrieve this young girl. So, that is what I must do. One does not upset the Queen.” He clapped his hands together.

“Call it.” Qrow said, coiling.

“He’s fast, maelstrom.” Ruby said readying her Semblance.

“Hmm, I think we've had enough talk now, don't you?” Their talk amused him, he lowered himself getting ready to spring.

“T ook the words right out of-.“ Qrow started but Tyrian rushed at Qrow, twisting to the right to slash with the left wrist blade. Qrow easily deflected the strike and the follow up and shouted. “NOW!”

Ruby blasted forth with her Semblance wrapping Qrow up in it, creating a huge storming wind of her crimson and his darker blood red petals, cycloning the air away from Tyrian.

The faunus leaped upward slashing at random, only for Qrow to materialize out of the storm and slice at Tyrian’s head. The Faunus bent out of the way with inhuman agility but Qrow still managed to slice his arm, weakening his Aura. Tyrian fired after Qrow but the man had vanished into the storm of rose petals.

Ruby strained to maintain the storm as Tyrian fired, letting Qrow move in and out of it was an
enormous amount of work. She was quickly growing to hate the faunus’s laugh, she felt Qrow attack twice more, getting in two more strikes but Tyrian punched him in the gut sending him tumbling out of the vortex.

Ruby let out a cry and her Semblance failed, she fired at Tyrian soaring back so she’d land beside Qrow. Qrow leaped to his feet, weapon in hand as Tyrian rushed them firing, he used his tail blocking the bullets as Ruby shot back as she was shielded by Qrow, deflecting Tyrian’s shots.

Ren and Nora raced into the fight, swinging for the faunus together. With a cackle Tyrian ducked, spun using his tail and kicked them both sending them flying back with their Aura’s broken. He raced after the two young adults and Qrow was forced to leave Ruby exposed to block Tyrian. Their weapons skid against each other and Qrow shouted over his shoulder, to Ren, Nora and Jaune. “Stay back!”

Tyrian glared at Qrow, his right wrist blades up against Qrow’s weapon. He broke away and attacked following through with his left, but Qrow used the flat of his blade to block both and then, slashed forward, pushing Tyrian back a step.

Ruby raced in to cleave for Tyrian’s middle, only for the faunus to spin disengaging from Qrow and try attacking her. She blocked the bullets with Crescent Rose while Qrow fired filling Tyrian’s chest with a buck shot.

Tyrian blocked and raced to the side, firing again cackling away, again Qrow and Ruby formed up one protecting the other attacking. They could feel their opponent wearing down their Aura’s, Ruby’s was close to breaking, using her Semblance to help Qrow get a few good hits in had really taken it out of her.

Qrow blasted forth going on the offense, slashing lowly at Tyrian, he dropped to the ground to avoid the strikes then bounced up on his kicking Qrow squarely in the chest sending him tumbling back.

Ruby saw Qrow’s Aura flare and launched herself forward covering him, switching Crescent Rose to war form and launching a series of jabs as Tyrian. The faunus blocked two but caught a sniper round to the face on the third. It sent him flying back into a derelict house, that then fell on him.

Qrow stumbled to his feet a hand to his chest, his dark red Aura breaking with a flicking crackle. Tyrian came flying out of the house his Aura flickering purple as it fell. The two clashed with a thunderous boom and Ruby swung in from the side.

Qrow leapt up over Ruby’s strike, she only just managed to stop before hitting Qrow. He landed on Crescent Rose and kicked Qrow in the head, causing the man to stumble back dazed. He launched himself off of Crescent Rose as Ruby tried to shift her weapon to war form, with his tail he knocked Ruby back then lunged for Qrow.

Qrow blocked the blade for his head twisting to the side, but missed Tyrian’s stinger till it was too late.

“Gaa!” Qrow gasped his eyes widening as the stinger cut through his abs, he only just managed to keep ahold of his sword.

Ruby didn’t hesitate, she threw Crescent Rose in war form and impaled the faunus, through the lower back.
Tyrian screamed as the blade cut through him, though only a few centimeters came out his front. Crescent Rose fell out of him with a squelch as he stumbled forward grabbing his gut, blood pouring from the wound.

Ruby raced forward grabbing Crescent Rose, switching it back to standard and swinging for his head.

Tyrian blocked the blade with his wrist blades and lashed out with his tail at the same moment whacking Ruby in the stomach. Her Aura failed utterly and she heard a crunch she guessed were her ribs.

Ruby tumbled to the ground with a high cry, as the rest of the team rushed towards Tyrian, the faunus wrapped his tail tight around his stomach and backed away with a pained snarl. “She’ll forgive you.” He took of running before the rest of the team could attack him.

“Ruby.” Qrow took a step towards her before falling to a knee dropping Harbinger and pressing a hand to his poisoned side.

Jaune raced over to help him stand, grabbing him by the back and putting Qrow’s free arm over his shoulder. “Nora help me, Ren can you manage Ruby? We need to get out of here before the Grimm come.”

“Yeah.” Ren grabbed Crescent Rose and collapsed it put it in Ruby’s lap and picked her up bridal style. She groaned pain flaring through her stomach she tried to force her eyes open to wake, but she hurt so much.

Nora raced over to Qrow’s free side, and after grabbing Harbinger they took off at the fastest run Qrow’s gut wound would allow.

Nora wrapped up Ruby while Ren helped Qrow with this wound, Jaune paced back and forth. “You gonna tell us what is going on?” He asked. “How did Ruby know someone would come for her? How did you know? How did you get there so fast? What’s going on?”

Qrow grunted as Ren tightened the bandaged one last time. “Ruby is a Silver eyed Warrior, the stories go that they are the best of the best, that one look from a silver eyes can kill Grimm. That is why Ozpin decided to teach her personally. She painted a target on her back the moment she used her power back at Beacon.” He looked over to where she was softly sleeping on her bag. “But she’s got no control and is too much of a threat for Salem to ignore. So yeah, Ruby has known that she’d be a target for over a year now.” He took a drink from his flask.

“Why didn’t she tell us?” Nora asked, sitting down beside Ruby.

Ruby groggily woke up, her Aura coming back quickly now. “What was I supposed to say? Hey I have a some ancient power that I’ve only used once and the big bad evil person that I can’t tell you about might decide to collect my eyes for trophies? Yeah that would have gone down well.” Pain was making her sarcastic, Qrow really did rub off on her. She took a deep breath and focused her Aura on her ribs, she could feel them rapidly healing.

Qrow chuckled and pulled out his flask and took a sip, his gut was burning.

Jaune growled at them both. “How did you get here so fast?”
Ruby sat up and waved Nora off, “I’m fine.” she got up and sat on Qrow’s good side. “He’s been protecting us since we left Patch, you didn’t honestly think the lack of Grimm we’ve seen was a coincidence?” She shifted over and rested her head on his shoulder and visibly relaxed.

“Then why not just travel with us?” Nora asked, getting up to add a log to their fire.

Qrow said, wrapping an arm around Ruby and pulling her against him. “Did you know that crows are a sign of bad luck? Old superstition, but it's how I got my name. See, some people can absorb electricity and some people can burst into rose petals and some people are just born unlucky. My Semblance isn't like most - it's not exactly something I do. It's always there, whether I like it or not. I bring misfortune.” He chuckled bitterly. “I guess you could call me a bad luck charm. Comes in real handy when I'm fighting an enemy, but it makes it a little hard on friends… and loved ones.” He rested his head against Ruby’s.

“Well, you are just a big bundle of help, aren’t you.” Jaune said angrily sitting down heavily on a log.

Ruby glared at him and got up stalking over to him and pointing to his face. “Shut UP! You have NO idea! He’s been through more than you could even comprehend. It’s not his fault he was born with an unlucky Semblance and for the record it doesn’t seem to affect me, it’s for YOU he stayed away.” She stormed away and sat back beside Qrow.

Qrow smiled softly to her, he hadn’t guessed she’d defend him so strongly, he kissed the crown of her head. “Thank you.” He said softly.

Ruby purred and snuggled into his side, setting her head on his chest and leaning up to kiss his throat. Qrow purred softly, her kiss was a welcome distraction from the pain in his gut.

Jaune grumbled and looked away.

Ren softly asked. “Why doesn’t his Semblance affect you?”

Ruby spoke softly only moving her lips away from Qrow’s neck marginally. “While I was training with Ozpin we figured out that emotions and familiarity with a person, can affect how their Semblances affects the person.”

“We are very close.” Qrow said reaching out and running a hand through her hair. “We share a… bond, she can carry me with easily in her Semblance and nothing bad ever seems to happen to her.” His eyes drifted closed as Ruby started kissing his neck again.

“Ruby could you stop that?” Jaune asked, her actions were making him blush.

Ruby flipped him the bird, then used the hand to pet the other side of Qrow’s neck.

Nora giggled, Qrow smiled and said. “Think of it as a painkiller kid, we all have our ticks, one of mine is my neck. Speaking of pain, how are your ribs?” He addressed Ruby.

“Fixed.” Ruby mumbled against his neck, pressing another kiss to it. “I’ve gotten good at moving my Aura around. You?”

Qrow grunted at her hand drifted down to his wound. “Poisoned I think, my Aura is focused on it but…”

He felt Ruby’s Aura flare as she started to push it into his wound, he grabbed her hand and pulled it away. “No. At least give yourself some time first.”
Ruby drew away from his neck. “But!”

“I’ll be fine, I’m not going out that easy.” He kissed her forehead again and glanced up spotting a Raven in the tree, he glared at it. He wasn’t looking forward to that conversation, he could practically hear her now. *Your fucking Summer’s daughter you sick pervert!* He got up and Ruby moved with him, wordlessly helping him out as they slowly made their way away from the campsite.

The other three let them go in silence and didn’t say a word when Ruby came back and retrieved her sleeping bag.

“Qrow? Qrow? QROW!”

Ruby’s panicked shouts roused the rest of the team and they came racing over, to find Ruby shaking Qrow’s shoulders trying to wake him up. Purple fluid was dribbling from his lips and his eyes were closed.

They didn’t know what to do when Ruby yanked open Qrow’s shirt and ripped the purple stained bandages away. “Stupid, stupid!” Ruby shouted pulling the wound open and wrinkling her nose at the stink, she would see how the caustic poison was eating away at his flesh.

Ren raced back to camp and grabbed his water bottle, then came rushing back. He knelt on the other side of Qrow and poured some of it over the wound and Ruby’s hands clearing the purple away.

They could see tears in Ruby’s eyes. “He should have let me look at this last night. I’m gonna heal him, but you have to wash the poison away as I go.”

“Right.” Ren nodded though he no idea how she intended to help him.

Ruby closed her eyes and envisioned her circle of Aura, she arched her back slightly pressing on Qrow’s flesh and reached out of his. She didn’t see the Aura physically flare up on their skins but even unconscious Qrow’s Aura welcomed her in. She used its currents to flow through his body and find the poison, then used her Aura to start pushing it out.

Nora and Jaune turned green when purple gushed up from the gut wound and Qrow groaned sweat collecting on his face. Ren bit his lip and poured more water over the wound, but it kept turning purple. “Jaune go get the rest of our water bottles, Nora go find a stream or something.”

The pair rushed off to their tasks and Ren kept a slow flow over wound, purple quickly saturated the ground below Qrow.

It was everywhere, it had traveled through his organs, to his lungs. His Aura had been trying to purge it there causing him to cough but it wasn’t enough. Ruby was overwhelmed but she refused to be beaten, she shifted to work with his Aura, it was less exhausting.

Qrow convulsed coughing and Ren tipped him to the side careful to not disrupt Ruby, purple splattered the ground as Qrow coughed the poison up.

Ruby didn’t notice when she started to feel cold and empty, when her Aura faded and faded. Just as Qrow finally stopped coughing and red pulsed from his wound rather than purple did his eyes slowly open. He saw the last flickers of Aura from Ruby, before she crumpled as if her strings has been cut.

He could feel her Aura twist inside of him as she fell to the ground beside him, “Ruby!” He reached
“Wait!” Ren stopped him pouring the last of his water over Qrow’s hands clearing away the poison.

Jaune stood to the side with three other water bottles, he gave them to Ren and went over to Ruby, pressing a finger to her wrist feeling for a pulse.

Qrow slumped back on the ground letting Ren wash away the poison, Ruby’s Aura felt strange inside of him, it was hard to tell what was hers and what was his. He could feel his work on absorbing it and the wound slowly healed over to Rens amazement he sat up.

He pulled off his poison stained shirt and wrinkled nose at the equally ruined cape. Well he had been needing a new one for a while now anyway. After discarding both he reached for Ruby, she was as cold as ice.

“I’m getting a pulse, but why is she so cold?” Jaune asked.

Qrow shifted getting to his feet and picked Ruby up. “We need to move. Burn those please.” He nodded at his shirt and Ren nodded. “Jaune the sleeping bags.”

Jaune nodded, he again didn’t know what was going on but they hadn’t gotten far last night and with all the emotions being thrown around they needed to move to stay ahead of the Grimm.

Qrow set a brutal pace for them after they refilled their water bottles, it was almost a flat out run. They kept to the roads and the teens wondered how in the world Qrow could run while carrying Ruby but he didn’t appear to have any problems. What they didn’t know was that Qrow had been working on isolating Ruby’s Aura from his own, he needed to give it back but he didn’t dare till they were good and far from any Grimm.

Qrow only let them make camp when the sun had disappeared and they were too exhausted to keep moving.

He set Ruby down and checked her temperature again. She was still frozen and her lips had blued slightly, a check of her pulse told him that it was still going slow but strong. He bowed his head and pursed his lips, he needed to give her Aura back but he wasn’t going to do that with an audience.

Qrow picked her up again and started to move away from the camp.

“Hey where are you going?!” Jaune moved towards Qrow, he still didn’t trust the man as far as he could throw him.

The red eyed man glared the youth down. “I’m going to help her and I won’t do so with an audience.”

Jaune opened his mouth to speak again but Ren raised a hand silencing him.

Qrow walked away from the campfire, making his way through the trees so he could still see the camp but far enough away that the Ren, Jaune and Nora would have a tough time seeing him. He picked a large pine and sat at its roots kneeling in the ground, he held Ruby tightly to his chest. Her red cloak wrapped tight around her, she was pale, so pale with dark circles under her eyes. He pulled off his backpack, sword and flask, they were a distraction he didn't need.

“Oh Ruby..” Qrow whispered blinking tears from his eyes as he kissed her temple. He shifted the young woman around in his arms so she was propped up by just one of his arms so he was free to touch with the other.
He bowed his head and rested his forehead to hers, cupped her cheek with his free hand. He called up the Aura given to him, with every passing moment it dwindled and felt less like Ruby and more like him. Qrow was struck with a bout of nerves, what if he messed it up and lost her? He wasn’t good at this, he didn’t ever do it, this was Oz’s area. He looked at the rose in her hair, the present he and oz had made for her, the green shined softly and he took hope from that.

Tears pricked at his eyes and he called up all the Aura he could, and kissed Ruby's' lips, it was a chaste kiss. The kind a prince would use to wake up their sleeping beauty, and through it he let the Aura flow. It hurt so much more than being grazed by Tyrian, it was like someone was tearing his heart out. He let out a sob, his tears falling on Ruby's face, the only pain that came close to this was what he felt when he thought Oz had died.

Ruby’s eyes fluttered opened, she felt Aura returning to her, felt the tears on her face and Qrows’ warm soft lips. She reached up and mirrored him cupping his cheek, she broke the kiss with a turn of her head and the exchange of aura stopped as well.

Qrows’ eyes snapped open and he let out a soft sob of relief, he rested his forehead to hers and said voice thick with pain and worry. “Never do that again.”

“You were dying.” Ruby said softly, wiping a tear away.

“You’ almost died.” His arms tightened around her and he drew her up so she could sit better in his lap. “There is a reason Ozpin doesn’t teach healing, you gave too much away, you.” His throat closed and he squeezed his eyes shut.

Ruby wrapped her arms around him and held him tight. “I’m okay, really. I’m sorry I scared you, I just didn’t think, I just didn’t know what else to do.”

Qrow lifted her up and kissed her firmly. “Just don’t ever do it again.” He whispered harshly, his arms tightened around her.

The silver eyed warrior wanted to tell him that she’d do it again, as many times as he needed it. That she needed him just as much as he needed her, but she could feel it in how desperately he was holding her. Such a declaration of love was not what they needed right now, instead she leaned in and kissed him, deepening it quickly and grinding her core to his crotch. “Muninn.” She injected what she felt into the sent thought.

He broke the kiss and said quietly. “Your friends, they’ll hear.”

Ruby reached between them and undid his belt. “Let them, I don’t care.” She leaned up and kissed him again, teasing his lip with her tongue.

Qrow groaned and parted his lips, sliding his tongue into her mouth moaning softly at her taste. A hand slid down her back and under her skirt, he hooked her panties with two fingers and ripped them off of her.

Ruby moaned softly into the kiss, grabbing his shoulder with one hand she unzipped his fly pushed his pants out of the way, pulled his member out of its' confines and started to stroke it with a tight grip. She jerked and let out a soft yelp, when he pushed two fingers roughly inside of her.

Qrow broke the kiss and raised her up higher so he can kiss her neck, she gripped him tightly as she felt his hot breath against her neck. “Need you.” He rasped harshly, rubbing the pads of his fingers over her sweet spot, feeling her get wetter and wetter around them. He bit her neck gently, needed to feel her, needed to know they were okay. Ruby felt his emotions radiating through the
bond, fear, love, longing.

She let go of his member and wove both hands into his hair. “Then move your fingers and have me.” She said breathlessly, she had felt it too, he almost died today, had almost been taken from her. Ruby moaned loudly when he did just as she ordered, teasing her just a few more times. He removed his fingers, lined her up and pulled her down swiftly on his member. She arched in his arms crying out at the sudden action. As he held her tight, groaned against her neck, closing his eyes and pressing kisses to it.

Qrow shifted drawing her hood up and putting her on her back, he shoved his pants lower as she let her legs fall open. Ruby pulled him down and kissed him again aggressively, it quickly devolved into tongue and teeth. Till Qrow pulled back and drove in sharply with great strength, his control forsaken in this frenzy.

Ruby cried out at the hard thrust, breaking the kiss and letting her head fall back. Qrow tilted his head to kiss and bite at her throat while her hands grabbed at his bare shoulders, she could feel the muscles tight under her hands. At her sweet cries Qrow quickly fell into a harsh sharp pounding rhythm, a hand grabbed her hip while the other wove tight into her hair.

“More.” Ruby moaned out her head falling to the side letting Qrow bite at her neck. Her hands raked down his back, leaving long red welts. She could feel the strong muscles of his back work and pulled at his butt. His actions hurt, but it was a good pain it, mixed with the pleasure driving her higher. She cried out with every brutal thrust from him, the pleasure grew rapidly, he had never done this before and it excited her.

Qrow groaned and bit down so hard it bruised and did as she asked. Neither of them cared at the noise they were making, or that Ruby would be bruised in the morning with a purple handprint on her ass. Neither noticed the Raven in the tree, or when the clouds started to gather.

Ruby dragged her hands up his back her nails adding to the red welts, grabbing him just under his shoulder blades, her nails digging into his back. She keened with every harsh thrust, she hooked her legs over his waist and drew him to her harder in time with this his movements. The sharp shocks of pleasure consumed Ruby as he started to grunt above her desperately pursuing that blissful finish.

Qrow pulled away from her neck, teeth scraping the sensitive skin and kissed her again dominating her with every action. She parted her lips and let him drive his tongue within her mouth, sliding it over hers with a moan.

Ruby kneeled and tightened her legs around his waist yanking him to her as she came. Qrow couldn’t help but follow at the feel of her tight walls squeezing him, he groaned softly and tightened his hold on her as he spilled his seed deep within her. They both panted for a moment not near sated, red eyes met silver and they kissed again. As they did Ruby let go of his shoulders and undid the clasp holding her cloak in place. She pulled away and said quickly. “Too many clothes.”

That was an idea that Qrow could get on board for he pulled out and lurched to his feet, toeing off his shoes and ripping off his pants.

Ruby had a tougher time getting through her clothes, her fingers rapidly pulled at her corset strings and in no time at all Qrow was back helping her. They had just managed to loosen them enough that they would come undone when he yanked the corset from her skin. He devoured her lips again, pulling off her shirt with equal vigour. She moaned when he forced her back and ran his hands over her chest and sides, before breaking the kiss and moving down to get her boots off. He left the tights, they wouldn’t hinder them and he had much more pressing things he wanted to do.
Qrow ran his hands slowly up her thighs, taking the time to feel her smooth skin, he pressed her legs together and pulled her skirt from her. Not seeing the bruise he had left earlier, Ruby pulled him back up by his chin and kissed him briefly, before sliding a hand to his shoulder and pushing.

Qrow rolled them over, making sure to land on Ruby’s cloak. Ruby straddled him and took his cock in hand lining up again, much more slowly this time she lowered herself onto him. She grabbed his pectorals and arched her back letting out a long moan in time with a crash of thunder, neither cared. Her nails let little crescents on his chest as she let gravity help her and eased her way down onto him. She closed her eyes a bit her lip letting out a little pleased hmm.

The red eyed man grabbed her hips tightly and started to rock up into her. Ruby took the hint and started to grind, rocking her hips while flexing and rolling her stomach. Qrow growled softly as her walls tightened and rippled around him, his hands tightened on her hips leaving bruises. Neither noticed or cared, Ruby had her eyes shut as she all but danced in his lap and he only had eyes for her face.

“Uoohhh.” Ruby moaned finding an angle she liked and forcing herself down in sharp thrusts, he was pushing up against her sweet soft just so. Her breath started to deepen as her eyes slid open to look at him, the hardness of him within her was only matched by the steely hunger in his eyes. Curious she racked her hands down his chest, her nails cutting into his skin, she barely saw him move.

Qrow flipped them, her slow movements teased and tested him. Ruby fell on her back with an “Ooof.” While Qrow grabbed her feet and threw them over his shoulders, he pinned her hips in place with on hand and braced himself with his free hand.

Ruby howled in time with another thunderous boom from the sky and Qrow hammered into her, his lips pulled back in a slight snarl. He loved watching her breasts bounce with each thrust, they had gotten bigger in the near year they hadn’t been able to be together full and finally matured. He had worshipped them last night, now as not the time for such actions.

The silver eyed woman tried to brace herself against the ground move to push in him harder, faster. Qrow growled in earnest and leaned forward, forcing her hips up exposing her yet more to him. Ruby shifted her legs so she could get at his neck and pulled him down the back of his neck with both hands while leaning up.

Qrow groaned when her teeth found his neck and bit down hard enough to bruise. His hand moved from the ground to her hair holding her tightly in place as he threw his weight behind his pounding drives. He could feel her scream against his neck but could only snarl when her teeth moved and she bit down again and again. His neck quickly became a patchwork of little crescent bites, Ruby moved away from his neck and pulled him down to kiss again.

They moaned into it, meeting as equals within it, finishing together bodies pressed as tightly as was physically possible. The storm quieted from its thunderous crashing and slowly dissipated as Qrow calmed. They enjoyed several more long calm kisses before gathering up their clothes and returning to camp.

Chapter End Notes

AN: Ozpin: “First I whip it out. Then I thru-.” Le sigh, right no spoilers…
Kry: Nooo don’t stop it there, it was just getting interesting *makes grabby hands*
Ozpin: *phone rings* Sigh, *slams foot on the table and catches phone lazily.*
Ardy: I am totally blaming Beast for this, I won’t take responsibility.
Kry: Boohoo! Beasty I’m gonna get you and you Ardy! *runs off*
Ardy: *cranks knuckles* My fight scene brain has been fueled up. That said thank you too: Silenaislife, darkvampirekisses, Bucky_Barnes and Sportsfangirl815.
Kry: *yells from afar* Thanks for the support! Have a fab read!
Ardy: Get the reference and maybe I’ll hand out a spoiler or two.
Ozpin sat out on the deck in the freezing air, he wore no shirt as he studied the scars from Nito. They weren’t obvious on his already battered hide, he had half a mind to trade in for a new model when the opportunity arouse. It was only the thought of relearning just about everything that stayed his hand. He shuddered violently at the thought, the time after a ‘rebirth’ was some of the worst periods in his many lives. He ran his hand over his left forearm, the flesh seemed whole and new. Not even a scar from where he got slimmed and yet… it was a little colder than the skin around it as well as a dull ache within it.

With a hum he reached over and pulled on a black sleeveless dress shirt. After which he picked up the light black thick pauldron of his new armour. It still amazed him how perfect it was, he put it on his shoulder and it molded to his skin. He pulled the strap tight across his chest, again it was a new feeling but he liked the feeling of armour. It scratched some itch deep in the back of his mind. Bit by bit he put on the metal plates, each molding to him and growing warm. Lastly he pulled the gauntlet on, it clicked into the rest of the amour sealing around his arm. He lifted his hand and wiggled his fingers, he liked that the gauntlets ended in claws. He could think of many uses for those. He grabbed the heavy cloak that was Naga’s last gift and clipped it into the rest of the armour.

The tall man stood and rolled his shoulders, it felt good to be moving around again. The months sleeping supported by Naga left him feeling lethargic much of the day. Oz stretched each arm behind his back.

Weiss came up onto the deck and abruptly stopped. She could see every hard line of Oz’s body, the muscle of his shoulders to the black combat boots. She swallowed thickly, she would never imagined just what Ozpin had hidden under all those layers at school. Well she had seen it before now, but when he was fucking Ruby’s brains out it hardly counted. Her eyes were drawn to the black armour on his left arm, it was like the metal absorbed all light.

“Hello Ozpin. You’re up late.” Weiss said walking over and sitting on a box. She looked up at the black sky, at first when she had awoken she thought it was early. She had to check her Scroll before seeing it was near noon, the sky was just threatening to let the heavens open upon them.

“Still not back to a hundred percent. I was hurt for a while, I’m still healing in many ways.” Ozpin reached behind his back and pulled out his sword, tapping the trigger to extend the blade. He looked up at the sky. “I’ve something Qrow and I used to do for fun. Now seems like as good a time to see if I can still do it as any.”

As if on cue the sky’s opened and rain poured down. Even Weiss could barely see Ozpin move, mostly she just saw a green blur.

Ozpin stepped, cut and sliced in clear arcs around him. His Aura clung to his skin as he sliced through the very raindrops themselves. He and Qrow used to do this to train their Aura’s, the goal was to cut every rain drop before it the ground… A whole lot harder than it sounded. He paused for
the barest instant, legs splayed in a wide stance both hands on his sword. Water fell all around him in a splash. His chest heaved as the exertion settled into his bones.

“Wow.” Weiss stared at him with wide eyes. She had never ever heard of someone moving so fast as to cut rain, she knew Winter couldn’t do it… or James.

“Heh.” Ozpin smirked and reached up slicking his bangs out of his face. “You haven’t seen anything yet Ice Princess.”

Weiss scowled at him. “Last I checked Qrow wasn’t here.” With his hair out of his face he looked no older than her, it made her heart flutter.

“He and I could do that and spar with each other.” Ozpin gestured to the sky with his sword. He looked at her the rain gathering on her coat. “We should go inside before you catch a cold.” He clicked his sword and scabbard it back on his hip. Ozpin turned on his heel his cloak sweeping out behind him.

Weiss could only think. Badass… with a nice ass. She walked up beside and he waited for her by the door, she glanced at his abs as she walked by. The rain had gotten his shirt wet and it was sticking to them. Clean thoughts Weiss, what would Ruby do… wait no don’t go there!

Weiss bit her lip as Oz closed the door behind her. The hallway suddenly seemed very small with just the two of them.

“Have you had anything to eat?” Ozpin asked.

“Uh no, I was surprised by the time and decided to come out onto the deck first.” Weiss said following Oz to the mess hall.

“I’ll get some stew, I’ve a few question for you.” Ozpin headed off to the kitchen.

Weiss found a corner that had seating for two. A minute later Ozpin returned and handed her a bowl and spoon before sitting down across from her. He slid the chair back and stretch out his legs holding his bowl with his armoured hand. Weiss guessed he couldn’t feel the heat. “So what do you want to know about?”

“Just what has been going on in the world? I read what I could off my Scroll when we came into the range of Atla’s CCT but there was only so much I could read.” Ozpin sipped directly from his bowl. Old memories stirred, days when he didn’t worry about being so polite all the time. Old mashed together personality aspects from yet older lives. He resisted the urge to put his feet on the table to further stretch.

“Well Huntsmen have been going missing and three of the bandit tribes are making bids for Mistral. Dust is getting more and more expensive. It’s… a real mess.” Weiss stirred her stew.

“Hmm.” Ozpin ate several big bites of stew, he was having a craving for pizza for some strange reason. “The bandits could prove problematic, I’ve a great deal to do in Mistral.”

“Find Cinder? If she’s even there?” Weiss asked.

“She’ll be there, Mistral is a logical target after Vale. It’s got the weakest defences and the White Fang under it’s roof seeing as she’s already worked with the White Fang once.” He ate more of his stew and drank the remains. “It’s just the intelligent route to take.” He tossed his bowl onto the table and kicked his feet up, putting his hands behind his head. “The only question is how she will attack. With the Fall Maiden power back all in one place…” Oz purred. “Ripping it out of her is going to be so satisfying.”
Weiss was surprised by how casual his actions had become, yet the bowl had fallen perfectly. He seemed a bit off to her, she decided against say anything about it and instead asked. “You can do that? Take the power Cinder has back? James explained the Maidens to me.”

“Yup, Fall’s powers were split before which was way I just didn’t pull them out of Amber. Now that it’s all in one place,” Ozpin smirked a corner of his mouth turning up. “Next time Cinder and I meet there will be nothing to hold back.”

“I hope I get to see it.” Weiss said.

Ozpin got up, memories kept pulling at his mind. “I’m gonna go meditate. Catch you later.” He saluted to Weiss before walking off in a sweep of cloak.

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“This is gonna be fun.” The Keeper looked over the expanse before him. Shambling corpses groaned and screamed at him.

He jumped into the air spreading wings of shadow. He landed with a boom in the horde, sweeping the wings out cutting those around him into ribbons with a little spin. He called the wings back into his body racing forward, a snap of his fingers and a huge claymore of a skeletal design appeared in his hand. The undead exploded into raining bits with the force he used to cut them apart.

The huge man blasted forth racing for an square towering obelisk in the distance, it was at least twenty meters tall. A chasm opened up between him and it, he leapt straight into the air soaring above the clawing masses of bodies writhing their way out of the pit. He landed on the other side and summoned glowing white Glyph scythes into his hands. He spun and danced his way through the hordes cleaving the zombies into bits. “All this for me! It’s really to much, I didn’t know you cared!” He dropped to the ground on his back, catching himself on his hands then spinning around kicking the heads off of zombies as he surged to his feet.

The Gate glowed and the middle of the stone split open in blue energy ice poured through. Huge claws pushed their way through and grabbed the edges of the gate forcing it open. A dragon undead and scaled in grey forced it’s body through and ROARED. It thundered out of the White Void of Rymgrand.

“HEY NERISCYRLAS UP FOR ROUND TWO?” The Keeper shouted, summoning his sword back into his hands.

“INSOLENT WORM!” The Litch Dragon yelled straight into his mind.

“Really after all this time you couldn’t come up with anything better?” The Keeper dodged and wove through the undead, blasting pass them in a wave of carnage in seconds.

Neriscyrlas charged forward summoning magic into her hands. The Glyphs screamed in protest in The Keeper’s mind. She roared out a way of decay and death turning her own soldiers into dust trying to blast The Keeper but he was already gone. She looked around and then felt a weight on her tail.

The Keeper sat on it looking over his sword. The white Glyphs flowed fluidly over his face. “And here I thought you had already forgotten about me. With you’re advanced age and all…”
“ANT!” Neriscyrlas’s flicked her tail only for The Keeper to jump and fly elegantly through the air. He landed perfectly his black tailed coat twisting unnaturally like it had a life of his own. “You know, you could just stay in the White Void. Cause I’m just gonna send your ass straight back there.” He drawled summoning a blue spear with a snap of his fingers.

Neriscyrlas chose not to answers only bring her fists together and slamming them down on him. The Keeper wiped his claymore up, catching her fists on the flat, blocking the blow with ease. He sighed. “The big ones never learn.”

The large man spun away and swept his hand up firing the spear out, followed by three more all straight into the dragon’s face. It screamed and slashed out blindly a wave of jagged ice blasting up from the ground. The Keeper jumped back and Neriscyrlas grinned summoning more ice in the same moment right behind him.

A huge spike of ice drove straight through The Keeper’s chest. He looked down at it and sighed. “Really?” He reached behind him and grabbed the shaft of the ice and pushed himself slowly off of it. The wound in his chest gushed black blood and sealed in seconds. “That is so old.”

He jumped up into the sky summoning spears of Glyph magic raining them down on the dragon who screamed in mindless rage. He spun in the air another Glyph forming under his feet, it glowed gold and he blasted off it ramming his shoulder straight into the open maw of the dragon’s chest. She screamed as her back it the open gate. He kicked off her of causing the massive creature to stumble back. Another elegant spin in the air landing on another Glyph mid air.

“See this why you should stop trying.” He tossed his arms out wide, the white key Glyph on the back of his left hand burned bright white. “As much as I find a good fight makes life more interesting. I’ve got better things to do.” The Keeper smirked and extend his left hand forward and snapped his fingers.

Javelins several meters long fired in a continuous wave from his hand. Impaling the dragon and turning it into a pin cushion. She screamed in pained rage. “Yeah yeah.” The Keeper jumped off his Glyph and slammed his foot into the centre of her chest upon one of the javelins, it burst out of her back in a spray of dried blood and she fell back into the Gate it sucking her in.

The Keeper landed on the ground and jogged over putting his left hand on the obelisk and the white gate shut returning it to black stone. The army of undead fell like marionettes with their strings cut. He turned away from the stone and looked over the battlefield and let out a tried sigh. Again he raised his left hand and SNAP. At the snap of his fingers the bodies turned to ash and dissolved into the ground.

With a sigh he let go of The Keepers form, the ever change Glyphs upon his skin sank into it and vanished. The black covering him oozed away, his skin revealing to be a light tan, his hair cut short and white. The coat turned a dark red.

He summoned his steel sword into his hand and scabbard it upon his back walking away. “Well that was fun.”

When he was about half a kilometer away he looked back at the gate and hummed. “I know this thing is a major cultural artifact.” He pulled his sword from his back. “But it’s bad for the community.” He slashed his sword out in unified arcs, force blasting from it. Then turned away and put the heavy blade back on his back. Behind him nothing happened for a long pregnant pause, then the obelisk parted the top half sliding smoothly off and crashing into the dirt sending up a wave of dirt.
The Keeper glanced back over his shoulder and smirked flicking his head to get his bangs out of his face.

Ozpin lurched back into the present day, a hand went to his temple as he stared unseeing down.
“What the hell was that?”

“That was The Keeper.” Garrett manifested leaning on the table in Oz’s room.

“What?” Ozpin asked completely confused.

Garrett rolled his eyes and tilted his head rocking it into his other socket. “You didn’t honestly think carrying something like The Eye in your body leaves you the same way you were before? The Glyphs don’t normally get involved, but when they do. Well you saw.”

“Who was that? I’ve don’t remember being him.” Ozpin said.

“He is… complicated” Garrett said with a smirk.

“You’re not going to tell me are you?” Ozpin stood and glared at the other entity.

“Ha, no. It’s been fun watching him become a part of your present day self. I’m just gonna sit back.” Garrett smirked and vanished.

Ozpin rubbed his temple with a hand. “What a dick.” The tall man sat on the back onto the bed with a flop, why was he so exhausted after just letting a memory play out? Oz yawned and stretched shifting over to rest on his side. A short nap wouldn’t hurt.

Weiss paced back and forth across the deck, the night air was crisp and she wore her thickest dress and cloak but nothing else. Her hair was free and the wind picked it up and set it dancing like leaping flames. She couldn’t sleep it had been near four months since they left Mantle, she missed James. She ached for him, to be close to him, to touch and kiss, to make love too.

Yes Weiss Schnee was horny and no amount of touching seemed to make it go away, so back and forth she went trying to walk the sexual energy off.

Oz rubbed his head as he stumbled out onto the deck, something had happened to Qrow and Ruby, he could feel it. He wasn’t sure how he felt it but he had noticed their Aura’s leaking through the ring with emotions that while grounded in love and lust, but they were volatile and painful. Something had happened, something bad but they were alright now, just left him with a raging hard on that he was getting tired of dealing with alone. Harkness was looking mighty fine in that moment but something had called him on deck. He stopped mid stride seeing Weiss, he could tell from where he was standing she was in the boat as him.

Weiss shivered gathering her cloak more tightly around her and looking up to the sky, it was so clear that the stars didn’t waver in the sky. The crisp air went right through her dress, the leggings helped but she was quietly cursing her utter hatred of pants. A warm familiar voice spoke out from behind her.
“Shouldn’t you be in bed?” Ozpin asked walking up and standing beside her following her gaze up to the sky.

Weiss looked over to him and smiled, he had chosen to sound like his old self and it was calming in a way she couldn’t quite put her finger on. “Probably, but I just can’t sleep Professor.”

“Missing James?” He asked casually leaning on the rail.

Weiss bit her lip, he had that cocky laissez faire posture that she was used to seeing on James right before he fucked her. She blushed. “Yes.”

Oz watched her shiver for a moment, the blush creeping up her pale skin having nothing to do with the cold. “I can sympathize.”

“Qrow and Ruby?” Weiss asked, having seen the three in action, she couldn't imagine what it was like to be apart for so long. The deck was oddly warm under her feet, so beyond the wind she was quite comfy. He moved standing up and moving to half embrace her drawing his cloak around her and offering his chest. “Yes.”

Ohh he was warm, Weiss snuggled into his chest, she missed the feel of a firm male chest. In her frustrated state, her brain started to look at Oz in a way it hadn't before, which was to say, he was the same height as James, very strong, handsome. She tried to shoot down these thoughts, she would ignore this damn itch, even though she knew she couldn’t deal with it on her own. “Is he going to Mistral too?” She asked, resting her head in the middle of his chest.

“He and Ruby,” He thumbed his ring, it was warm but there was no other flare of emotions, he guessed they were sleeping. “I think something happened, but they seem to be alright now.”

Weiss wondered how he knew that, but then this was the Headmaster, he probably had abilities she couldn’t even dream off.

They stood in silence for several long minutes Weiss enjoying the warmth and feel of him, she was just so lonely, she missed James, missed his unique brand of wake up calls, the way he laughed. The utterly shit disturbing grin he wore when he wanted to teach her something new. Her core throbbed and leaked at these thoughts, they were only making her problem worse.

“Why are you really out here Miss Schnee?” Ozpin asked, she was doing a rather odd cycle of relaxing and tensing in his arms.

Weiss bit her lip, did she tell the truth? “I’ve got that, feeling you know, when you just need someone too…”

Oz smiled looking out over the still ocean, he knew that feeling very well, it was why he was out here. He had almost gone to Harkness but something had drawn him to the deck. “The chief engineer, Harkness, he’d be happy to help you with that.”

Weiss shook her head, “Sex with someone I don’t know doesn’t interest me.”

It was Oz’s turn to pause, he had a thought, dare he offer? He’d woken up so bloody hard even Naga started to look fuckable and it would be nice to have a woman, he hadn’t touched a one since Ruby. This could potentially solve both their problems, warily he asked. “Would I be more agreeable? I find myself up here for the same reason.”

Weiss brow shot upwards, did Professor Ozpin just admit to being randy, while holding her? She did know him, not well but well enough to have some idea of his character. She weighed his offer in
her mind, he wasn’t James but she and James hadn’t talked. She didn’t know if James wanted her to herself, she hadn’t brought it up and she had this damn ache between her legs. It seemed to think letting Ozpin inside of her was the perfect solution. “Okay.” She said softly.

He hadn’t thought she’d say yes, he looked down at her his brain trying to figure out what to do first. “Do you want to go inside? Are you protected?” The deck was empty, the weather was so calm there wasn’t even anyone at the helm.

Weiss shook her head, turned so her back was to him and parted her legs, tilting her hips back and upward. “I’m on the pills, I’m clean and I like it out here.”

Oz grinned, she was presenting herself, **Ohhh boy, James has taught you well.** He slid his hands over to her hips and started to gather up her dress, shifting it so it was hanging before her and between her legs, protecting her from any gusts of wind. He folded the last of it up under the belt of her skirt and ran his fingers along a pale white butt cheek, no panties, James had definitely trained her well. The muscles flexed under his touch, she was slight and muscled he guessed she had found some way to train with James. He drew a finger down between her legs and slid it through her seeping core.

Weiss bit her lip muffling the little moan, his hands were rougher than James’s, fingers longer. She could feel him chuckle slightly as he stepped back slightly, pressing three fingers through her folds the middle one tracing back and forth of the pearl of her sex. “Someone's eager.” She heard him rumble behind her, heard the soft click of his belt being undone. She held her chin up and tilted her hips back a little more. “What can I say Professor? I’ve been thinking about this for a while.”

Oz removed his fingers and and moved his pants out of the way, taking himself in hand he stroked twice, they really had been getting uncomfortable. He liked being called Professor, no one had called him that as he fucked them in ages. Smirking as he grabbed her hips and lined up lifting her slightly, Weiss grabbed the railing it warmed her hands and leaned on it so her legs wouldn’t have to support her, she stood on the tips of her toes it helped but he was still very tall. She bit back the yelp as he pushed inside, a long steady smooth stroke half way, then he paused and rocked giving her a moment to adjust, then shifting his grip and driving the rest of the way inside. They let out a mutual moan as their hips met, Weiss panted softly, he was maybe a little longer than James with a more pointed head, but James had greater girth and a round head. At least that was what Weiss thought she could feel as her insides squeezed him, delighted to finally have something to squeeze.

“Are you alright Miss Schnee?” Oz asked through a deep breath or two of his own. She was much quicker to adapt than most were, but then James had been her first lover and they weren’t so different. His memories of Ruby danced behind his eyes as he admired her pale behind, their skin tones were near the same though Ruby had a much more voluptuous behind. Though he would admit the skinnier look of Weiss was very nice as well.

Weiss smiled, this was a game she had played with James, “Yes Professor, could you please move?” and moaned when she felt his member throb when she called him professor.

**Holy hells, I’m buying you a keg of White Wolf James.** Oz drew back slowly teasing her, he could feel her tense under his fingers. Then he surged forward, still slow but enough for their hips to meet with a slap. He leaned forward and pressed a kiss to her neck, holding her hips flush to his. “You know Miss Schnee,” He purred in her ear. “If you want to play that game, you only needed to ask.”

She moaned when he started to pick up slow deep strokes, flicking his hips slightly at the end of each. She had to work to keep her breath steady, it felt so good and it had been weeks. She imagine what this would be like without clothes, she’d bet his balls would be slapping her clit right now. “Mhmm,” she bit her lip to stifle another moan. “well Professor you have taken brooding to a art
form. I had no idea you were interested.”

Oz slid a hand under her dress and played with her pearl tracing a finger over it in pace with his strokes. “I have been rather lonely, but that’s an easy state to mend.” He snapped his hips forward harder to drive his point home.

Weiss moaned out loudly, she couldn’t help it anymore, not with him at her back driving into her with growing vigor. This was definitely what she had been needing, “Oh Gods, harder Professor please!” she let out a shout as he grabbed her hips tightly and rammed into her drawing her back to meet each thrust.

Oz closed his eyes and grazed his teeth along her neck, listening to her moan up a storm in his ear. He bit down and she shrieked writhing under him, he moved an arm to pin her chest in place, gripping tight enough to bruise as he drove harder and harder into her. Oh gods it had been so long and she felt so good in his arms, he felt her walls fluttered around him and bit down harder. It was enough for him to forget for a moment the longing that had turned into a pain in his chest, she wasn’t his loves but this was something. He could pretend if only for a moment, that this was Ruby in his arms, she was young enough, her voice high enough.

Weiss felt the shift in him, when he started to move a little faster a little harder, his teeth at her neck so hard it hurt. This was something she recognized, this was what James did to her after a bad day. His grip was a bit too tight but she liked that, tilting her head back she stopped muffling her cries and sang out for him with every hard fast slam of his hips. She could hear his groan of appreciation, and closed her eyes imagining James. As Oz let off for a moment then bit down again harder, she came with a high moan tightening around him.

Oz groaned and followed her over, holding her tight to him as he spilled his seed in long hot pulses. He let her neck go and pressed his cheek to her jaw, inhaling her scent. They came down together slowly, Weiss relaxing into his embrace. “I think we should do this again.” She said softly.

Oz let her go slowly, supporting her as he pulled out and eased her back onto her feet. He tucked himself away and fixed her dress before the cold could get to them. He wasn’t sure what to say, he knew it wasn’t her he had been inside for those last few moments. Weiss turned and looked him in the eyes, she could see what was going through his mind. “You miss them, I miss James, we can miss our lovers together.”

When had she gotten so understanding? Though she had someone she longed for too, he sighed deeply, at this point being truthful was the best course of action. “Thank you for understanding.”

“It’s okay, I was pretending you were James as well. I stand by what I said, we should do this again, we don’t love each other and I am fine with that. But given that this was very enjoyable and we can talk to each other about it, I don’t see any reason why we can’t just... Do what we need to to find our pleasure, we are not in it for each other and that is mutual. So I am fine with this so long as you are.” Weiss said.

Oz nodded, this was more than he had even dared think of. “Well then Miss Schnee, would you like to adjourn to a warmer place for another round?” He offered his hand.

Weiss took his hand. “I’d like that very much Professor.”
Oz woke up to a warm soft presence snuggled up to his front, Weiss had her face tucked into his chest an arm around his middle. While he had one over her torso and her legs pinned under one of his. He looked down to her softly sleeping form and felt a little bit guilty, he had a feeling James would be less than pleased with him if the man ever grew a pair and talked to her. That said they had made very good use of the night, if the slightly sticky state of his pelvis and her thighs was any indicator. He purred softly, she had scratched that itch wonderfully and he knew he had done the same for her.

He called up a tiny piece of Aura and set it to Ruby and Qrow with the image of a Weiss snuggled into his chest. “This okay?” He asked.

The response was instantaneous. “You fucked her!?” Ruby’s voice sounded in his mind with a bit too much glee.

“How in Remnant did you manage to lay the Ice Princess?” Qrow sounded more than a little impressed.

“She’s James’s, only the idiot never summoned up the courage to say something. Instead he left her in a lurch after teaching her of a much wider pleasurable world. With whatever happened to you two last night leaked over onto me, so I couldn’t sleep. I went for a walk and ran into her in much the same boat, we talked for a bit, I offered and yeah. I have Weiss in my bed, we better not ever mention this to Winter, I rather like my balls.” Oz liked being able to converse with them, it wasn't what Qrow and Ruby had but it was enough for now.

Ruby snorted and made sure Oz knew it. “Winter will have to get in line, I’m pretty sure my Dad will try to castrate you when you next meet.”

“To be fair, I think I’ve earned anything Taiyang wishes to deal out several times over by now.” Qrow’s relapse was still fresh in Oz’s mind, he knew that Tai knew something now.

“Well I’m cool with you helping her out.” Qrow said, he knew what it was like to be alone, far from the one you loved.

“Me too, she’s my friend and I don’t want her hurting. Plus it will keep you from going stir crazy, oh have you played with Harkness yet?! I still demand a play by play of that!” Ruby all but bounced in glee, then let out a little moan when Qrow pressed into her.

Oz felt the flare of pleasure and smiled. “Just think of it Ruby, you’ll get to watch Qrow and I plenty.” He felt pleasure from the both of them, his erection rose rapidly and he smiled. “Did I call at a bad time?”

“No, we’ve got a couple hours till dawn, you’re not the only one with a girl to please. I’d already started when you called, someone just couldn’t hide it any longer.” Qrow purred, letting the feel of Ruby pass through the rose.

Oz stirred rolling a sleepy Weiss onto her back. “Give me a minute to talk to Weiss, go slow you two.” He shifted down pressing kisses to Weiss’s neck, he felt her stir and shift.

Weiss moaned her eyes fluttering as he teased her inner thigh. “Again?” She moaned out softly, she was tired and more than a bit sore. She was used to James waking her up like this but something felt different now.

“Mnhmm, though I have a proposition for you.” Oz spoke softly against her neck. “Be ready to send you two, if she says yes or is curious I’ll ease the feeling over her as well.”
“Long distance orgy, nice one Oz.” Qrow said with a smirk, he could always count on Oz to be a creative! horny bastard.

“Oh?” Weiss asked steadily waking up.

“Now.” Oz commanded and Qrow and Ruby let what they were feeling flow through the rose to Oz, who in turn opened his Aura and settled it over Weiss, including her in the feedback loop.

Her eyes widened as the sensations poured over her, she could feel Qrow at her back gently rocking in her. Her arousal rose like a raging fire, her skill flushed and her core grew hot, wet and dilated, more than ready for Oz. She could feel Ruby’s pleasure slowly rise, hear their soft pants, feel skin on skin all too soon it was over, Oz closing the door to that pleasure.

“Are you okay? Did you like that?” He could tell she found it arousing but that wasn’t the same as being okay with it.

Weiss spread her legs farther and lifted her hips up, lining up. “Yes, but what was it?”

“That was Qrow and Ruby,” He held up his left hand showing her the red ring. “This is like Ruby’s rose, only instead of being made from Qrow and myself, it’s Qrow and Ruby. I can send to them and they to me, through my Aura I can let the sensations flow onto you. Would you like to be a part of that?”

Weiss thought about that, to be honest it sounded really cool. “So, they’ll be able to feel me through you?”

Oz nodded, she’d be with them just as much as with him, hence the pause and asking. “They are alright with you, it’s your choice.”

She pursed her lips, she had played with Ruby before maybe they would be able to talk about this when they all got to Mistral. “Okay, do it.”

Oz had been watching the expressions lit over her face instead of answering her question. He bent down and kissed her neck, teasing his teeth along the tendons as he eased his Aura hers and called hers out and into him. Ruby and Qrow felt it and opened up the floodgates, causing their extended partners to moan.

Weiss’s eyes slid shut as she felt the cool air of a forest after rain slide over her nipples, hear Ruby moan softly fighting so hard to stay quiet as Qrow’s breaths were soft behind her as he tried to keep his own groans and grunts from escaping. She could feel it all, How does Ozpin think through this? She wondered she could barely think… then Oz drove into her and all thought ceased.

Oz groaned biting lightly down on Weiss’s neck, both women moaned in response. Weiss’s Aura didn’t meld with his, so it was a little bit of effort on his part to carry her’s within his, but it was so worth it. They four of them quickly found a rhythm, Oz was harsh to the gentleness of Qrow and Ruby, Weiss screamed for Ruby who could not.

Who was who quickly bended away in a sea of sensation, of contrast and pleasure. Reality dribbled away, as bodies just became extensions for the minds, thrusts and cries, clawing and holds, an endless circle of connections being forged and strengthened.

Qrow and Ruby moved positions to mirror Oz and Weiss, wanting to chase that connection. Sensations lined up and the four fell deeper into this merging of minds and bodies. Weiss opened her eyes one moment and saw Qrow above her, saw a kind smile that she would have never dreamed the arrogant man capable off.
Oz leaned down and kissed Weiss, he saw Ruby beneath him. He hadn’t kissed Weiss before, kissing released endorphins that promoted bonding and he didn’t want to fall in love. But with Weiss and Ruby blurring places, it felt right, her lips were thinner than Ruby’s and she was more confident in the kiss. As he slipped his tongue into her eager mouth it didn’t matter, Qrow and Ruby had followed suit and who the bodies belonged too ceased to matter.

Both men made love to both women, Weiss and Ruby flitted between each others bodies without thought just enjoying the embrace of both men equally. They came together, the chorus of moans and groans, the slap of hips all stopping at the exact same moment. Weiss screamed her nails digging into Oz’s shoulders as Oz slammed into her arching his back, pressing his hips forward to get as deep as he could. Ruby bit Qrow’s neck to keep quiet, as Qrow held her as tight as possible. The orgasm went on and on, the pleasure cycling through their minds, their bodies following suit. None of them had ever felt so good in their lives, eventually it ebbed and they relaxed together.

Oz eased down to brace his weight above Weiss, tucking his face into her neck and smelling Ruby’s scent instead. Weiss was the first to speak, as much to Ruby and Qrow as to Oz. “Thank you.” She panted softly trying to get air into her lungs. “Thank you for including me in that.”

“You're welcome Weiss,” Ruby said her voice sounding in Weiss’s mind as Oz hadn’t pulled their Aura’s apart yet, the man was still enjoying the post orgasmic bliss far too much to even think about severing the connections. Ruby paused for a moment thinking her idea over. “Maybe we could explore this more in person? I’m curious.”

Weiss giggled, after that… “I’d like that, I’m curious too.”

“Oooo can I watch?” Qrow said grinned from ear to ear as he kissed Ruby’s neck.

“Hmm, that sounds like a great deal of fun.” He spoke aloud with a deep purr that had the three of them shivering, letting it flow through the ring as well, while brushing a lock of Weiss orange hair out of her face.

The other three laughed, oh the potential in this idea. Oz drew off of Weiss pulling his Aura out of hers, smiled slightly at the little shiver she did. “We’ll talk to you both later.” With that he let the connect fade slowly allowing Weiss to hear their goodbyes.

Weiss’s eyes widened as he pulled his Aura from her’s, she could feel bits of it linger entwined with hers. It felt strange a good strange, but still strange, when she opened her eyes to look into his copper there was a spark there she hadn’t seen before. She felt his power for lack of a better world, a gleam in his eyes that was the real Ozpin not the Headmaster that he had been showing her up to this point.

“If you wish to shower, I’d recommend coming with me now. The rest of the crew doesn’t usually wake for another half hour, we’ll only have to avoid the cooks and that should be easy enough.” He rose stepping off the bed and traversing the room, since Naga started to like him his cabin had undergone a bit of an upgrade. Now they were more like Harkness, though still about half the size, Oz was fairly sure it was magic, one day he had opened his door to find a bed that actually fit him. A room that took several steps for him to traverse as well as a chest of drawers and table to put his armour on. He strode over to the drawer and pulled out a pair of trousers.

Weiss slowly sat up, easing herself over to the edge of the large bed and swung her legs over the side. She pressed a hand to her stomach and bit her lip to keep from making a sound, she was very sore inside and out. She had forgotten how much she could ache afterwards, especially when the couplings were frequent and less than gentle. Make no mistake he had been when he needed to be, but she had a feeling he got more pleasure out of being harsher. When they had retired to his cabin he had her on her front again. She closed her eyes and remembered, now it felt to have him looming
over her, the faction of fear that had gone through her. His words had been smooth and soft, lulling her into security like prey into a trap, honeyed words that made her mind blank as he touched her.

James knew how to use his voice, he was very much a General he could command her with a word and oh how she loved to obey. Oz’s approach was very different, he was a spider drawing her into his web, making her think it was all her idea. Rather than turning his voice steel and commanding, he made it like velvet caressing her with it alone. Making sweet promises of pleasure, of forgetting the pain he gave her something else to feel for a while. To dull that ache in her chest where she knew James belonged. She knew what he had been doing but she let him do it all the same, she also knew that Oz had been one of James’s teachers now and she had a feeling Oz hadn’t taught him everything.

She opened her eyes, watching him pull the trousers on and grab a wash kit, getting a good look at the red marks her fingers had scoured over his back and biceps. The thick weave of black tattoos hid them well but she could still see them, he was more muscular than James. Though James had started to fill out when she had started cooking for him, James was much broader in his physic. While Oz was much more lean and sharper with less fat to pad the muscle. She thought it made him look sculpted and just a bit menacing, not the kind of person she wanted to cuddle, she defiantly preferred James.

Oz picked up her dress and walked back to her, as he helped her back into it Weiss asked sorting out her arms and adjusting the neckline. “Why do you have tattoos Sir?” She thought it best to address him as she would another dominate, it was a bit less formal than Professor but not as informal as using his given name.

Ozpin stepped away and turned on his heel, he didn’t want to talk about it. Thanks to Harkness he could forget about it for a time, forget the pain and the tattoos. He knew they hid the damage well, so he could go without clothing to hide them, but remembering still hurt. “Find out for yourself.”

Weiss stood with a wobble letting her dress fall the rest of the way into place. The pain between her legs grew sharper but she recognized it and let it be, she knew she wasn’t hurt and endeavored to ignore it as she reached out and touched Ozpin’s back.

While long since healed, the skin was still raised in places, imperfect, welts and long scars in equal measure. The skin was dry as she moved her hand up his back feeling the grooves and divots, she bit her lip and pulled her hand away, she had a pretty good guess of how far they went. “I’m sorry.”

Ozpin turned around and as Weiss looked up to him she felt very small, James never made her feel small at least not like this. He cherished her, made her feel like she was queen of his world, even when he towered above her. Oz was the opposite, they weren’t lovers, he’d protect her as needed but they were only using each other and they both knew it. No Oz made her feel small and little bit by little bit he was letting the mask he wore as the Headmaster fall and it was becoming clearer just how powerful, how dangerous he really was. People didn’t survive scars like he had, heck it took a lot less to kill even a Huntsman, yet here he stood healed and strong.

“Do you need assistance?” Oz chose not to linger on the exchange.

Weiss shifted her weight slightly and nodded. “Yes please, the showers are a ways away.”

Oz bent and scooped her up holding her across his chest with one arm, her back braced against his upper arm and his hand under her knees. Weiss pursed her lips determined not to give any other reaction, yes Ozpin made her feel small.

Oz picked a few sideways to get to the showers avoiding any early risers for Weiss’s sake, while he
didn’t care it seemed the nice thing to do. Thankfully the showers were empty by the time they got there, Oz set Weiss down at let her lean on him as he got the water going. Then they both removed their clothes.

The water was just right when it started to pour down over them, Oz shifted so he could start finger combing through her hair. Weiss turned and leaned against his chest, she knew what he was doing. A aspect of BDSM that James enjoyed was providing services, they could be little things. He liked to brush her hair for example, she had a lot of it and assistance with it was always nice. Weiss liked doing things for him as well, her favourite thing was to give him a massage after a long day at work. Neither of these things were sexual and were really quite normal in any relationship, it was all in the intent behind them. Weiss had learned she enjoyed putting herself in a submissive mindset, it was fun to serve, even if it was just making food, cleaning or giving a massage. James had enjoyed reciprocating, focusing all his attention on her helped him cope with the stress of work.

Weiss let out a happy humm, aftercare was just as much fun as the scene or sex, she loved the feeling of her hair being brushed. She felt Oz pause for a moment then return to her hair with a comb, the water was soothing her aching muscles but it was a good ache. She wondered what James was up too, if her time with him had improved his confidence enough that he would seek out a woman better suited to him then her.

Oz chuckled he could practically hear her thoughts. “Stop thinking so much and enjoy.”

Weiss wrapped an arm around his torso and sagged into him, now those were universal words of any dominate. Stop thinking so much and enjoy, “Yes sir, yes sir.” Weiss said to the tune of ‘Do you have any wool’.

They washed in peaceful enjoyment, Oz allowed Weiss to do his back taking it as an opportunity to desensitize himself to having someone touch it. Every action was mutual for aftercare was important to the dominate as the submissive, after which they parted ways till the next time either got strung far too tight.

Chapter End Notes

Kry: Thank you too: Bucky_Barnes, darkvampirekisses, Sportsfangirl815, Frapadingue70, AgentEP, QueenofSpades19 and Celestialfae for all your comments.

Ardy: Only one more chapter to this arc! Yay... only I've had to throw out 2/3rds of the next arc. Can't say I'm sad about that though, it will be nice to be writing completely new content again.
Qrow and Ruby dreaded leaving their tent, tents weren’t exactly good at muffling noise and they were both sure that the rest of the team wouldn’t just let what they had been up to be. They both were curled up tight to each other, pretending the sun wasn’t high. They savored the feel of skin on skin that they were finally together and wouldn’t have to hide it, for at least a little while.

Alas it could not last as they heard the rest of the team stir, they too got ready for the day. Qrow helping Ruby into her corset, she fixed his shirt to hide the collection of bites on his collar, doing an extra button up to hide the little red marks from her fingers. Each touch lingered as they loathed to part and didn’t part as they got rather distracted when Ruby started kissing him. If it hadn’t been for a very well timed cough from Ren outside, their clothes would have come off again.

Eventually they managed to pack up the tent and leave, Qrow and Ruby working silently to collapse the tent and pack it with Qrow’s bag while Ren got a fire going. Qrow got his own breakfast, a ration bar while Ren boiled water for the rest of theirs instant porridge.

Both Qrow and Ruby chose to ignore Jaune’s glares as he still didn’t understand their relationship. The knowing giggle from Nora when Qrow sat beside Ruby and let her snuggle into his side made Ruby blush.

Ren chose to break the silence. “So Qrow how far are we from Mistral?”

“About two weeks walk.” Qrow folded the wrapper of his breakfast into a little square with nimble practiced movements and tucked it back into his pocket. He stroked Ruby’s hip with a thumb as she took her serving of porridge from Ren, their unofficial chief.

Ruby stirred the gloop around with a collapsible spoon, she was so sick of porridge. “Anything we should avoid?”

“There is an old town Kuroyuri that should be avoided, last I heard there was a rumor floating around that a Nuckelavee still in the area. I didn’t have time last time I was around here to deal with it.” Qrow pursed his lips, while he didn’t doubt the kids could handle a Nuckelavee he was in no hurry to test them. He heard Nora take a sharp breath and looked up in time to see her look at Ren. He watched as they two of them shared a long solemn look, taking note of how both clenched their silverware. Ahh. Maybe they should deal with the Grimm, he could draw its attention and let them figure it out. “You two have history with Kuroyuri.”

Ren sighed pulling the now empty pot from the fire as Jaune had collected his portion and sat down beside Nora. “It’s home or was, there was an attack back when we were just kids. We both lost our families, we only survived because of my Semblance.”

“It wiped out a whole town?” Ruby asked and started eating, she was so bored of this stuff. She couldn’t wait till they got to Mistral, just for the food and well Ozpin would be there too.

Ren nodded and poured some water in the pot to soak, he that sat down beside Nora and started on his own serving.

Jaune sat stewing silently, looking between Ren and Nora and Qrow and Ruby. The latter pair were
almost snuggled up together, he just didn’t get them at all. He didn’t think it was fair that someone like Qrow got to be happy with someone like Ruby, while Pyrrha had died. He took a bite of mushy porridge, if only he had seen how she had felt sooner, been able to help her.

He glared at the garnet eyed man as he hugged Ruby to his side, pressing a kiss to the crown of her head. Then Ruby PURRED, he couldn’t get why she liked him. He and Ozpin both had blood on their hands and yet it seemed like she didn’t care. He really doubted Qrow was a ‘good’ person. Yet Ruby was with him and Ozpin … he couldn’t wait to meet the headmaster again, he had words for that man.

Jaune watched Qrow offered Ruby his flask and she took a sip then looked up at him surprised. “Water?”

Qrow shrugged and smiled, Ruby suddenly estatic for him pounced, knocking him off the log for a long kiss. They ended up half on the log legs entangled, Jaune could hear Qrow go “Ooof.” and a giggle from Ruby. He glanced over at Ren and Nora both giggling as well. Jaune took another bite of his food furious that he had to strike ‘dunkard’ off his list of things, faults really describing Qrow.

Eventually the party got moving again, Qrow leading the way Ruby all but bouncing beside him. Ren and Nora ended up pairing up as well, which wasn’t really that surprising to be honest but they did put a bit more effort into including him in their conversations. Ruby was talking at near mach five and about things that Jaune knew nothing about. Mostly the holiday, but sometimes her voice would dip so only Qrow could hear those conversations passed quickly her man speaking almost as fast as she did.

So the blonde stewed as they walked and when Qrow dusted a stray leaf from Ruby's hair his touch lingered on the short strands. Jaune watched the exchange, thinking was this what he could have had, if Pyrrha had lived. Small touches filled with obvious affection, stolen kisses and moans, muffled so no one would hear. His fist clenched at his side, no Pyrrha was gone now and it was all Qrow and Ozpin’s fault.

Ruby noticed the dower mood of their Vanguard and pursed her lips. From what she had heard from Ren and seen on occasion if she let Jaune brood he’d eventually explode. Which would not bode well for anyone. They continued on for the rest of the day, which was thankfully quiet. Ruby had a quiet word with Qrow which got her a solemn nod and she waited for Jaune to depart for his nightly practice.

Jaune set the video on his Scroll on loop and started to train, trying to vent the days frustration. He was surprised when Ruby appeared, he figured she’d be fucking that dirty pervert.

“Are you okay Jaune?” Ruby approached slowly wrapping her cloak around her. “You’ve been quiet all day.”

Jaune ignored her for a minute finishing his form, went over grabbed his Scroll shutting off the recording and shoved it into his back pocket. He didn’t want his precious memories of Pyrrha on display, at least not for Ruby. “What's the matter? Do you need this space to fuck with your uncle?!” He snapped glaring at her.

“He is not my uncle Jaune, you know that and this isn't about Qrow, it’s about you.” Ruby took a deep breath, she knew this was coming, Jaune had never liked Qrow or even attempted to try. “What’s really wrong?”

“I'm fine Ruby just fine!” Jaune shouted at her, he really couldn’t believe her, she’d lied to them. “You know I came with you because I believed what we were doing and where we were going was
right. We were suppose to go to Mistral, find out what was going on and stop them.” His anger rising
Jaune kicked a few rocks into the bush, wishing it were Qrow’s head. “But noooo you already knew
what was going on. You knew! You knew who we were up against, you knew that given time
someone would come after you and you knew Qrow was laying in wait to help when you would be
unable to protect yourself. So why the HELL did you not tell us!” Jaune bellowed, his skin started to
flush in his anger.

Ruby pursed her lips, giving them both a moment of silence while before she spoke again, almost in
a whisper. “You wouldn’t have believed me. It’s not that I didn’t trust you, or Ren or Nora. If
everyone had been on alert then whoever came after me would have noticed. If they had found
Qrow first, or separated us. Jaune what would have happened if Tyrian came after us and Qrow
hadn’t been there? Qrow and I had a plan, not telling you was the best way to make sure it would
work, to protect everyone.”

“Like Pyrrha … Pyrrha protected me, that night during the Fall of Beacon, But who was there to
protect her, NOBODY!” Jaune clenched his fists, the words tasted vile in his mouth, tinted with
anger and anguish.

"Jaune you can-.” Ruby started but he cut her off.

"I don’t blame myself! SHE wouldn't have even been there is it wasn't for Glynda and Ironwood and
Ozpin ...... and Qrow! Because they put those ideas into her head SHE IS DEAD, because of them
and their selfishness SHE IS DEAD, Because of Qrow she is DEAD!” That last kiss was burned
into his mind.

“It wasn’t Qrow’s fault Jaune, it was Cinder’s.” Ruby said calmly taking deep breaths to stay that
way. Ozpin had taught her to keep her temper to not get emotional when in stressful situations. The
fury radiating off him was unjustified, did he really believe the things he was saying? It was a miracle
the Grimm didn’t come storming between them.

“He said it himself didn’t he? Wherever he goes misfortune follows.” Pointing the finger at Qrow’s
Semblance was all too easy, Jaune wasn’t above using that.

“It still isn’t his fault.” Ruby flexed her hands trying to keep calm, his attack at Qrow might as well
been one at her. Qrow was her other half, she knew Jaune would likely never fully understand that
but it still hurt.

“He might as well have shot that arrow himself.” Jaune seethed.

“Jaune!” Ruby’s eyes widened, that was beyond cruel and utterly untrue.

“HE’S A KILLER-” Smack! Jaune stood stoic, his face turned to the side from the force of the slap
that came from Ruby. They stood for several moments until quiet sniffles broke the silence. Ruby let
a tear trek down her face and reached up to turn Jaune’s head back into her direction, her hand
hurting from slapping her friend. His cheek a bright red and his eyes wide with shock she spoke in a
broken sad voice.

“I know you’re angry with me… and Qrow and Ozpin. But we didn’t kill Pyrrha, Cinder did. We’ll
get her I promise you that. She will pay for the things she’s done, the people she’s taken from us but
please don’t use Pyrrha’s death as an excuse to hate, she wouldn’t want that. We have enemies all
around us but Qrow and I are not them Jaune and I’d appreciate it if you didn’t treat me and Qrow as
though we are. We used to be friends, you’re the only reason we aren’t now.” Ruby cleared the tears
from her eyes. “So when you get your head out of your ass. You know where to find me.” She
turned on her heel and walked away.
In the end the team plus Qrow decided to avoid Kuroyuri, instead heading up the mountain. Ren and Nora protested strongly against going through the town and they didn’t need any supplies. So they picked the shorter route. Qrow led the party again Ruby beside followed by Ren, Nora and Jaune. Thankfully there was a cave carved into the mountain so they didn’t have to go the whole way around. It didn’t take any time at all to see the weapons littering the floor of the cavern.

Qrow drew his claymore and led the way, the others pulled out their weapons and followed suit.

“It’s still alive.” Nora whispered fear rising up in her, she adjusted her grip on her hammer.

Ren bent down and picked up a blade, recognizing it as his father’s knife, closing his eyes and pressing it flat to his chest. The image of his father running with him hand in hand, the knife glinting and speckled with blood . . . “So it seems.”

“And not here.” Qrow said worried, judging from the sheer amount of weapons laying around the cave this was an old Grimm. He tried to extend his senses but he couldn’t feel the Grimm, meaning it was at least for now far away from them and hadn’t been back for a while. “What do you want to do?”

“You’re asking us?” Jaune said surprised that he asked.

“Do the four of you want to hunt the Grimm or not?” Qrow asked, looking between the four of them, this was their show not his. He walked up and peered out the whole in the opposite side of the cave, he could see Mistral in the distance.

“It is our job.” Ruby said, she knew with Qrow they stood a chance five against one. At the same time it was a very old Grimm, it would be wiser to leave it to the fully trained Huntsmen.

This was unfinished business for the Ren and Nora and yet, did they really want to seek out the thing that haunted them to this day? No, they were both too emotionally involved with this Grimm. What if one of them froze? Or worse? No there was far too much risk in it, too much pain, too many memories. Better to push on and leave it to other Huntsmen. Ren shook his head. “We should press on.”

Qrow nodded approving of his choice, he’d scout a Grimm like this out, set it up so he had the every possible advantage. They didn’t have time for that now, or the training to work tactically with him. Then there was his Semblance on top of that, no it made no sense to seek out this Grimm. “Come on then, we don’t want to attract it.” He sheathed his sword and climbed out the hole in the side of the cave. “There’s enough of a path here, looks like a goat trail. We can use this.”

The team heard him drop and Ruby started climbing up the wall after sheathing her scythe. She climbed through the hole and Qrow gently grabbed her and set her down beside him. The goat rail was only thirty or so centimeters wide, it would make for a tricky climb. “Move on down.” He said and Ruby started picking her way down the cliff-side. He helped Ren and Nora down as they started to carefully pick their way down the path then caught Jaune when he overbalanced and nearly tumbled down the hill.

“Thanks.” Jaune grumbled but didn’t glare at him. He had been thinking about his talk with Ruby and came to the conclusion he still didn’t like the man.
Qrow rolled his eyes and jumped off the goat trail turning into a crow to scout out ahead of the teens. Nora found it really cool watching him fly off ahead of them. “That’s so cool is it Semblance or magic?”

Ruby focused on the ground as she spoke. “Magic, something Oz gave him.”

“I wouldn’t mind a second Semblance, mine takes too much concentration to be useful most of the time.” Ren said, catching and righting Nora when she wobbled.

“What is your Semblance Ren?” Jaune asked, glancing out over the trees.

“It’s kinda hard to describe, I can make myself and another person invisible to Grimm. I don’t know if I’m just masking emotions or something else.” Ren said pondering.

Ruby huffed annoyed. “They seem so changeable. Or just hard to guess, like Jaune doesn’t even have his.”

“Hey!” Jaune shouted indignantly.

“No offense meant Jaune, it’s just frustrating. Something so important to us, yet we understand it so little.” Ruby groused, she was more than a little worried about her Aura too. Since she had given all of it up to heal Qrow she left strange, both wrong and right. She really wished Ozpin was around so he could take a look at it. She reached up and brushed the rose in her hair, sending a mix of emotions that equaled to a ‘I miss you’ though the rose. The response was quick and heart warming, the tiniest flicker of green Aura over Ruby and her heart felt a little less heavy.

Gloom from the memories of the Grimm settled over the party so Nora decided to cheer everyone up. “So do you think we’ll get to play another game when we get to Mistral? We didn’t do anything for Ruby’s birthday this time around and that kissing game was fun!”

“Oh Ren, who won you are Yang?” Ruby looked over her shoulder at the black haired boy.

Ren blushed lightly. “I’m not really sure, it was fun though.” That had been a very memorable game, Yang had been a great kisser. “She did have a bit too much fun feeling me up, not that I mind.”

Nora giggled and lightly patted Ren’s butt. “I don’t blame her at all.”

“No!” Ren blushed brighter but didn’t really mind the gesture, he turn to look at the girl as Nora reached out and poked his nose. “Boop!”

Ren smiled and booped her nose back. “Aura tag was fun, it was nice to just play with our Aura’s.”

Ruby nodded. “We should do that again sometime.”

Jaune thought about telling them how he lied about his transcripts and his training with Pyrrha but he couldn’t bring himself to do it. He was still a bit mad at Ruby and he didn’t want to tell Ren and Nora, it still felt too much like a betrayal. That was assuming they hadn’t figured it out already, with how inept he had been when he arrived at Beacon. “Well that conquering Remnant game in the library was fun.” He said at last.

Ruby wilted. “You beat as all soundly.”

The rest of the trip was spent trading tales of Beacon, to keep up their spirits, eventually they came to the gates of Mistral. Ornate heavy things for keeping out Grimm, the streets were all built on a incline, the houses stacked neat and tidy but they looked like they had seen better days. Muck lined
the streets and houses, the road was in slight disrepair. Qrow guided them up a few layers of the city, the muck fading away till they came to a inn which in addition sold month long term hosting of the Huntsmen Hostels that were kept for traveling Huntsmen.

Ozpin and Weiss stood on the forward desk of the ship as Mistral came into view. Jack and Harkness, walked up to the pair. “Well this is where we part ways.” Jack offered his hand.

Ozpin took it and they shook once. “Thank you for all your help.”

“Anytime and I mean that literally.” Jack withdrew his hand and summoned up a small black orb of energy. He took Oz’s hand and put the black orb within his palm.

Ozpin looked at then curled his fingers around it, the Aura object absorbed into his body it was a strange cool sensation. A memory tickled his mind but he shoved the sensation way, he had been getting better at that. Though the feeling that he had done something similar before didn’t leave him. He looked down at his fingers, flexing them. “A gift from Naga?”

“Just a little something so if you ever need to get her attention you don’t have to chase us around the ocean.” Jack said.

“Thank you.” Ozpin said shift his shoulder so his cloak fell over his front.

Harkness grinned. “See you around and give those lovers of yours a kiss from me.” He stepped up to Oz and they hugged briefly.

“Oh I’ll do that and more.” Ozpin said brushing his lips over Harkness’s cheek.

As he withdrew Weiss said with a smile. “Thank you for having me.”

Jack bowed slightly from his waist. “It was a pleasure.”

With that the two departed from the ship. A soon as Oz’s foot hit the deck a memory pushed over his vision.

It was near midnight, the sky was lit by only the moon. The Keeper hauled his way out of shadow, it clung to him trying to draw him back into the In Between. The black oozed way from his skin as he looked over the shamble of docks. “Nice Mistral long time, so see.” He saluted the Great Elevator.

He reached up and turned his attention back to the docks. They were pitafull, slave cages pressed up against the buildings packed tight and full to the brim. He strode toward them looking the sleeping stock over, there were a few very lovely wenches. “Hmm, I like this place already.”

Ozpin lurched back into awareness pressing a hand to this temple. Why hadn’t he seen any of these before? Why were they pushing in on him so aggressively now?

“Oz are you okay?” Weiss reached up and touched his arm. He had frozen for almost a minute.

Ozpin stook his head and pushed his bangs out of his face. “It’s nothing, let’s head up and find someplace to wait for Qrow.” Glancing around he was surprised by the number of armed people,
given that many of the weapons were not guns it was safe to assume they were bandits. The foundations of Mistral were stone carved into and from the mountains. This reflected in the time, every few builds were of the finer wood structures of upper Mistral. Columns and huge stone walls defined the lower city.

One of the largest structures linked to the main road was the communal bathhouse. It was fed by the hot-spring that reside under both mountains. The original designers of the city had harnessed the pressurized water to not only power the Great Elevator but the water system of the city as well.

*Garrett wove his way through the packed streets, his nimble fingers empty pockets as he walked by.*

*The memory shifted violently and The Keeper was swaggering his way up the hill, his hands stuffed into his pockets. He turned off the main street into a side alley, then another and another. He passed men chewing svef, they looked him up and down but he ignored them. Coming to a dead end, he raised his left hand the key Glyph blazed into light. When he pressed hand flat to the stone, a door Glyph glared quietly into life and a doorway formed in the wall.*

*He strode through the wall reappearing behind him, the room behind was untouched by time. It was little more than a bed, table and bathroom but it was good enough. The white haired man pulled his sword from his back and dropped the massive thing onto the table and then flopped into the bed kicking his heels up. “Nothing like free rent.”*

Weiss pulled Oz into an alcove, the stone pillars hiding them from view. “Oz?”

“Just old memories pushing through. I thought they were done with me but it seems not.” Ozpin leaned on the cold stone, rubbing at his eyes with his bare hand. When he looked up Garrett had manifested across from him, that half smirk was really getting on Ozpin’s nerves. Garrett moved off the wall and stepped into the crowd vanishing. Oz pulled his gaze back to Weiss. “Sorry I’ll explain somewhere more private. Let’s get going.”

Chapter End Notes

Kry: Thank you too: Bucky_Barnes, Celestialfae, darkvampirekisses, Sportsfangirl815 and QueenofSpades19 for your comments take it away Ardy.
Ardy: *plays a drum* We are done with the second arc! Woot! I'm an so done with just editing and adding content! The next arc will take about five or so chapters from the original Emerald Rose but that will be all for a while as I do plan on reusing much of the Tyrian stuff but not for a LONG time. I've a lot more to do this time cause well *flips RT the bird for a useless V5* just watch me properly make Mistral. It was supposed to be Remnants Ba Sing Se and I can't wait to SHOW that. *finishes tune and bows* Now then lets get back to the fun stuff shall we?
After Qrow sent them up with a lodgings as they weren’t set to meet Leo for a little while yet. It was a rented out house, fully furnished for Huntsmen or Huntresses passing through and needing a place. Ruby, Jaune, Nora and Ren all followed Qrow up through the levels of Mistral, he had decided to take them on the scenic route. Ruby loved the houses and the market, the city was mostly vertical with every available bit of cliff side used. Qrow and Ruby couldn’t help but glance towards the dock, Oz wasn’t here yet they both could feel that. With no reason to put it off they headed up to Haven.

The Courtyard was much smaller than Beacon’s, that said the whole school seemed smaller at a first glance. Jaune, Nora and Ren walked first into the space, a pathway dominated the yard, surrounded in grass. One path going to each major building like the lines on a compass. Qrow glanced around and pursed his lips, sure it was November but there still should have been Huntsmen and Huntresses around. He didn’t see anyone, worry started to build in his chest.

Ruby hung back and after glancing around herself took his hand, he relaxed marginally and they started into the school. The redhead found herself liking the design of the buildings, all the wood remind her of home. Even if the doors were mostly thin and made of paper instead of wood and it felt a lot less sturdy than home.

Qrow led them straight to Lionhearts office, he pursed his lips. In the texts he had exchanged with the much elder professor he was supposed to be waiting from them at the gates. “Hmm.” Qrow rumbled under his breath. “this isn’t right.” He squeezed Ruby’s hand once and then let go running down the hall, pulling out Harbinger and extending it as he went.

The rest of the team followed suit, Qrow kicked the door open and a elder man with a mane of grey hair just as he was open it. The older man yelled and nearly fainted from shock, Qrow who had been a bit stunned to see him and was standing on one leg. His Semblance decided he should fall in a very undignified a manner.

Ruby giggled putting Crescent Rose away and leaning down over him head cocked to one side. “Having fun?”

“Oh hush you.” He grumbled sitting up, Ruby looked over to the other man and said. “Uhh, Professor Lionheart?”

Professor Lionheart sat up and caught sight of Qrow. “Qrow! For crying out loud you nearly scared me half to death.” He raised a hand across his chest as if protecting himself. Qrow picked himself up with a growl. “Me? Why weren’t you waiting for us at the entrance?”

“Oh?” Lionheart reached into his long brown embroidered cloak and pulled out a pocket watch. “Oh right. Apologies, I guess time slipped away from me.” He picked himself off the floor.

“Your joking.” Qrow slumped forward, he hated dealing with Lionheart.

“Where is everybody?” Nora asked as she and the rest of them put their weapons away.

“Ah you must be the students Qrow mentioned.” Lionheart looked over to them.

“Yes Sir! Ruby Rose.” Ruby smiled at him sweetly.

“Jaune Arc.” Jaune stood a little taller.
“Nora Valkyrie.” Nora beamed doing a tiny curtsy.

“Lei Ren.” Ren tucked his hands behind his back and stood taller.

“It’s a pleasure to meet you all.” He bowed to them slightly making an equally small gesture of welcome with his hand. “Leonardo Lionheart at your service. I’m afraid most of my staff is currently away till classes resume.”

“What?” Qrow to a step towards Lionheart and the elder man shrank away, raising his hands almost curling in on himself under Qrow. “Leo you can’t be serious, who’s guarding the Relic?”

Leo shrank back more, “Qrow the children.” he glanced over to them.

“Already know,” Qrow stepped back giving Lionheart some space. “I filled them in. What do you mean your staff is away?” The red eyed man pointed at him.

“You filled them in.” Leo kept his hands close to his body one just under his thick grey beard. His mind was going in circles, wondering just how much they knew.

“So,” Nora looked over to Ruby. “is this not going at all how anyone thought it would.”

Leo sighed and backed up gesturing for them to come in. Ren and Nora seated themselves on a couch to the side while Jaune and Ruby flanked Qrow as Leo sat behind his desk with Qrow standing before it. “I say Qrow this is reckless, even for you.” Leo said mutely.

Qrow crossed his arms. “No. Reckless is leaving one of the Relics completely unguarded.” He gestured out his movements matching his annoyance. “Not checking in with Oz for ages.”

“There was nothing to check in about. Before the Fall of Beacon, but since that day Mistral has been in chaos.” Lionheart growled standing up. “Vale wasn’t the only kingdom to suffer that night, everyone was watching, every house, in every kingdom saw that poor girl ripped to pieces. Saw monsters crawling over the city, Atlesian Knights attacking citizens and then nothing.” Lionheart looked down at his desk. “You could feel the dread in the air. With all that negativity, you can imagine what it was like when the Grimm came for us.” He walked away and turned to look out of one of the windows lighting the room in a warm golden glow. “Mistral’s controlled territory is the widest reaching in the world you know and that makes it infinitely harder to protect. We lost so many great huntsmen, teachers from this very institution and its only gotten worse.”

Ruby stepped forward closer to Qrow and spoke up. “What do you mean?”

Leo leaned on the window sill, bracing himself against it. “We may have dealt with the Grimm but the Mistral council is still at odds with representatives from Atlas. First it was the Dust embargo, now it’s the closing of borders.” Leo turned from the window and addressed Qrow. “I’m not sure what happened to James in Vale, but it seems to have only worsened some of his more unfortunate tendencies.” He sighed. “And on top of that everything we still don’t know where the Spring Maiden is.”

Qrow lowered his arms and pointed down with a finger. “All the more reason we need the huntsmen and huntresses here.” He growled and Ruby could sense an inbound shouting match.

She stepped up quickly beside Qrow drawing his attention to her as well as Leo’s. “Okay okay, things are bad but we’ll figure this out. Why is the Spring maiden so important?” Ruby asked.

Leo looked over to Qrow and lifted a hand gesturing towards her. “I thought you filled them in.”
“Mostly filled in, look there is a lot to cover okay.” He pulled out his flask and uncapped it. “I quit teaching for a reason.” He took a long drink, though with the watered down drink it was more of a habit than anything else now.

Leo sat back down and leaned on his hand, his elbow on the wooden table. “Each maiden has the power to perform feats of magic and they are the only ones capable of reaching the Relics.”

“What?” Jaune asked.

“The Relics are each locked inside a chamber.” Qrow explained. “That can only be opened by a specific maiden. Winter for the gift of creation, Summer for destruction, Fall for choice and Spring for knowledge.” He had another drink. “Spring is the problem.”

Ruby was confused. “But Qrow, Ozpin kept his Relic with him. I mean we saw it in action. If they were locked up how did he get it?”

Qrow glared at her and raised a finger to his lips. “Think on it Ruby, you already know how, it was one of the first things he told you.”

Ruby glanced down thinking it over, the King made the schools and Oz was the… “Ohhh…” She put two and two together. “I get it. Good thing he was that paranoid.”

“Yeah.” Qrow said smiling slightly. “Enough about him, it’s Spring we need to focus on.”

“What happened to her?” Ren asked.

Qrow looked over to him sadly and Leo spoke up solemnly. “She was determined at first after inheriting her powers, but the weight of responsibility proved to be too much for the child. She ran, abandoned her training, everyone. That was over a decade ago.” Leo looked down at the table. “There is no telling where she could be now.”

“I know.” Qrow said sadly and putting a hand in his pocket. “Or at least have a pretty good idea, it’s not exactly good news.”

Leoheart got up from his desk excitement creeping into his voice. “What are you talking about?” He walked over to Qrow and seized him by the shoulders, shaking slightly and talking swiftly. “This is incredible news! After all these years where?!”

Qrow pushed him away with a hand by his chest and walked towards Ruby and the desk. “I did some digging around looks like after Spring ran away she was picked up bandits. Specifically the Branwen Tribe.” He clenched his fists.

Leo deflated. “The Branwens.”

“That’s right.” Qrow walked over to the table and pulled out his Scroll. It projected a map of Mistral, he stepped back and crossed his arms again. He nodded at the coordinates his Scroll focused on. “That’s about where they’ve set up their main camp. It’s where they fall back to after raids and scouting missions. Hawk and Falcon managed to gain a lot of followers since I was a kid and I’m sure when the Spring maiden showed up it only made things easier.”

Leo walked over and patted Qrow on the back before gesturing to the map. “Well Qrow I’ve got to hand it to you. With these coordinates we can mount a retrieval force and head out in a few weeks.”

Qrow clenched his hands again and asked. “A few weeks?”
Leo walked away from him back around his desk and sat back in his chair. “That’s right.”

“Leo maybe you didn’t hear me, my ugh family has the Spring Maiden and I know where she is we need to go as soon as possible!” He snarled bracing himself against the table swiping books off of it angrily.

Ruby walked over and took a hold of his arm, pulling him away from the desk. “Qrow.” She said softly pitching her voice down and felt him relax slightly.

Leo glared up at Qrow, ignoring the young woman beside him but he did notice Qrow respond to her. Subtle as it was, the lowering of his shoulders, turning his body every so slightly towards her. “Maybe you didn’t hear me.” Leo growled. “This Kingdom is in shambles, as soon as possible does not mean tomorrow. It means as soon as I can convince the rest of the council that I need huntsmen more than they do. Unfortunately bandit tribes aren’t very high are there priorities when the threat of war on the horizon.”

“Then damn the council we’ll do it ourselves, you and I are trained huntsmen and these kids aren’t exactly pushovers.” He heard Nora celebrating his complement and Ruby’s hand tightened on his arm he was sure she was smiling.

“Perhaps there is a more peaceful way approach this.” Ren offered his idea.

Qrow was still focused on Leo. “We need to get Spring as far away from here as possible and my parents aren’t going to give up her most without a fight.” He clenched his fist, he had hopped to never have a reason to go back to the tribe.

Lionheart spoke calmly. “Unfortunately you and your sister are evenly matched and I’m not the fighter I used to be. Not to mention the rest of them.”

Qrow bared his teeth and open the door that hid his full Semblance a fraction. His eyes turned black with a thin ring of red and Leo’s chair broke dumping him on his ass. “You’d be surprised.” The lean man growled.

As Leo stared up at him with a new reason to be terrified of Qrow, Ruby pulled on Qrow’s arm. “Hey.” Qrow looked over to her and bowed his head towards her and closed his eyes. When he opened them a few seconds later they were back to normal.

Leo picked himself up. “No offense but these students and I can’t take on a entire bandit tribe and a maiden. Regardless of how you’ve changed since your parting with Raven. We need to be positive we can apprehend Spring otherwise the tribe will scatter and Spring will be lost.” He raised a hand, “We’ve got one shot at this” he lowered it. “and it needs to be perfect.”

Qrow and Leo stared each other down and rolled his eyes. “You know Oz wouldn’t be happy about any of this if he were here.”

Ruby giggled, thinking it was a good thing he’d be here soon. Though she had a feeling he’d stay under the guise of ‘Obsidian’ for as long as possible.

“Perhaps you are right, but he’s not and I’m doing the very best I can.” Lionheart said.

“There must be something we can do.” Ruby let go of Qrow, sensing him calm back down.

“What about Cinder, Emerald and Mercury?” Jaune asked. “There were from Haven.”

“We pulled their files after the Fall of Beacon, nothing but lies and forgeries.” Leo said as Jaune
clenched his fists.

Qrow shifted his weight stepping away from Leo. “Well I can’t say this has been a warm reunion Leo.”

“I’m sorry, I know you’ve all traveled a long way, but I will do everything I can to help.” Leo said, leaning against his table.

“Sure. We’ll stay in the city for time being.” Qrow pulled out his Scroll and showed it off to Leo. “Keep in touch.” He turned walking away. “Come on kids.”

“It was nice meeting you Professor.” Ruby said as a goodbye.

“Likewise.” Leo said, wondering just how much sway she had over Qrow.

She closed the door behind her and as they walked down the hall following Qrow Nora asked. “So what do we do now.”

Qrow sighed and turned to them pointing. “You four head back to the house. I need a drink.”

Ruby hung back as the others turned down the hall, her hands taking his. “What are we going to do?” Ruby asked she turned to him, as he weaved their fingers together.

“I don’t know. Even with O- Obsidian’s help, Leo is right we can’t take on the whole tribe plus the Spring maiden alone.” Qrow reached up and brushed her bangs back, cupping her cheek.

Ruby closed her eyes and leaned into his touch. Her eyes flew open and they both moaned softly as a ripple of green Aura passed over them. She smiled up at Qrow. “He’s here.”

Qrow leaned down and kissed her chastely, then felt his pocket vibrate. He pulled it out and glanced at the address that had been texted to him. “Seems I really need a drink.”

Ruby giggled and leaned up to kiss him briefly again. “Go get him and bring him back.”

Qrow chuckled and smiled at her. “Yes Ma’am.” They walked out together before parting ways, Ruby racing off to catch up with her friends.

Unknown to the two of them that hall had camera’s and Leo had been watching the whole exchange.

Ruby raced up the stairs as soon as they got in the door. Qrow had claimed the master bedroom for them, as soon as they settled on a house and no one had dared question him. She turned back the bedding started working through her clothes. While it would be fun to time the to see how fast they could get her out of her corset, she’d rather it out of the way for this reunion. After a quick and thorough shower she changed into her pajamas sans panties and looked over the room. It was fully furnished and seeing as they three of them lived out of their backpacks had more than enough space for the three of them. She set her things up against a wall as she didn’t feel like unpacking and Crescent Rose on the dresser. The king sized bed had a wooden headboard and it reminded her of Oz’s bed back at Beacon. She walked over and traced one of the bars, no knicks though it looked freshly painted.

She headed downstairs and ended up pacing back and forth, waiting for Qrow to come back and by extension Oz. She stopped for a moment a smile slowly blooming over her features. She pulled the
Rose from her hair and called up one of her more interesting fantasies involving the three of them. Letting it flow through the rose, she sat on a step of the stairs grinning in a way that had Jaune quaking in his boots. Ren and Nora looked at each other and Nora asked. “Ruby what are you doing?” They could see the Aura being absorbed by the Rose.

Ruby looked over to her and grinned. “Qrow went to get a friend, I’m encouraging him and said friend home as quick as they can.”

“Do we know this friend?” Ren asked.

“You do.” Ruby took a minute to focus on her fantasy, she imagined giving Oz a blow job.

“It’s Ozpin isn’t it.” Nora asked with a grin, she was looking forward to seeing him again.

“Yup.” Ruby said standing up as they heard a thud and a crash from outside.

The door slammed open and a huge man that three had trouble recognizing as Ozpin strode through the door his eyes locking on Ruby’s, then he spoke and they could hear their professor. “What did I say about using the rose like that?” He strode over to her, heavy boots causing a deep heavy thump with every step. Qrow keeping back to watch, it was also fun taking in the expressions of the other young adults.

“I remember and I didn’t say a thing about not using it when it suits me.” Ruby stood up and twirled the Rose between two fingers with a smile. She fed the image of her sucking him off while Qrow took her from behind. She smiled sweetly as both men jerked Qrow’s gaze snapping over to her as Oz invaded her space a hand gripping her hip as he took the Rose from her fingers. He tossed it back to Qrow who snagged it out of the air with a smirk. “You little horny vixen.” Oz growled, bending down to kiss her.

Ruby pulled away backing up taking a step up the stairs, the growl Oz let loose was almost enough for her to give up her game. She kept backing up and turned on her heel. “Come and get it.” She patted her butt and then used her Semblance disappearing in a flurry of red petals to give herself a much needed head start.

Ozpin gave chase making ready use of his Aura, to speed himself and the rest of the group heard a thump followed by a “Ack!” Several more thumps that sounded like armour and weapons hitting the floor. “Hey!” They heard Ruby yell.

Qrow looked over to the blushing group. “I’d recommend headphones.” He started up the steps undoing the buttons of his shirt as he went.

The three looked between each other. “Ruby’s one lucky duck.” Nora said and the boys groaned. “Oh you have no idea.” Weiss said with a giggle from the doorway having caught up with the two men.

Qrow found the door ajar and his lovers already nude on the bed, he closed it behind him. Oz’s clothes were on the floor as well as his armour and weapons. Qrow moved the later objects before someone stubbed their toes on them. Yanking off his clothes and setting Harbinger beside, Crescent Rose and Ozpin’s sword, he briefly wondered if Oz had named it. He set the Rose down beside the weapons, petting it for a moment, Ruby had most definitely motivated them home quickly.
A moan drew his attention back to the bed, Oz was braced above Ruby kissing her neck her eyes closed as she arched under him. Her breasts brushing his chest, Oz stroked up her side and took a breast in hand massaging gently. Qrow crawled into the bed and reached out to Oz running a hand down his back then up to his hair. He could feel the lumpy skin under the tattoos, the only difference between them was that while Oz wore his scars on the exterior, Qrow wore them on the interior.

Oz pulled away from Ruby and sat up, leaning over to kiss Qrow. Ruby blinked a few times to get her bearings and followed suit sitting up. While she didn’t really how to please both of them but she did want to learn, she clenched her legs together watching them. Oz’s hands had found their way into Qrow’s hair, they both were kneeling, Qrow’s hands were stroking down Oz’s torso teasingly. Ruby move over and took them both in hand, stroking them in time. It was a little hard to move her hands together but it was interesting to feel their differences, compare side by side as it was.

They groaned and turned their attention to her, Oz grabbed her by the waist and pulled her between them her back to Qrow. Qrow’s hands stroked her breasts as he kissed and nipped at her shoulder while one of Oz’s spanned her hip the other sliding down to her core. He growled and sat back on his heels to lower himself and kissed her neck rumbling out. “I think that fantasy of yours should become reality. If you think you can please us both.” He dipped a finger inside of her, rubbing her clit with his thumb.

Ruby cried out arching in their arms, Qrow’s hands started to massage her breasts as he rumbled in her ear. “I think that is a very good idea.”

Oz pulled away and glanced at Qrow, a quick and silent conversation. Oz moved so his back was facing the headboard, spreading his legs giving them room as Ruby turned and knelt between his legs. She bent over him and shifted her body so she could brace herself best as Qrow ran his hands over her posterior. This was one of his favourites, he got to watch Oz and be inside her.

Ruby bit her lip and took a deep breath trying to keep calm as Qrow teased her. Tiny brushing touches to her wet sex, she looked up at Oz as he put his arms behind his head.

“Wherever you are ready.” Ozpin said looking between the two, he could see Ruby quivering as Qrow teased her, warmed her up and got her ready.

“You okay Ruby?” Qrow asked spreading the lips of her sex with his fingers and lining up.

Ruby grabbed Oz’s sharp love handles and nodded. “Yes.” Part of her wondered just what she getting into but her mind blanked as Qrow pushed slowly inside. She moaned pushing back against him welcoming him in, it was so nice to have a bed to do this on and space. She’d had more than enough of cramp tent and trying to keep quiet in the last few weeks.

Oz reached down and started to stroke himself with a hand watching Ruby’s face bliss out in pleasure her eyes slid shut. She opened her eyes the silver shining as she took in what he was doing. She bent down and took him into her mouth very very slowly managing little more than the head. “Relax.” Oz stroked her jaw with both thumbs, fingers tightening in her hair. He looked up to Qrow and nodded, a little signal to the other man.

Ruby’s eyes shut again as she moaned, Qrow’s strokes were slow as he held her hips steady with a firm grip. Between the two of them they kept her immobilized so she didn’t jerk on Oz. The aforementioned man loosened his grip and let her start to figure out her pace. Her moans felt so good, Oz gripped the sheet to keep from moving as Ruby set about figuring out her limits.

Qrow as being gentle enough that she found she could focus on what she was doing. She started to bob her head in time with Qrow’s strokes, sucking whenever she wasn’t moaning. Qrow put himself
at a torturously slow pace, he wanted to draw this out and let her feel every slow thrust to the fullest
drawing out their pleasure. For once they didn’t have to rush, no impending doom, no frantic build of
emotions to the exploding point. He kept it nice and slow almost shallow encouraging her to focus
on Oz.

The silver eyed woman moaned relaxing letting more of Oz into her mouth. She was very careful to
keep her lips over her teeth, working her tongue over him. She could hear Ozpin’s breath deepen,
opening her eyes a fraction she saw the muscles of his abdomen flex and contract as he moaned
softly. The copper eyed man brushed her hair back with a hand, his fingers weaving tight into it.

Qrow stroked over her behind pushed forward with a force deepening his stroke, he smiled when
they both moaned. He admired Ruby’s back the pale soft smooth skin, he reached out to her
shoulders. He stroked down his calloused fingers providing a stark contrast to her smoothness. Both
men could feel her shiver and relax as Qrow stroked down her back in one long smooth gesture, his
fingers trailing over each dip and curve.

Ruby drew off Oz and braced her forehead against his stomach, she could feel his fingers gently run
through her hair. She closed her eyes and just enjoyed the feel of them touching her for a moment.
Qrow’s smooth steady strokes, his hands on her hips, teasing over the curves and dimples of her
behind. Oz’s hands in her hair, over her head seeking out all those little pressure points that
communicated straight into pleasure.

Oz took her by her shoulders and drew her up shifting forward, so she could lean against his chest.
Ruby purred softly and hugged him, an arm across his chest and over his shoulder the other gripping
the other gently. She didn’t even notice the roughness of his skin, or the new collection of scars
across his chest and torso from Nito. The small woman just relaxed into his embrace and enjoyed
behind held by him. She closed her eyes and inhaled deeply of his scent, there was the Oz she knew
and loved.

Qrow and Oz could feel her relax into a purr puddle, her mood already changing theirs. It was easy
to bask in the calm radiating from her, now that she was no longer perched above Oz. Qrow
tightened his grip and put a little more into his thrusts. They listened as Ruby cried out softly with
each one, Oz ran his fingers over her back and down to her breasts. Their little lover moaned as his
calloused fingers teased over her soft milky skin. Oz enjoyed petting her, it was nice to not worry for
once. He tested the weight and feel of her breasts, drawing tiny circles over her nipples for only a
few strokes before moving on to another section.

Ruby was glowing, her hands kneading Oz’s skin slightly, not noticing anything but the pleasure.
Each stroke of Qrow’s made her moan softly, cry out with little mewed. “Ah.” Against Ozpin’s
neck, the aforementioned man’s touch on her breasts was so gentle it near teased her but not quite.
Their touches caused pleasure to bloom through her whole body rather than just her core. She
opened her eyes a tiny fraction when Oz took ahold of her just below her breasts and eased her up.
She moved her hands and braced herself on his shoulders as he pressed slow wet kisses to her neck.
His hands stayed around her chest holding her still as the young woman arched with a long moan
and rocked back onto Qrow.

The red eyed man took the hit and picked up his pace their hips slapping together. The sound made
Oz growl against her neck, he pushed her up a little farther and took a nipple into his mouth. He
flicked it with his tongue before tracing a little pattern over it before drawing more of her breast into
his mouth and giving it a hard suck.

Ruby cried out, arching her back throwing herself back onto Qrows cock. Her head thrown back
eyes shut as she twisted in their embrace her cheeks a rosy pink and mouth parted. Qrow thought
they needed to get a large mirror in here. He saw Oz slide closer and felt a finger trace over her clít. Qrow let out a groan and devoted his attention into pounding into the beautiful woman. She strained in their arms, her orgasm sweeping through her, she moved a hand to grab at her hair as the other dug into Oz’s shoulder.

Qrow moaned as she clenched tight around him and let himself follow her over, spilling his seed in several hot gushes. He glanced up to Oz for a moment the larger man had pulled away from Ruby’s breast and smirked at Qrow. Qrow bit his lip and slowly pulled out of Ruby, making sure to tip her hips forward. He reached forward and wrapped an arm around Ruby’s torso while Oz grabbed her hips and pulled her towards him rising up to kneel and pulling her down on him in same moment.

Ruby’s eyes flew open wide. “AH!” She arched in their grasp back bowing, showing off the curves of her torso and her breasts. She reached back and clawed at Qrow’s shoulders leaving long red marks. Her head thrown back over his shoulder, mouth wide as she panted.

Oz grinned and pulled her down further onto him, she was tight and sopping wet around him. The mere thought of Qrow’s seed deep inside her already, made him all the harder. There was a reason they both enjoyed sharing a partner, he leaned down and caught a nipple teeth and pulled. Ruby shrieked, short and loud, then all the louder while Oz gave that first hard drive forcing his way as deep he could. Qrow had to move his hands wrap around her lower ribs as Oz grabbed her love handles.

He picked a slow hard pace that had her breasts jiggling with each thrust. Qrow was more than content to watch Oz, watching the bigger man’s member stretch her was a thrill all its own. He licked his lips and reached up and wove a hand into Ruby’s hair and forced her to look down. Oz glanced up at her for a moment then drew slowly out, letting them both see each long glorious inch.

Ruby whimpered as he slowly withdrew, she could see him shining with her juices. It seemed to take so long, she started to panting her chest heaving as the muscles of her stomach flexed and rolled. Oz drew a tiny circle over each of her love handles with his thumbs then tightened his grip slowly. He looking up to her with keen eyes, pulling back till only the head of thick long erection was inside of her.

Oz watched those silver eyes dilate so far they looked near black, saw Qrow’s grip tighten on her. He loved how Ruby watched him, her lips parted, skin flushed red. Loved how her breath caught as he smirked and surged forward driving his member inside of her, he flexed his glutes burying himself as deep as physically possible. Ruby screamed as he hit so deep it hurt, she thrashed in their hold. Qrow tightened his grip in her hair and forced her to look back at Oz. “Watch him.” He growled into her ear. “Watch him own you.”

Ruby writhed in their embrace their hands restricting her movements but both could see her muscles move the flex and strain. Oz slowly withdrew again drawing it out as Ruby looked down at him. She licked her lips looking down between them then back up at him. He leaned forward again cocking his head to the side and did that same slow powerful drive back inside of her. Ruby closed her eyes and strained against their hold again, a deeper, “Uh!” escaping her. She forced her eyes open to look him so fogged with lust.

Ruby was burning, her core ached clenching tight around him each time he drove inside of her. Each long movement shunted pleasure through her, but he was going so slow that it only built and built.
That sweet crescendo always just out of each. So she started to push back against him whenever he moved inward, he was holding her hips in such a way to take all her weight her feet planted on the bed. This did not give her much leverage, instead she was forced to use her core muscles.

Ozpin greatly enjoyed it when she pushed back against him, he could feel the tense ripping of her muscles, could watch the elegant motion of muscle through her body like a dancer. Qrow enjoyed though for a different reason, he loved watching them both get worked up. Ruby’s nails biting into his skin, little pinpricks of pain. He loved watching her contort as Oz picked up a quicker rhythm, matching the one Ruby set.

Oz leaned forward and kissed Ruby’s neck as she threw her head back, his hips never ceasing their movements. He scraped his teeth along it and Ruby moaned. The redhead grabbed his hair holding him against the pale column. It was starting to build faster in both of them, sharp shocks of sensation turning into a steady sea. Ruby pressed up offer her neck to him, his teeth against her skin was a whole new feeling a contrast to the pleasure radiating through her. She tried to gather her thoughts, as his teeth scraped against her skin.

“Bite me.” She whispered through a moan but both men heard. She remembered how Ozpin loved to bite and mark those who were his.

Oz thought about it as he moved a little faster, just to listen the sounds of her, the wetness of their hips, the panting of her breath. Instead he slid a hand around to her behind and held her in place and devoted himself to moving faster till he started to feel her core flutter and squeeze him. Only then he did sink his teeth into her neck.

Ruby came with a scream straining against their grip but they held in her place. She could feel Oz follow her, that hot throbbing sensation. She moaned softly relaxing all at once against them. Oz released her neck and took a moment to admire the perfect red crescent bruise. He took Ruby from Qrow’s arms she was quite happy to snuggle up to him, sleep fast creeping up on her. Oz laid her gently on her back and kissed her cheek, slowly pulling out of her. Ruby let out a soft moan at his movement, she was going to be so sore in the morning.

Ozpin then turned his attention to Qrow, the poor man was already jerking off. Oz rolled his eyes and reached over grabbing the smaller man and yanking him up the bed and under him in one motion. “Let me.” Oz rumbled taking Qrow’s cock in hand and kissing down his neck till his lips settled over the faded scar.

Ruby watched as Qrow gave into Oz’s embrace, it did not take long and at the moment of climax Oz bit down on the old scar till it bleed again. She reached up to her neck her own mark painful but the skin was whole. While Qrow recovered Ozpin, got up and walked to the joining bathroom returning with three wash clothes. One for Qrow’s neck and two to wash themselves with. Ruby was quite happy to let him take care of them, he did her first, his touch gentle and caring. Then moved onto Qrow and himself, once all three clothes had been turned to the washroom he returned and slid in behind Ruby. Qrow quickly took the hint and snuggled up to her front. Oz grabbed the duvet and pulled it over them, tucking it around Qrow’s shoulders so it there wouldn’t be a draft.

Ruby was quite happy to let him take care of them, he did her first, his touch gentle and caring. Then moved onto Qrow and himself, once all three clothes had been turned to the washroom he returned and slid in behind Ruby. Qrow quickly took the hint and snuggled up to her front. Oz grabbed the duvet and pulled it over them, tucking it around Qrow’s shoulders so it there wouldn’t be a draft.

Ruby traced just under the new mark on Qrow’s neck, wondering why Ozpin didn’t do the same to her. “Oz,” she asked softly as she snuggled down tight between the two men. “Why did you break Qrow’s skin and not mine?”

“Hmm,” Oz hummed happily and stroked over Qrow’s hip. “For him it’s not a simple mark for pleasure. I would not do the same to you without permission.”
“What is it then?” She asked as Qrow purred and closed his eyes. It had been a long few days, he was happy to let Oz explain and to sleep.

“A collaring, not unlike his piercings. A step some dominants and submissives make in their relationship. Qrow would never let me put a proper collar on him, at least outside of a scene. So instead he picked that and while we were floundering before you came along something temporary felt…” Oz trailed off and reached up to brush Qrow’s bangs back, tracing a finger over the curve of his cheekbone.

They both smiled as Qrow purred, turned his head and kissed the finger. Ruby smiled, he was being cute again, though she’d be nice and not say anything this time. Then it occurred to her. “But Qrow’s not a submissive.”

“Not entirely true.” Qrow mumbled.

Oz chuckled and let his arm fall over the two of them again. “Qrow is technically a Switch that leans towards the dominate. Getting him too switch is… challenging.”

“Hehehe.” Qrow snickered thinking of the hoops he has made Oz jump through in the past before he’d switch for him.

Ruby giggled imagining it, she slid her arm up and draped it over Qrow’s waist. Ozpin spoke up. “Yeah, getting him to switch never fails to be interesting.” His voice dropped several octaves. “Even if it’s always worth it, a little slave in hiding under that dusty exterior.”

Qrow leaned up and Oz down they kissed briefly and Qrow said. “But this time I’ll be nice, set up a date and time and I’ll do whatever you want.”

Ozpin’s brow shot up and he smiled rumbling out. “We’ll have to go shopping first.”

“This is Mistral I’m sure we can find replacements for your toys.” Qrow said with a smirk settling back into the bedding with a purr.

“So, if Qrow is a Switch, I guess I’m a submissive. So you’re just a dominate Oz?” Ruby asked and Qrow laughed. “He’s the alpha that can hold a whole room under his sway.”

“Qrow!” Oz blushed but didn’t otherwise deny it.

“Seriously, I’ve never met another Dom to stand up to Oz. Once when we were clubbing once and I was wearing my play collar. This idiot started getting all handsy with me, thinking that I was just some trained timid Sub. This guy was spectacular stupid Ruby, called me all sorts of derogatory names. I still think he was new to the scene and knew jack all about the kind of people subs often are.” Qrow scoffed and shook his head.

“We’re kick butt kings and queens of the universe.” Ruby said lifting her head regally.

Oz chuckled and petted down her neck. “Exactly Ruby.”

“Yeah, this moron tried to get me to leave Oz for him. He was feeling me up and not at all in a good way. Guess what Oz did.” Qrow grinned looking up at the blushing Oz.

“What did you do Oz?” Ruby asked smiling.

“Broke his hand and tossed him out of the club for violating the rules of courtesy.” Ozpin said with just a hint of pride.
“Nice.” Ruby giggled imagining Oz kicking a jerk out of a club by the seat of his pants.

“Since then Oz built up a rep as being vengefully protective of his subs.” Qrow purred, enjoying the warmth of Ruby and the weight of Oz’s arm when he set it back over him.

Oz shrugged casually this was all standard to him. “As a dominate the safety, happiness and wellbeing of my submissives is my chief concern.”

“How many subs have you had Oz?” Ruby asked, she wasn’t sure why she asked maybe just plain curiosity.

“Consistent ones of my own? Or just in general?” Ozpin asked petting Qrow’s hip with a thumb.

“Both.” Ruby asked leaning back to look up at him.

“Consistently, just Qrow. Subs I’ve Dom’d for in clubs or been asked to be a causal dominate for a night. Many, my teacher would set a few up once I was familiar with how to perform. Over time I built up a reputation and subs started to come to me, it was a way to relax after a long day teaching. Being a good dominant is like any other skill or trade. One needs lots of time, training and practice, three things I’ve had a surplus of.” Ozpin explained he preferred submissives that were more high maintenance than less. He liked to have an active role in their lives beyond the bedroom. It was yet another thing he’d have to talk to Ruby about, but he was relaxing and growing tired. “Sleep you two, if you want Ruby we can play fifty questions tomorrow.”

“Okay~.” Ruby yawned the long day and strenuous exercise catching up with her. “Goodnight.”

Qrow snored softly softly as his goodnight, Oz lifted his hand to press up under Qrow’s chin shutting the man’s mouth and silencing the snores. He rolled his eyes with a little smile and whispered, “Sleep well.” before drifting off himself.
Ruby woke first needing to pee, somehow over the course of the night she had ended up on Ozpin’s chest with one of his arms draped over her. Qrow was snuggled up to his side with his head on Ozpin’s pectoral. She pushed herself slowly up careful not to wake them and giggled, it was a good thing Ozpin was so big or this wouldn’t have worked. She carefully picked up his arm and moved it off of her, slipping out from under it and set it on his chest.

After visiting the bathroom she looked over the room, Qrow’s clothes were the only ones that managed to get to the dresser. Her’s and Ozpin’s were strewn all over the floor, her pajama shirt and pants were in four pieces as Ozpin had ripped them cleanly apart at the middle. She smiled almost fondly took at the torn fabric, Oz had been eager to chase her and all the more enthusiastic to touch her. He seemed very different then when they last had been together, healed in a strange way.

She spotted Oz’s black metal gauntlet, it was edged in bone and she couldn’t help but wonder about it. Kneeling down she picked up the gauntlet, the promptly dropped it with a hiss. It was cold, not cold metal sitting on the floor all night cold. No this oozed cold, she bent and she could see frost on the metal. How did he wear it?

Ruby picked up her torn shirt and used it to pick up the gauntlet and set it on the dresser. Through the cloth it was still cold but not biting her fingers anymore. She set the heavy thing on the dresser and set about picking up the rest of Ozpin’s armour. It was all cold in that same frozen frosting way, maybe he found it comfortable after being burned, she could see him taking comfort in the cold. Lastly she came to his cloak, it was different than the white one she had seen him with before. Curious she picked it up and felt that same cold she got from the armour. Dropping it again she pushed her pieces of shirt again, holding it up into the thin slivers of light peeking out from the curtains.

It was moving, what looked like grey and black fur, was not. It was almost inky as it moved and devoured the light, once or twice she swore she could see a skeletal hand or skull in it. Did Oz know about this? Just when had he gotten it? She picked it up off the floor, it weighed a ton, biting her lip to keep quiet she dragged it over and set it on a coat hook. Oddly enough for something that felt so heavy to her, it didn’t even pull on the hook.

Perplexed she frowned, something continued to swim just under the surface of the cloak. She shook her head, something to ask Ozpin about at a later time. She walked over to Qrow’s bag and pulled out one of his spare shirts, then frowned again. He lost his cloak to the poison and one of his shirts, her clothes weren’t in much better shape. Shopping was definitely going to be on the top of everyone’s list now that they were settled. She pulled the shirt on and looked over to the bed when she heard a groan.

Ozpin rubbed his eyes with a thumb and forefinger, he did not want to be awake but his stomach was demanding food. He dropped his hand and looked over to Qrow, still out cold an arm had slid around Oz’s torso as if to say mine you are not permitted to get up, I’m still snuggling here. Ozpin chuckled and traced a hand over Qrow’s arm, Qrow’s grip tightened. Nope, you are not moving and I am not getting up.

Ruby giggled as Oz hummed perplexed, Ruby now knew where she got her snuggling habits from. Oz looked up and thought she looked stunning with bed head and half dressed in Qrow’s shirt.
With a smirk he shifted and pulled Qrow onto his chest, strangely the man did not wake. Another rearrangement of limbs and Oz spun his feet out of bed. Ruby opened a draw of the dresser and pulled out a spare sheet and pilfered a pair of Ozpin’s trousers. A quick peek into the hall showed that everyone else was still asleep.

The three made their way downstairs, Qrow still out like a light. Ruby set the sheet out on the sofa and Oz put Qrow into and tucked it tight around the smaller man. Qrow snored but otherwise didn’t move other than to snuggle into the sheet.

“Breakfast?” Ozpin whispered to Ruby, pulling on the trousers she offered.

“Breakfast.” Ruby confirmed and the two hit the kitchen.

JNR and Weiss woke up to the smell of pancakes and ended up standing in the doorway of the kitchen, trying to collect their jaws up off the floor. There stood Ruby as she cut up strawberries while Ozpin was proving to be a master chief. The three admired the tattoos that rained down his back and Ren had to admit the elder man had great pancake skills as he flipped one by giving the pan a flick of his wrist the pancake soaring up a and landing perfectly.

Nora bounced into the kitchen and stole a finished pancake, putting it onto a waiting plate. “Morning!” She said sitting at the kitchen island and grabbing the syrup.

“Morning.” Ruby said popping a strawberry into her mouth.

“Good morning.” Ozpin said dropping the accent and sounding like his old self. He tossed three new pancakes onto the plate and the boys helped themselves.

“Sooo, did I see right and that Qrow is out cold on the sofa?” Ren asked, arranging strawberries on his pancake before adding a more moderate amount of syrup to his breakfast.

“Yup, he wouldn’t let go of Oz this morning.” Ruby giggled at the memory.

“Not the first time he’s done that.” Oz said pouring fresh batter into his pans, he had an evil master plan for waking Qrow up, it worked every time. First the young adults needed feeding and it had been a while since he cooked for a group, he was enjoying it immensely.

Jaune addressed the elephant in the room. “So Professor? How’d you-, where’d you go?”

“Played possum for Cinder after she did her very best to burn me alive. Escaped Beacon, eventually got patched up and have since been working my way here. Don’t call me Professor, I am not your Headmaster anymore. Ozpin in private is fine, Obsidian in public though. Salem will slow if she thinks I am dead and that is what we desperately need.” Ozpin flipped the pancakes.

“What is the plan?” Jaune asked.

Ozpin shook his head. “First we look for the Spring Maiden, then perhaps deal with the bandit tribes and seek out the White Fang. Furthermore we need to be on the lookout for Cinder and other agents of Salem.”

“Oh!” Ruby bounced in place remembering. “Qrow found Spring, she’s with Raven.”
Ozpin turned from the counter and raised a brow. “You could have mentioned that earlier.”

The Silver eyed woman blushed. “To be far we were otherwise distracted.”

Oz smirked. “Fair enough, that does change things. Have you spoken to Leo?”

“Yeah! Though he wasn’t every helpful, ALL of huntsmen are in the field fighting Grimm. He says he can’t get us any help to approach Raven for weeks at least.” Nora took a big bite out of her pancake.

Ozpin frowned. “That’s not… hmm.” He growled under his breath, so Leo believed that the Huntsmen were missing, rather then what the news has been saying they’ve been missing. Furthermore the Relic was unprotected, he could move it but for now it was safer where it was. His first instinct was to send Qrow to scout out Raven but if there were really no other Huntsmen in the city then they should stay put. Protect the Relic, train, keep and ear to the ground for Salem’s next move. “Well there are worse places for Spring to be, the Branwens are a powerful tribe, they can take care of themselves.”

“So we’re not going to go for them?” Jaune asked surprised he figured with Ozpin they could gun of the Maiden.

A dark look flashed over Ozpin’s face and a hand drifted to his back, his fingers digging into the scars. “No, we can’t match a Maiden alone, much less a whole tribe of Aura using bandits. We’ll need to play this carefully.” He turned back to the stove and flipped the pancakes, when he put the last pan down his hand started to shake. The thought of facing another Maiden alone… he grabbed his hand and pressed it against his chest taking deep breaths. He wanted to get his magic back but he could still feel the fire. *I’m fine, I’m fine, just stop.* He took another deep breath and focused on the pancakes, watching the bubbles around the edges for the colour to turn.

Ruby looked up when Oz went still, she could see his shoulders raise and the tension rise up in him. She glanced at the other three, they were all staring at Ozpin’s back. Nora had narrowed her eyes, as if she saw that something was off with Oz’s tattoos. Ruby hopped off her stool and walked over, reaching out she put a hand on his arm. “You okay?”

Oz dropped his hands trying to hide it, but she could see his right hand shaking he clenched it into a fist and pressed it to the only tattoo he had on his front. It was about ten centimeters long and wide, twisted like a vine with offshoots spreading out over his ads. Ruby could tell they were just to draw attention away from the base of the stem. “Oz?” She asked softly as he stared blankly at the food, taking deep breaths in through his mouth and out of his nose. Ruby drew him away from the stove and threaded the fingers of one of her hand through one of his hands, forcing him to relax it. Using her other hand she started to tap a her index finger against his wrist steadily, right above the pulse point. She could feel how his heart was hammering under his skin. Using her own much calmer heart beat she began following the thumping in her chest. Everytime she felt a thump she tapped Oz’s wrist. To help she closed her eyes and focused on those two tasks. She had learned this when reading about how to help Yang.

Oz felt the sensitive skin over his wrist being touched and looked down at Ruby’s digit. The more he watched the more he realised she was following a steady and calm tempo. His own racing heart seemed to slow down as he felt the constant tapping of warm smooth skin. One, two, three… Oz counted the taps his breathing slowed and his fogged mind started to clear more and more. He gave himself a large deep breath and let it out slowly, his breathing still a little shaky but much more settled than it had been. By the time he lost count of the tapping he realised most of his symptoms had diminished.
Ruby, sensing something had changed opened her eyes and smiled at the calmer expression on her lovers face. Removing her hand from his wrist but keeping the other interlocked with his fingers she drew the hand up and kissed it softly.

He bowed his head to her and watched her, she looked up to him and he further relaxed gazing into her silver eyes. Soft, shining and just a bit worried for him. How things have reversed, once upon a time I was the one helping her. He thought and a tiny smile crept onto his lips, he let her hand go and turned his attention back to the pancakes. They were getting to be quite well done, Qrow wouldn’t mind he liked his food as an offering to the gods sometimes.

“We should wake Qrow up.” He said softly grabbing the plate and plating the slightly overdone pancakes.

“Ren can you take over?” Ruby asked as he had long since finished his food.

“Sure.” Ren headed over to the stove and pour fresh batter into the pans. No one said a word though they all saw the event for what it was. Jaune couldn’t even get annoyed when he noticed Qrow’s buttoned up shirt was the only thing Ruby was wearing.

Ozpin picked out several slices of strawberry and arranged them in lines upon the pancakes just like Qrow liked then poured syrup over each line. It was nice to do this, to focus on something else. He grabbed some silverware and headed out into the living room. He smiled as Qrow still lay curled up and snoring softly.

He sat beside the smaller man and waved the plate under Qrow’s nose. Muahaha evil ‘wake up Qrow plan without getting punched’ in action. Ruby sat on the edge of the sofa and giggled as Qrow’s nose started to wiggle like a bunny’s.

“Shaa food?” Qrow blinked a few times slowly waking up he reached up and rubbed the sleep dust from his eyes.

“Good morning.” Ozpin said and Qrow freed his arms from the blanket and took the plate.

“Morning.” Qrow said forking a strawberry and putting it in his mouth, he blinked looking around. “Uhh, when did I get downstairs?”

Ruby giggled and stole a strawberry, licking her fingers clean. “You were out cold this morning and not letting Oz get up. So he moved you, so he could make breakfast.”

Qrow blushed, it had been a long few weeks and they had been busy over the last few days. However he normally wasn’t that hard to wake up. “Hmm,” Qrow hummed around a mouthful of pancake. “I blame you Oz, you just must have been oozing sleepy-yawn-particles.”

Oz laughed, trust Qrow to never fail to cheer him up. “I am not a cat.”

“Nope! Qrow’s the cat. I’m still torn between panther and lazy tom cat.” Ruby giggled as Weiss, Jaune, Ren and Nora came out of the kitchen, the latter two holding extra plates full of pancakes for Ozpin and Ruby.

Both said thank you and they ate in silence for a moment as the other three settled with their plates before Oz asked. “Wait, if he’s a panther as I don’t think lazy tom fits. What does that make me?” He pointed towards his chest with a finger.

Ruby cocked her head and pondered for a moment. “Hmm either a stallion or a stag.”
Oz set his plate down and raised his hands just over his ears with them facing back his fingers spread. “I like to run as Cernunn for the Wylde Hunt, horns and all.”

Ruby pressed her legs together at the mere thought of that. “Stag it is!”

Both elder men laughed at Ruby’s declaration and Jaune asked. “What is the Wylde Hunt?”

Oz ate a few more bites then laid back into the couch and recited.

:When all the world has gone to sleep

The hunters to the forest creep

From out 'the wild wood comes the call:

"The hunt is life... the hunt is all ..."

An ancient forest beckons me

To run skyclad amongst the trees

My lusty spear, it cannot wait

The gentle deer to penetrate.

Oz looked over to Ruby and grinned, she’d make one very fine deer. Smile more when she pressed her legs together and her skin flushed, he could guess what she was thinking.

:Cernunn, Lord of Beasts, he grunts:

"Come join us for the Wylde Hunt!":

Weiss was almost as flushed as Ruby, the deep timbre Oz’s voice had taken on was doing things to her as well. Then there was the way he looked at Ruby when he said penetrate. He made it very clear just want the poem was really about.

Qrow finished his pancakes. “It’s a holiday in Mistral, Vacuo, Vale and Menagerie, I don’t imagine it will happen this year with Grimm counts so high but the gist of it is. The huntsmen and huntress clear the Grimm from the forests so it’s safe for everyone and when the ‘hunt’ is called woman make their partner chase them through the forest. The woman ‘deer’ and the men ‘Cernunn’, there is of course safety measures huntsmen and huntresses standing guard and the woman usually were ribbons of some type so everyone knows who’s taken and who is not. For those who don’t want to go outside there is usually a city held ball, it's like a Hay festival really just the big city version. Same amount of rolling the hay.”

Jaune had helped out with Hay harvests but hadn’t had a ‘roll in the hay’ he was slightly confused by the saying.
Seeing Jaune’s face Nora filled him in. “Sex Jaune.”

Jaune blushed and said. “They have a whole festival dedicated to sex?”

Ozpin chuckled, he’d been to many festivals over the years. “It’s not about the sex Jaune, it’s about the worship of Cernunn. Sex just happens to be the vessel for that and it’s completely optional. Plus what did you think happens on Rymrgand’s Night and the Hay harvest festivals? They are both involve eating, drinking and lots of sex happens at both. You have seven sisters, I bet at least half of them were born nine months after a hay harvest.”

Jaune did some quick math in his head and found he couldn’t argue with that. His cheeks burned a brighter shade of pink, he sure was learning a lot about the world since he left home.

Ren spoke up. “The whole point of many festivals is to have a party, Rymgrand’s is so we all don’t get depressed on the darkest day of the year. The harvest is to celebrate being able to eat over the next year. Nora and I have helped with a few hay harvests, lots of drink and people running off behind the hay stacks when they could get away with it.”

“How have I always missed this?” Jaune asked Ren and Nora.

“Uhhh.” Nora said stalling trying think of a polite way to say it. “You can be a bit thick at times Jaune.”

“Plus you’re young yet.” Ozpin picked up his plate and tucked into his food again.

Jaune looked over at Ruby and tried to change the direction of the conversation. “Ruby why are you wearing one of Qrow’s shirts?”

Ruby mock glared at Oz. “Because someone decided my pajamas were better off in pieces.”

Oz paused mid chew and swallowed, then turned his head away and whistled in an innocent matter. Not completely able to keep the grin off his lips. Ruby stuck her tongue out and ate her food. Ozpin grinned and leaned over purring out. “I’ll buy you new ones.”

“No lace!” Ruby said finishing her pancakes and putting the plate on the table.

“Two lace one not.” Ozpin bargained. “Maybe some satin as well.”

Ruby climbed over Qrow’s lap, not noticing his gaze get very distracted. “One lace, one not. No satin.”

Ozpin leaned over and whispered in her ear, JNR and Weiss watched Ruby’s jaw drop and her cheeks flushed. Ruby back up and sat down between Qrow and Oz. “Two lace, one satin, one normal.”

Qrow chuckled with a snort covering his mouth, he could only imagine what Oz had said. Though he did have a pretty good idea given how bright Ruby’s cheeks where.

Oz looked over at Qrow, in all his white sheet glorily. “You need new clothes as well, don’t think you’re getting out of a shopping trip too.”

Oz stood up holding his sheet in place, “Na I’m good.” as he walked off Oz reached out with his foot and stepped on the sheet. It fell down Qrow only just managing to grab it before it fell past his hips. Though Weiss and Nora did catch a glimpse of his tight buns. Qrow growled pulled at the sheet. “Get off my sheet!”
“Or what?” Ozpin said with a smirk.

“Or I’ll just walk away.” Qrow said with a determined tone.

“I’ll let you.” Ozpin said pushing his foot tighter on the sheet.

“Boys please not here.” Ruby said looking between the two of them.

“I am not going shopping.” Qrow said firmly.

“You can’t hide in the house with a sheet all day.” Ozpin said smiling.

“You’re right.” Qrow dropped the sheet, flicked his bangs back and strode out of the room as bold as brass.

Ruby caught Ozpin’s stunned and distracted expression and laughed so hard she fell off the sofa. Nora quickly followed her after she was done admiring Qrow’s backside and even Ren giggled. Jaune was blushing as bright as a tomato but had to admit the whole exchange was pretty funny.

Weiss stared after Qrow. “I can’t believe he did that… not that I’m gonna complain.”

“That is one nice ass.” Nora said dreamily.

“I have to agree.” Ren said his eyes as glued as to Qrow’s behind as his girl friends.

Ozpin seemed to be stuck on the fact that Qrow was just walking away starkers. After a moment he shrugged, stood up and followed Qrow.

Qrow had just stepped out of the shower while Oz was rummaging through his bag looking for socks. He bit his lip taking in the tattoo’s again, he hadn’t really had a good chance to really look at them, feel them. The red eyed man walked quietly over and touched Oz’s shoulders. The bigger man paused in what he was doing but didn’t say a word. Qrow knelt behind him and ran his hands down Oz’s back. Up and down, racing over the raised and sacred flesh, he had to lift his hands for a moment to collect himself.

He touched again, remembering when Oz’s back was smooth, just plains of strong muscle that always felt so good to hold onto. Guilt rose up in Qrow, Oz had burned for them, burned alone… He withdrew his hands and got up walking away to his bag. He grabbed these painful thoughts and slammed them away, down into the deep dark corners of his mind. Only to come out when everyone else was asleep.

Qrow yanked open his own bag and quickly got dressed he missed his cape, maybe he’d find a new one today. He had hoped to escape before Oz could question him but alas it was not meant to be. As he fled the room again, Oz grabbed him and pulled him into a hug. The smaller man resisted for a moment and then gave in.

Oz had finished getting dressed so Qrow could not feel any of the new scars. So Oz held him for a long moment before letting go, watching Qrow pull away. “Are you alright Qrow?”

Qrow flashed his cocky smirk, moving away towards the door. “Of course Oz, just remember you get a free scene soon, we got to shop for toys too. Tomorrow we’ll do it Oz.” He turned and fled.
before Oz could respond, his hands tingling still feeling Oz’s marred skin.

Once everyone was dressed they regrouped in the living room. Nora couldn’t help but giggle as Qrow adjusted his shirt, clearly remembering his earlier antics.

“So Obi?” Nora asked. “What are we gonna do in the meantime? Waiting for the Spring semester.”

“Please don’t call me that.” Ozpin rubbed his temples as Weiss giggled. “We have four months before the spring semester. Salem’s next move will likely happen before the students return. So we train, we get you four into fighting shape. Hunt down the Spring Maiden and keep an ear to the ground for Cinder. We protect the Relic of Knowledge. Then we enlist the aid of other huntsmen, if we can find any.”

“But we can fight.” Ruby said with an uhh, she did not like where this was going.

“You still can’t fight without Crescent Rose.” Ozpin turned his attention to her a smirk playing over his lips.

“Hey I practiced with Qrow over the winter!” Ruby said, they had after all practiced.

Oz grinned, crossing his arms. “I know, I also know what those lessons often turned into.”

Qrow coughed on his coffee and Ruby blushed, crossing her legs.

Jaune looked between the two. “Jezz can you two keep it in your pants for two minutes?’

“And while I can see you’ve improved, I’m disappointed you still haven’t unlocked your Semblance.” Ozpin turned his attention to Jaune, then to Ren and Nora. “You all have to improve before you stand a chance against Salem and her soldiers. As for finding Huntsmen to help us, Qrow?”

“I'll put a list together, I’ve been here enough times to know where to look.” Qrow set is coffee aside.

Ozpin nodded trusting Qrow in that before letting out a long sigh. “But before all that, we are all in need of new gear and some time to unwind. So I propose today, we deal with the clothes situation and set about stocking the house for a more lengthy stay. Enjoy Mistral without the sword of Damocles over our heads.”

“SHOPPING!!” Nora leaped up into the air in glee.

Ruby flicked through clothing racks, they had split up Qrow had taken Jaune and Ren for mens clothing. While Ruby, Nora, Weiss went with Oz, though the later mostly silently with a smirk on his face and gone to a lingerie store. Old things too worn out to keep were thrown out and new ones were being browsed for. Ruby sighed, she had grown an inch already, eighteen seemed to be her
year of growing. Not that she minded getting steadily taller, it was just everything else was growing
too and shopping for underwear had never been more complicated! With a huff she pushed through a
few more bra’s looking for one her size, damned tiny rib cage!

A black and red, lace trimmed foam cup bra, complete with a lace connecting point between the
straps that then flared out about three centimeters wide making use of near the whole band entered
her view, hanging delicately from a long male finger. “Try this one.” Oz purred from behind her.

Ruby eyed it skeptically she wasn’t sure how she felt about all the lace but the pattern on the back
was quite pretty and she sure didn’t have anything to lose. “Okay.” She glanced at the tag and
noticed the band was an inch smaller than she thought it should be. Well she could at least check the
style.

Oz picked a spot on the wall in eve of the change rooms. A few of the other women giggled
watching him, while it wasn’t abnormal for a man to come in with his girl and he was very
distinguished. Weiss took up beside him, she didn’t need much in the way of new things, she had
come more for the fun of it.

Nora rushed over and held up two bras, one pink the other blue. Oz recognized the colours
matching the respective eyeliners of Nora and Ren, but the two cuts of the bra’s were vastly
different. The pink was satin and lacy, with a push up cup and spaghetti straps. The other was more
modest with no foam cup, just lace floral pattern not unlike Ren’s emblem with much wider lace
straps. “Which one Obi?” Nora asked holding them up higher.

“You going for support or trying to get Ren to pay attention to you?” Ozpin asked with a sigh at
the nickname, it seemed he wasn’t going to be able to live that one down. He applied his expert eye
to the two vastly different articles of clothing.

“Ren of course!” Nora asked, it was kinda nice having Ozpin around she had decided, he was so
much more laid back now. Plus breakfast with him had been fun, as was watching him and Ruby
chat up a storm about Mistral on the way down.

“Then blue, it’s more flattering. You have plenty of cleavage, you don’t need any help there. Less
is more in this case, your natural shape will be more than enough for him. Let it show.” Ozpin gave
his honest opinion.

Nora looked between the two articles and nodded, she had many more bras hanging from her arm.
“Yeah okay, I’ll try that.” She then zipped off to a change room.

Ruby then came out and strutted up to him standing on her toes hands on her hips. “How did you
know?”

Ozpin shifted his weight off the wall and reached out wrapping his hands around her rib cage his
fingertips near touching. “Call it an extremely educated guess.” He slip a pinky under the band
testing the tightness, damn near perfect. “Do you like it?”

Ruby pulled away and did a little jump, next to nothing moved. “Yeah, it’s like super lock and
load without being squishy and ugly. Though I thought the band would be too small.”

“From my experiences people tend to overestimate the size they need for a band. It’s supposed to
press on your skin, not barely hug it.” He tested the straps and twirled a finger for her to turn around,
as he snitched them up properly. “Though in a store like this you won’t find much in your size, we’ll
have to hit up a specially place later.” He said with a smile.
Ruby found that felt much better, he very slightly loosened both straps and made them even. “My old bras were fine!”

“You didn’t wear them often at… home Ruby, but from what I did see, I felt it was very safe to assume Tai has never taken you to a proper store. Large outlets like this are next to useless for finding anything truly good.” Oz couldn’t help but pet down her spine once with a thumb.

“Yeah you’re right, but at least Nora is having fun.” Ruby pulled away and turned to smile up at him.

Nora burst out of her change room locked and loaded. “How’s this?”

Ruby giggled at all the bouncing, Oz rolled his eyes with a smirk and gestured for her come over and turn around. “Your straps are too loose.” He fixed then with professional grace and tested the band. “Same cup larger band, we’ll move on after you find the right one.”

“Cool thanks!” Nora bounced off to change again.

Oz turned his attention back to Ruby. “Go get changed, as lovely as that looks I don’t think they’ll let you wear it out.”

“Okay.” Ruby pouted a little bit, the longer she wore it the better it felt.

As she left a petite sales associate came over, she was a lovely young woman. “Having fun doing my job for me?”

Ozpin looked over gave her a cocky grin. “Oh yes. Do you know if Lydia still in business?” His heart gave a flutter, she has been his supplier for many years… among other things.

“Oh yes, she got some new help the other day.” The associate said as Ruby and Nora came out.

“Huh, that will be interesting.” Oz said with a humm and stepped out while Ruby and Nora made their purchases. With Weiss staying by Oz, she had never been to such an average store.

“So where to next?” Ruby asked slipping her arm around Oz’s right. Oz had taken her bag and had it in his other hand.

“Another lingerie store, an old friend by the name of Lydia.” Ozpin said with a smile, he was really wondering just what help Lydia had gotten.

They went up several levels, the Great Elevator was packed with people. Weiss and Ruby found watching the city change styles fascinating. It reminded both of them of Vale only the change from district to district was less jarring. They came to the point where the buildings were made of wood rather then stone and entered another store, only instead this one had a waiting room. It was pristine, with beautiful artist bra and model paintings. Oz went up to the receptionist. “Hello Gretchen, I’ve a pair of young women in need of a proper fitting.” He purred out, leaning on the desk with a hand, while crossing a calf over the other.

Gretchen pushed up her glasses and looked at her schedule then up at Oz. She recognised him instantly and near jumped out of her seat. “O-.”

“Shh.” Ozpin put a finger over his lips. “Come on I am sure Lydia can fit us in, the red head is a twenty eight E, I think, but I’ll leave a true assessment to Lydia.”

Gretchen blushed and picked up her Scroll, she talked for a few minutes softly to the voice on the
other side. Then she set it down looked up at Oz. “You can go in now.”

Oz gestured for Ruby and Nora to follow and headed over to the doors. “Now, head on in and don’t show fear. She’ll see that as a weakness, follow my lead.”

They entered a dark room Oz walking in. “I’ve got three challenges for you Lydia, I dare say one might stump you.”

“Bold words young one.” A eerie voice said.

SWOOSH!!!

Ruby, Weiss and Nora spun with the force and speed of the impact. Nora looked down to find a new bra holding her breasts in place, it was very sturdy and somehow put on under her shirt. Ruby found her shirt open and wearing a bra that resembled mirthal. “What the heck?!” She pointed at the bra with both hands. Weiss giggled liking her own blue lace sleep number.

“Lingerie ninja’s be on guard.” Oz said leaning over and raising a fist protectively, then he grinned and called out into the dark room. “Impressive! But it’s not like you to go the route of hiring mercenaries. You’ve always been a loner.”

The voice boomed again. “Too True becan valen. But these are not mercenaries. I had to call upon the knowledge of my old master. They are his elite guard.”

“Prove it.” Ozpin said firmly.

The flash was longer this time and Nora let out an IEEE while Ruby and Weiss squealed with a giggles. Then the three saw Ozpin and their jaws hit the floor.

The ninja’s had changed him too, where his old clothes had gone no one knew. Now he was wearing skin tight leather pants that instead of ending at his waist slopped up at the back in a smooth arch hugging his love handles. The front was in a V ending at a clasp that was just low enough to show a dusting of black hair. He was wearing one piece leather gloves that went all the way up to his mid upper arm. He twisted around look at his behind and testing the lovely hugging leather. “Well, a bit simple but a good first step to getting back in the swing of things.” Oz said enjoying the feel of the leather with a smirk.

A woman dressed completely in black save a slit for her eyes appeared beside Nora as the lights flicked on. “Espresso?” Nora took the offered cup a bit stunned.

Lydia walked up to them, an older woman with lines around her eyes and pulling at her cheeks. Her eyes were very dark and long black hair, she was wearing a tight dress with her own buxom bosom pushed up. “What you are wearing is a lampskin, custom skin suit with spider silk threading, the liner layer is silk a golden silk orb weaver. It is held together by a blend of aramid fibers woven with carbon nanotubes. Those are held together with dragline silk from a bark spider layered with memory carbon gauze thus creating a non-newtonian fabric.”

Ozpin blinked twice, boy was he out of the loop. “And… what did all that mean?”

“HI-YA!” A lingerie ninja appeared out of thin air cleaving down at him katana in hand. He raised a arm on reflex to shield his head and the sword split in two as it hit the black leather glove.

“Wow, would you look at that.” Ozpin looked at the leather more closely, testing the fingers by wiggling his.
“It means not even your Qrow will be able to rip it.” Lydia put a hand on her hip.

Oz giggled and rubbed his hands together much to the shock of the young women beside him. “Ohh the ideas I have for this. How much for it?” He asked shifting to stretch each leg, it really was a perfect fit.

“Three thousand for the suit, eight hundred for your red haired woman and eighty for her two friends. You’re in luck an unnamed agency contacted me shortly after I finished making your suit and ordered several.” Lydia said smoothly.

“Sold!” Ozpin said spinning on the spot. “Hmm could I order a shoulder piece and cape assembly?” He paused and then grinned. “You got any of this in crimson red?”

Lydia smile at her old student, letting the formality ease. “I’m sure I can work something out.” She stepped up to him and sighed softly but happy, reaching up she took his cheek in hand.

Ruby and Nora stood amazed when Oz closed his eyes and leaned into her touch. The woman was clearly much older than Oz and meant something to him, Ruby wondered what.

“It is good to see you alive, when word of your death reached me.” Lydia looked down to his chest her hand falling from his check to trace along scar. “I mourned for you my little Ozzy, my becan valen.”

Oz took her hand in his and brought it to his lips kissing the palm. “It will take more than a little fire to put this old stag down.”

Lydia laughed it was breathy yet pleasant. “Old?” She reached out with her free had tracing up his torso, her finger following the flow of his hard muscles. “You don’t look like you've aged a day,” the elder frowned. “Though you have lost weight, what have you been doing to yourself?”

Oz shrugged. “It's a long story and well immortality is a bit-.”

Lydia caught his tongue better her thumb and forefinger before he finish his sentence and pulled it. “Immm sorrry Misszrsss it zwooonzt happnn againnn.” Ozpin endeavored to say his apology sans his painfully pinched tongue.

“Apology accepted.” Lydia let go of his tongue and gestured for him to sit on the plus leather sofa. Meanwhile two ninja’s were measuring up Ruby and Nora, both too shocked at the woman putting Oz in his place to say a word.

Ozpin sat back in the sofa his arms over the back of it as he watched the ninja’s measure the girls. Nora they just measured her bust before pulling her away to show her the collection. Ruby however took much longer as they measured all of her limbs and then let her sit down beside Oz.

As Ruby snuggled into his side, Oz let an arm down and pulled her into his lap. His hand splayed over her thigh, he missed their movie nights. He turned his attention back to Lydia. “How did you know it was me?”

Lydia sipped her coffee. “You really have so little faith in my abilities? I knew it was you as soon as you came in. You damn near gave poor Gretchen a heart attack, it’s a good thing the girl is so calm.”

Ozpin cocked his head to the side, he could feel Lydia’s semblance. “Did you read me? Is that how?”
“No becan valen, I saw you for you. No amount of tattoos or accents could hide you from me.” Lydia said fondly, the wrinkles around her eyes crinkling.

Oz blushed and bowed his head, it was nice to talk to Lydia another person that knew everything. Ruby looked between the two, she was surprised when Oz dipped his head in a submissive fashion. “Uh, what’s the story?”

The colour around Oz’s cheeks deepened. “Lydia is my dominate, my Mistress and Teacher.”

“Wow.” Ruby looked between the two of them rapidly, she knew Oz had to have learned from somewhere but never thought she’d meet the teacher.

Lydia smiled and asked Ozpin. “Who is this one? And you still haven’t introduced me to your Qrow.”

“Lydia this is Ruby Rose, a new submissive of mine. Very new to the game, I haven’t had a chance to teach her much of anything yet.” His fingers stroked little circles over Ruby’s hip.

Lydia nodded to Ruby. “I pleasure to meet you, I’m always glad to see Ozzy letting more people in. As an immortal he’s always had trouble on that front.”

Ruby pursed her lips. “I know it’s not my place to pry, but how do you even know about that?”

“My dear I am a telepath, that is my Semblance. I can read minds and send thoughts to them. Oz was well…” Lydia paused searching for the words.

"In a bad place.” Ozpin said, moving his hand pulling Ruby to his chest.

“I was intrigued so I offered him an escape.” She sipped her coffee looking at Oz with a small smile.

“It was the start of a very long education.” Oz kissed Ruby’s temple and breathed deeply of her scent. “I was... emotionally damaged, Lydia helped with that. Retought me any things and provided a distraction.”

“It was about the only time I could get him to be a good submissive.” Lydia said watching the two closely, she had noticed the rose in Ruby’s hair and knew what it was.

Ozpin shrugged and smiled. “What can I say? I was born to be dominant.”

“That you were.” Lydia said and looked way when a ninja appeared with a white lingerie dress for Ruby.

Ruby gawked at the thing, the lace was so thin in places it might as well have been see through. The white lace bra of it was ornate, cupping and presenting her breasts, the dress was cut away under them at the middle the light fabric flowed slightly away from the rest. The dress came with stockings of yet more light lace and garters. The panties made Ruby flush, while they would cover her completely, they would also frame her butt cheeks. She looked up at Oz her jaw dropped.

“You said two lace.” A smile pulling at his lips.

Ruby stood up and headed off to a change room with the ninja and Weiss.

When she was gone Lydia spoke up. “She’s lovely, it’s a shame you found her first.”

Ozpin picked up a cup of hot chocolate, trust Lydia to remember what he liked and had a sip. “She is, a kinder more honest soul I have never met.” He wove his hands around large mug, he couldn’t
remember the last time he had hot chocolate. He smiled thinking back about how Lydia would always make him some after a scene, maybe that was where his preference for it began.

“She is good for you.” Lydia said watching him again, she was scanning him quietly already seeing what had happened to him in the last year.

“Already taken a read of her?” Ozpin asked, he knew his old teacher was reading him as well. She was the one person where he didn’t mind it, she already knew everything more than anyone else.

“Of course, she loves you and is still just a little afraid of you. But I think time will cure that, you have changed a great deal. More than I think even you know.” Lydia said leaning back into her chair and crossing her legs at the ankle.

“What is that supposed to mean?” Ozpin looked up sharply to her.

“You nearly died Ozpin, you haven’t come to terms with that and it’s going to come back and bite you. You’ve lost everything but your lovers and even then they were ripped from you. Just this morning you had an anxiety attack, your Qrow took the time to feel your scars then lied about being fine. Even in your memories I can see that, I don’t think little Ruby has come to terms with your changes either. You are having a scene with Qrow tomorrow? If that goes smoothly I’ll give up making lingerie. You have all been broken by the Fall of Beacon and its had a year to boil and brew. It will explode soon.” Lydia spoke with firmness, her voice slipping into tones that Oz would not question.

Oz bowed his head again, lower this time. “Thank you for the warning.”

Lydia watch him for a moment. “Something has changed. Show me.”

Ozpin shook his head. “I don’t think that would be wise. So much has happened and very little of it… I… I don’t want you to think less of me.”

His old teacher stood up, sat beside him and took his hand between hers. “We all make mistakes what is important is we learn from them. I’ve long since known you and know you’re mind feels strange and foreign. Not the one that belonged to my pupil, show me please.”

Oz let down the walls he used to protect his mind and let her in. His head dipped towards her as he closed his eyes. Her hands were soft cradling his cheeks. Ozpin heard her suck in a sharp breath, he could feel her looking through the last few years. Everything that had changed, what he had done.

Lydia withdrew from his mind and Oz cleared the tears that had collected in his eyes. “What you did to Qrow… Brings shame to me and to you. Be thankful you did not travel in our societies while you were both in such a state. As for the rest, I fear for you. To have an Awakened Soul, yes I know what they are and to have it be so powerful. Tread carefully my love, or I fear you will be in a battle for your mind, body and sanity.”

“Thank you for your insight. My mind has become a rather confusing place at times.” Ozpin drew away and leaned back into the couch.

Lydia smiled like a fat cat. “That said my dear, don’t think you’ve gotten off scot free. You will make time to come and visit me and I shall endeavor to remind you why your behavior was utterly horrible and shameful. Some correction seems to be in order.”

Ozpin paled and shrank into the couch, his shoulders hunched in and he hugged himself. Lydia reached over and patted him on the head. “Now sit.”
Oz didn’t say a word just slid off the couch and onto the floor and put his head against her knee. Lydia put her hand in his hair, idly playing with the black locks.

Ruby and Weiss returned, Ruby in her little white lace number and Weiss in a dark blue lace corset that only framed her breasts not covered them. They posed together, Weiss with a hand on Ruby’s behind and Ruby kissing her neck. Ozpin gawked at the pair causing them both to giggle.

Ruby and Weiss were surprised to see him on the floor but at the smile from Lydia both chose to leave it be.

Much later the two groups met up for lunch before splitting again. Qrow, Ozpin and Ruby headed off together to another shop, this one had pink curtains over the windows and a title of Kate’s. Ruby was floored when the door opened to reveal the contents.

Sex toys, everything a kinkster could need, Qrow had already near bounced towards the anal section towards the back of the store. For it was a large store and aside from the merchandise looked rather normal. Dildo’s, restraints, movies, books, lingerie, toy cleaning supplies, Ruby’s mind was blown. “Wow.”

Oz chuckled and patted her back. “Feel free to explore, ask if you have any questions. I need to get the sales associate to cut some rope for me.”

“Okay.” Ruby said and headed down one row, it was hard to wrap her mind around all the different things. There was a dildo so big on display she wondered if you needed to be a giant to use it, or if it was just there to amaze poor unsuspecting redheads.

When she came to the books she paused reading the titles. ‘The Ultimate Guide to Kink: BDSM, Role Play and the Erotic Edge’, ‘How to be a Healthy and Happy Submissive’, so many books. She pulled one off the shelf and started to read, it seemed like in no time at all Ozpin appeared by her side.

He peered at her book, the first of the aforementioned books. “That’s a good one, solid essays.”

“Do you have recommendations?” Ruby asked look up to him, there were so many she didn’t know where to start. Oz’s smile told her all she needed to know.

Enema kit, check, anal plug, check, hehe you’re gonna love that one Oz. Qrow was browsing mostly for prepping kit, tomorrow was the scene after all. He wanted to give himself to Oz without a damn condom and that required a few things first. He’d already picked what he was eating for the next two days out and he’d mess around with the plug tonight, not something he was looking forward too but it would be so worth it in the long run.

He couldn’t help but run his hands along a leather corset, what Oz had put him in the past was of a vastly superior quality but he still liked the leather. He could hear Oz speaking with Ruby about books elsewhere in the store, that would be a good start for her. At least that way she’d have an idea
of what questions she needed to ask.

He came into the impact section of the store, most weren’t really his thing. Oz had other tools that were much more effective for getting under Qrow’s skin. He shuddered, getting under his skin, the feel of Ozpin’s skin under his hands rose in his mind with vengeance. He had felt that skin, I left him to burn. Qrow hugged himself suddenly not feeling at all playful. Guilt rose up in him, if only he’d gone back, looked a little longer for Oz. He looked up and around at the tools of the dominant trade, a long black leather whip jumped out at him.

Slowly he walked over and ran his hand over the leather, he could feel it was of good quality just by the touch of it. It had no cracker, no tails, it would cut and it would hurt like hell. Oz burned in hell because I didn’t look for him, didn’t go back again. He picked up the whip and tested the grip, it was good and big enough that it would fit well into Oz’s hand. I failed him, I should burn too. If I can get him to use it, this would be a good stand in. I want to feel it, feel how he burned alone in the dark because I was too slow. He grabbed the whip and folded it up, he need to make his purchases before Oz caught on.

Chapter End Notes

Ardy: Thank you too: darkvampirekisses for your comment. It's always appreciated. Now in other news, as you might have noticed I've been updating rather quickly. That is because my goal has always been to finish Emerald Rose before Volume Six aired. That's so not going to happen but at the very least I want to be at completely new content by that time. You will have noticed several changes to this chapter, the next will resolve Qrow’s long standing guilt as I am sure people remember only that will all be in one chapter instead of two. After-which we will be heading into new territory, I do not know how much longer Emerald Rose will be. However once it is done I DO NOT plan to carry on in this AU for probably several months at least. Maybe longer it highly depends on our other stories and what Volume Six gives us. Thank you for all the support, for putting up with my endless experimentation. Lets all cross our fingers for a good Volume Six... and that it gives me lots to play with!

P.S
The Elite Bra guard
http://wapsisquare.com/comic/elite-bra-guard/
Qrow made use of the emena kit, then had a shower. These two things were easy for him, practiced, common place but as he stepped out of the shower and cleaned off the mirror to look at his face. He bit his lip as guilt turned in his stomach, he had time before the scene, Oz was never late but he was never early either. He always arrived exactly when he wished too.

The red eyed man stared into the mirror, taking in the dark circles under his eyes. He’d been up all night thinking about what he wanted for today. He came to the conclusion he wanted the whip, to feel the pain, he shivered and sat down on the side of the bathtub. Hugging himself he tried to calm down, it wasn’t the pain he was afraid of, it was switching. To give up control and letting Ozpin do as he wished to him, but even then Oz knew him well, he’d be safe. *Switch Qrow, you said you would and if you don’t all this is gonna be for nothing.* His stomach turned, the whip was outside, he felt a bit guilty for buying it, Oz wasn’t the pain inflicting kind of dom. The room was still hot from the steam but he felt cold. *Come on! You bought it! He burned there is no reason why I shouldn’t too!* Qrow pushed his bangs up, then grabbed a towel roughly drying his head. Only when he had furiously dried the rest of himself did he hang the towel again and look the mirror. He pulled his bangs back down, as if they would help him hide from the world. *Come on! Calm your ass down! This is Oz, even when you’re strung up and you’re ass is red you know you are safe! Breathe, remember that? Breathe.*

Qrow grabbed the counter bracing himself and hung his head. His body was tense and alert, he wanted to do this, he needed this it had been so long. *Deep breaths, calm your fucking mind, you can’t switch if you’re on high fucking alert all the time. The point of this is to let go, to let him guide you for a while.* Qrow took a deep breath through his nose till his lungs were full, then letting it out without holding his breath. Trying to unwind the knots that his stomach was twisting itself into. *Again, that’s it, this is Oz even with a whip he’ll take care of me. He always takes care of me. He burned for us, for Ruby and me and I left him behind.* Another deep breath, another tiny shred of tension being released. *Breathe just breathe, remember how it feels. Remember his embrace, to be held to be under him, not just in body but in soul. Remember how it feels to be safe, to have him inside. Body, mind and soul, relax, breathe.* Qrow’s shoulders lowered and his grip on the counter lessoned, big deep breath after breath. *You don’t have to be Qrow fucking Branwen, you don’t have to be anyone for a while. Relax, think of how gentle he can be when he’s not worried about you talking back, think of all the pleasure he’s brought you. How you are always safe with him, always. He closed his eyes and let his head fall back letting out the warm air in his lungs with one big huff. It’s okay to let go.*

Qrow let out a whimper and let his mind travel down that alien path, one so rarely used. He strode out of the bathroom and to his shopping bag, pulled out the whip and knelt in the middle of the room beside the foot of the bed. He folded it so it was only a foot long and shifted his legs were spread knees far apart but comfortable. The red eyed man paused for a moment and let out another long breath. Then he delicately picked up the whip again and bowed his head closing his eyes and raised it up well above him held gently with both hands offering it up to his Master.
Ozpin pursed his lips as he entered the room, he had told Qrow to get ready but this was not what he thought Qrow would do. With Ruby in attendance he thought this would be a light scene. He most certainly didn’t expect to find Qrow kneeling legs parted, head down, eyes closed with a whip Oz had most certainly NOT bought held lightly in his hands. Said hands were well above his head, presenting the whip to Oz. He bit his lip Lydia’s recent lessons drilled into his mind, though he doubted she’d let him go anytime soon.

The older man gestured for Ruby to sit on the bed but didn’t say a word. He did not like whips, they were much too easy to do serious damage with. He also didn’t enjoy inflicting that level of pain, he had used one on Qrow before but it was a very rare thing and never lasted beyond three strokes. His hand twitched as he went and grabbed the head covering he had bought, black leather, soft and supple, Lydia still had Qrow’s measurements as well. He walked behind Qrow and knelt down beside him, he ran a hand through Qrow’s hair pushing his bangs back. “Are you sure about this?” He asked softly.

“Yes Master.” Qrow’s voice was oddly smooth, the response instant and clear.

Oz frowned again and took a deep slow breath, he brought the mask over Qrow’s face an buckled up the back. The black fitted leather covered Qrow’s face till just under his nose but leaving it clear so he could breathe, it also contained near all of Qrow’s hair only a few strands escaping out the back.

The red eyed man closed his eyes as the leather tightened over his skin. This made it easier for him to sink down, he took deep calm breaths, trying to let his thoughts dribble away. Oz would whip him, Qrow would do the rest. Bring himself down deeper into the mindset Oz desired from him and where he wanted to go. He so badly wanted to please Oz right now, guilt twisted in his stomach as he remembered why he chose this whip. He picked it because he wanted to feel the pain, he had failed Oz and he had no way to beg for forgiveness. He could only offer his body, his flesh, his pain and hope that was enough. His hands clenched on the whip for a moment before releasing again, he would do this. He wanted to feel what Oz had felt.

Oz pulled the simple black leather collar from his pocket and buckled it around Qrow’s neck the ring was cold on Qrow’s throat. Qrow swallowed at the familiar feel of the soft leather, he had forgone his cross today, it had no place here. Ozpin stood and ran his fingertips over the leather whip, he could tell just from here it was six feet long and lacked any tails upon the end. He bit his lip, this wasn’t a tool for fun, why had Qrow picked it?

Reluctantly Oz took the whip from Qrow, the fine heavy handle felt near alien in his hand. He walked behind Qrow at a exactly six feet and turned back to Qrow. He gathered the whip and tested the strength of it, it had that perfect little bit of give that leather was so good for. Qrow had picked very well, even if Oz still questioned his choice. With a deep sigh he flicked out the whip with a whoosh made Ruby jump but Qrow stayed perfectly still.

Oz only just refrained from shifting his weight, without his eyes Qrow’s other senses would be on high alert. Control the information Oz. He took another deep breath. You can do this, he never lasts beyond three. It will be over soon. He swallowed and shifted his voice down forced it into his confident Dom cocky drawl. “Present.” He ordered and watched Qrow like a hawk.

Here we go. Qrow thought and stood, lifting his hands behind his head as he stood his feet a shoulder width apart. Deep breaths, remember this is nothing compared to what happened to him. His pain is my fault, it's high time I paid for it.”

“You know what to do.” Oz said and stepped to the side readying his arm.
“Yes Master.” Qrow said automatically, he had to work very hard to keep from tensing up. Oz would start with his back, it was the largest target with the most protection.

Ruby watched Oz bite his lip again, but his arm flew down, a deep dull thwack filled the air as the whip struck the venerable skin. She jumped and watched the thin red line bloom over Qrow’s back.

Qrow hissed and took a deep breath. See that wasn’t so bad you weak piece of shit. His body said that hurt like hell and begged him to put his Aura up. Instead he spoke. “Thank you Master, please may I have another?” The words came so easily to him, more he needed, more of this, let his flesh pay for his failure.

Oz watched the thin red line and felt a little ill, he couldn’t go any lighter, it was this damn whip. The line crossed horizontally over Qrow’s back from shoulder to hip, clean and perfectly placed in exactly the middle of his back. He raised his arm again and struck out, a new thin red line appeared exactly ten centimeters above the first. Only one more. He thought as his stomach turned.

Qrow bit his lip to keep from crying out, he knew Oz hated it when he sounded like he was in pain. The strike lit his nerves on fire the sound of the whip reverberated in his mind. Deep breaths you asked for this, he’s burned from head to toe you can take this. “Thank you Master, please may I have another?”

Ruby watched Oz shake his head, the red lines on Qrow’s back were so close to bleeding, looking between both men she could see neither was aroused. So what was the point of this? She covered her ears again as Oz let his arm fly again.

Ozpin bit down on his hand to keep his stomach in check as the red welt bloomed on Qrow’s back. There it’s over, he won’t ask for another, he never does.

Qrow hissed near silently, he had to be quiet for Oz’s sake. That’s it, that’s what you deserve. He clenched his hands tight letting the pain wash over his body. “Thank you Master, please may I have another?”

Ozpin’s gaze snapped to Qrow. What the hell? He wondered, his eyes swiftly scanning Qrow again, the man was taking smooth deep breaths. He hadn’t made a sound, his stance was solid and even as Oz watched Qrow relaxed again ready for another. His grip tightened on the whip and he lowered his hand, Ruby could see the red crescent mark from his own teeth. Why Qrow? What is this about? He raised his hand again and Ruby curled up. “Go if you wish Ruby.”

Ruby shook her head, she wouldn’t leave Qrow nor Oz but she did turn away and keep her hands over her ears.

Qrow had forgotten she was here, shame rose up within him. He didn’t want her to see him like this, but he wasn’t going to back out. They had barely started but he could hear Ruby turn away, maybe that would be enough. The whip flew slightly harder and Qrow bit down on his lip to keep from crying out. Silence, silence for Oz. Pain burned in a hot red over his left butt cheek, before it faded he spoke again. “Thank you Master, please may I have another?”

Oz covered his mouth again for a moment taking deep breaths through his nose. Then raised his arm and let the whip fly, striking the other butt cheek. What was going on?

Qrow’s head jerked back and he sucked in a deep breath of air. Silence, Oz needed silence, the pain from the whip was lasting and deep. “Thank you Master, please may I have another.”

Oz grit his teeth, what the fuck was going through Qrow’s head? He envied Ruby’s connection to
him, but he would not ask her to ask him mentally. He lashed out twice more with the whip, harder faster, once over each thigh. He needed to get a response, some tell from Qrow.

Qrow clenched his hands together, he could feel the sting of the whip, the sound of his skin so near being ripped open. “Thank you Master, please may I have another.”

The coppered eyed man frowned and struck out harder, he had no choice but to strike over the other marks upon Qrow’s back diagonal across them. Blood seeped slowly from the places where the strikes overlapped. End this Qrow. Oz paced back and forth slightly and silently, something here was deeply wrong.

Black dots danced over Qrow’s vision, he could feel the blood trickle down his back. His body begged him to stop, while his mind was singing a very different tune. He burned and burned, nearly died, all because I was too slow. Too weak to go back, to look for him. I’m not in any danger here, more. “Thank you Master, please may I have another.”

There was no warning, with the hit Qrow’s back was sliced open and blood trailed down over his skin. “Enough of this Qrow.” Oz snapped, his gaze was fixed on the blood, there that had to be it, he wanted to bleed. Well he was bleeding now, this had to end, they needed to talk.

The blood brought him a little closer to catharsis, his guilt dribbling down his back. It didn’t scare him, he was with Oz, he was safe. You’re always safe with him. Qrow thought. And how did you repay that? You left him to face Cinder alone, he burned alive alone. You should have seen this coming, it was your job to see it. The whole damn thing was set up and you knew the enemy was there. All your fault, you worthless bad luck charm. Qrow rushed the words out. “Thank you Master, please may I have another?”

Ozpin was getting angry, Ruby had long since curled up onto her side, staring blankly at the far wall. He should move her, but he didn’t want to break whatever illusion that Qrow had taken himself too. If Qrow felt that he didn’t need wherever he was going, they wouldn’t be doing this. He lashed out with the whip again harder, six perfectly spaced strips of flesh upon Qrow’s back, blood oozed from where they overlapped and one more that bleed freely cleanly split. He walked up to Qrow with heavy steps letting Qrow hear him, grabbed his shoulder and pressed his thumb into the split skin of the last lash. “Enough Qrow.”

Qrow couldn’t help the pained gasp, tears leaking down under the mask. No it wasn’t enough, the blood was slow he could do this for ages yet without passing out. “Please Master, may I have another?”

Oz’s brow shot up and he grabbed Qrow by the jaw with his bloody hand. Shoving Qrow’s arms down out of the way. “Why?” He growled out, he kept some space between them, the last thing Ruby needed to see was Qrow’s blood on him.

Qrow shook his head biting his lip and refusing to answer. “Please Master, may I have another.

Oz let go of Qrow and turned back to Ruby. “Ruby leave, get the first aid kit, make something to eat. Whatever you need to do.”

Ruby fled but left the door open, she could tell something was wrong here. While she couldn’t stand to watch or hear, Qrow’s silence was worse then yells. She moved quickly and quietly not wanting to leave the two men alone and she didn’t want to be completely excluded.

Oz turned his attention back to Qrow, he hated this, he hated that Qrow was refusing to talk to him. He watched as Qrow raised his arms again and returned to the ‘Presenting’ position. The fact that he
did it without an order showed he was already deep into it, Oz just needed to figure out what ‘it’ was. The whip flew again and again, each time Qrow jerked as Oz moved down to strike his behind. More blood, it tickled onto the floor, wet drips quiet drips that echoed in Oz’s ears and made his stomach turned.

Qrow fell to his knees, blood loss was starting to get to him. He knew what Oz was doing, he was trying to force Qrow to stop. He kept all the pain clenched behind his teeth, he wouldn’t make a sound even when he could feel the blood seep from him. Tears slid down his cheeks, he wouldn’t yell but he could cry, it was a release that he would allow himself. He didn’t want this to end, he was safe, here with Oz, this was nothing compared to now the man burned. He wouldn’t let Oz put an end to this, he flared his Aura, healing just enough for the bleeding to stop, restoring the lost blood and closing up the wounds. Slowly he moved first planting one foot then the other, he forced himself to his feet. “Thank you Master, please may I have another.”

Oz shook his head, there was giving your sub what they wanted and then there was this. This was taking it too far, he exhaled and folded up the whip, he’d clean it later. “No Qrow.” He said softly. “Talk to me, what’s eating you?”

No, no, no! No, no, no this wasn’t how this was supposed to go. He wasn’t supposed to say NO! He needed this! He needed to burn like Oz had, needed to feel as Oz had. This was just, he should have been faster, should have helped with Cinder! Oz had needed him and he failed, left Oz alone, burning, bleeding… dying. A part of Qrow dearly wished to speak but he couldn’t, wouldn’t. As soon as Oz knew what was bothering him he’d spew some bullshit about it not being Qrow’s fault, that he didn’t fail him. Say that he had needed to protect Ruby, that he understood that Qrow picked Ruby over him. Qrow couldn’t bare to hear that, it would be a lie, there was no excuse for abandoning Ozpin to burn. “I can’t.” Qrow said, his words finally catching, his breath stuttering.

Oz set the whip aside on the dresser, he looked at the blood on his hand and felt queasy. He needed a moment, this was getting to be too much for him, the stickiness of Qrow’s blood was starting to guide his mind down a path he couldn’t afford to go down. “Take three steps forward and Kneel Qrow, nose to the floor. I need to wash my hands.”

Qrow was quick to comply and Oz went to the bathroom, he ran the water and watched the blood spin down the drain. He sighed, Get a grip Oz, Qrow needs his Dom, you can’t wuse out! Something is clearly very wrong in his head right now, you need to figure out what and help him with it. Come on think, he’s not deep enough to speak his mind yet. There is always using pleasure, that worked before but… No that would send the wrong message. This wasn’t okay, asking for this wasn’t okay, he was here to help but bleeding then healing just so he could bleed again? That was taking it too far. He turned off the water and dried his hand, he needed to bring Qrow deeper, get him to talk.

He found Qrow exactly how he had been ordered to be, he wished Qrow would come up just a little. At least he knew what the sarcastic, cocky Qrow would do. This Qrow, this submissive Qrow, he learned something new about every time he met him. He walked over to his drawer and pulled out the seventy five feet of hemp rope he bought. He had bought silk for Ruby, he hoped the hemp would give Qrow the pain he so clearly desired. He looked at Qrow the man hadn’t moved a muscle. “Present.”

Qrow stood swiftly, even as his body screamed at the movement and Oz saw the tear tracks below the mask. His stomach turned, the smaller man hadn’t made a single sound of pain but it was written all over his face. Oz’s hand twitched and he gave in clearing the tears away with his thumb. He listened to Qrow whimper at that, as if the one gentle touch caused him more pain then the whip had.
Oz unknotted the rope so it fell in two equal lengths, then gently drape the middle behind Qrow’s neck. The smaller man let out another whimper at that, Oz set his hands on either side of Qrow’s neck and dipped his head to rest their foreheads together. Ozpin made his breaths deep and slow, they stood together for several minutes till Qrow’s breathing matched his. Only then did Oz take the ropes in hand again start to tie.

Qrow finally started to truly fall, his back was still a wash with pain, his eyes ached from the tears. Then there was the ropes, the ritual of this for that was what Karada was, a ritual. Tears started to flow again, how could Oz give him this? Each touch pulled him further down, the roughness of the rope pulled at the welts, pain lighting up his mind. Then there was the tenderness of Oz’s hands, his touch feather light yet blind as he was, each touch filled him with anticipation, joy.

Neither man noticed Ruby return, she did as soon as she heard the whip stop. Now she sat on the floor, legs drawn up as she watched. Her soul twisted and she could feel Qrow sink deeper and deeper, Oz wasn’t just tying him up. Karada a binding of Shibari was so much more than simple bondage. It didn’t restrain the submissive, they were free to move as they wished, it was the process of the ritual where it held it’s purpose. Each knot, each brush of rope of against the skin, sent the submissive deeper and deeper. Ozpin’s fingers caressed Qrow’s abused skin as he worked. Ruby saw his hands faltered as he moved behind Qrow again drawing the two lengths of rope between Qrow’s legs and up.

Qrow’s head lolled back his mind slowing to a crawl, he didn’t deserve this only now these thoughts made it past his lips. “Why? Why are you doing this for me? I failed you, I left you behind.” His voice was heavy with pain.

That’s it. Ozpin smiled softly he slowed the movements of his hands drawing out each knot just a little more. He won’t speak here, he couldn’t press Qrow here, only draw him deeper. He touched one long barely healed line and Qrow whimpered again tears sliding from his eyes.

“I should have been there, we should have faced Cinder together. I was too slow, I failed you, you burned for us. It’s all my fault, is always my fault.” The tears started to flow as he felt another knot be tied, another stroke of his battered skin. “I want to feel your pain, it should have been me.”

Oh dear. Ozpin thought doing the last knot threading the two ends around the back of the rope around Qrow’s neck. He kissed Qrow’s shoulder just below the rope as he separated the two lines, reached around Qrow guiding the lines under his arms and looping them between the first and second knot across the smaller man’s pectorals.

Qrow let out a hiccupping cry as Ozpin’s stroked his chest with both hands lightly holding the rope as he brought it back. “I’m sorry, I’m so sorry.” The more he cried the more the pain dulled, even as Oz pulled the rope of his skin, repeating the looping process with the middle section.

Oz reached up intent on taking the mask off but Qrow shook his head, covering the buckles with his hands. “Please leave it.” Qrow’s tearful words compelled Oz to leave it, his hands turned to the ropes and he wove them through the last of the loops. Now Qrow had three diamond shaped links going down his torso, with rope under his arms, around his waist and hips.

Ozpin wrapped his arms around Qrow’s middle. “Arm’s down.” He whispered, as Qrow slowly let them fall, Oz gently pulled Qrow to his front and brought them both down, Qrow in his lap. He tightened his grip and tucked his face to Qrow’s neck, so their cheeks were touching. So he could feel each fresh wave of tears, there were so many things he wanted to say but didn’t. This had to come from Qrow, he could not push for it.

Cries turned into sobs, Ruby picked her way into the room to get a washcloth, Qrow would need it.
Qrow felt so safe like this, the rope rubbed at his skin and he could not see but he knew he was safe. “I feel that I left you to die, I picked Ruby over you and I’m so sorry.” He grabbed the hands holding him, felt the scars the burns, the pits and raises of Ozpin’s skin and cried all the harder. “I left you, I gave up, I left you-,” he sobbed. “I’m sorry, I’m sorry!” He wailed out he bent over and Oz followed him holding him tight.

Tears leaked from Oz’s eyes, he wanted to shh, Qrow, to tell him that it was alright, but it wasn’t alright. Qrow needed to get this out on his own, for a man so emotionally repressed as Qrow. Oz could do nothing but hold him, protect him while his walls were down. Normally Qrow would never be able to voice these feelings, they’d just boil and chew at him. He’d drink and drink, fight and lash out, not talk, not cry. To cry was so important in the healing process, everyone needed to do it so Oz let his own tears flow. He could understand how this hurt Qrow, why it still hurt him. He let himself cry for his own pain, he could still feel the scars pull at his back and that would never go away.

“You couldn’t have known Qrow and even if you had there was nothing you could have done. Oz kissed Qrow’s neck, his soul ached but there was nothing he could do here. “I’m sorry.” Qrow said his body shaking as best as Oz’s tight hug allowed, he sniffed not caring if his face was a mess. “I don’t deserve you or Ruby. Everyone around me gets hurt, I always fail when I’m needed most. I’m no use to anyone, I don’t deserve your love.”

Ozpin’s eyes snapped up and he pulled his face away from Qrow’s neck, he needed to be able to breathe clearly. The red eyed man’s pain was filling the room and Oz couldn’t stop the tremble of his own chest. He thought Qrow was past this, he had hoped Qrow was past this, but then he guessed with each imagined failure it came back. He didn’t know what to do at this point, words wouldn’t end it, he wasn’t even sure actions would, nor would baring his soul to Qrow. This was all within the raven haired man and no outside force could change him. Instead Oz flipped Qrow around pulled him back onto his lap, he cleaned away the tracks of tears and snot and gently kissed him.

Qrow shook again and wrapped his arms around Oz’s back holding him just as tight as he was held. He didn’t deserve this kiss, but he wanted it, he wanted to please Oz, to make up for all his failings. “I’m clean,” He whispered. “You can have me without the condom.”

Oz shook his head. “No beloved, I don’t even think I could get it up right now. I don’t want that from you now, just know that I love you. That you are precious to me, that I will always want you. No matter what you think you deserve or what you believe about yourself. You are mine and I will love you and care for you.” He reached up and this time Qrow let him remove the mask, he tossed it onto the bed and cleaned Qrow’s face with his thumbs. He watched as Qrow blinked at the sudden onslaught of light. Seeing Ozpin’s features so worried and forgiving made him start to cry again.

Qrow’s breath hitched when Oz kissed him again, his thumbs stroking Qrow’s cheeks, fingers sliding and resting in the thick raven locks. He ignored the burn in his back and fell into the kiss, salty with tears, slow and gentle. Small brief tastes of Oz’s tongue as he tease it forward now and again.

Oz drew away and pulled Qrow to him so the smaller man could hide his face to his neck. “Are you ready to come up?” He asked softly, stroking Qrow’s head slowly with a hand.

Qrow shook his head nuzzling into Oz’s neck. “No, you can take the rope off if you want but leave the collar. I just want to ‘be’ for a little while.”
“Alright.” Oz said and pulled at a few of the knots, in no time at all the whole thing unraveled and he left the rope on the floor. Picking Qrow up and moving him to the bed, only now did he see Ruby. He set Qrow on the bed the smaller man silently letting go and resting on his side, eyes closed and breath slow.

Silently Ruby got up and offered the cool cloth, Oz nodded his thanks and started to clean Qrow’s back. Ruby zipped from the room and returned again silently with three cups of milk, cookies on a tray and a first aid kit in the other hand. Oz again nodded his thanks and gestured she could sit on the bed, but then pressed a finger to his lips for silence.

Qrow could heal his back, so could Oz but aftercare was about more than patching up any wounds, cleaning up and cuddles. Aftercare is about letting go of the roles of dominant and submissive, Master and Slave, Sir and Pet. It was about humanizing each other again, letting the disguise fall, talking, being flawed individuals as they were. It was as important for the dominant as it is for the submissive, it’s the ease of tension. The shift from D/s to lovers again and Ruby could see that.

Ruby climb carefully on the bed and grabbed a pillow, curling up and watching. Qrow was so quiet, not one witty retort about how gentle Oz was being with him. Not one comment on the scene, she was tempted to reach out with her soul and feel what he felt but instead she decided to respect his privacy. She took note of how Oz’s posture had changed, from the king of the world dominant, to the Oz that liked to make her breakfast. The one that bantered with her and let her cuddle him whenever she pleased.

The start of the scene had terrified her, the violence of it, she couldn’t understand why Qrow would want that. Now she did, she saw how it had twisted Oz up inside but how he did it, because Qrow asked for it. Neither of them had been aroused the whole time, yet they still did it. Even now she could tell that Oz had no desire for sex, that Qrow was slowly relaxing again from the whipping, the bondage, the tears, being brought to a place that he couldn’t go alone. She could see how it helped him, that each gentle dab of the cloth, helped him.

When the blood was cleaned away Oz pulled out some white temporary stitches and closed the long cuts. Qrow let out a little sigh and Oz covered the stitches with a numbing cream. The minutes ticked on by as Oz put Qrow back together again, inside and out. These flesh wounds would not scar, by tomorrow they would be gone but that didn’t matter to Oz. He treated each and everyone one as if it was forever.

When he was done he pulled off his pants and moved to the other side of the bed. Then moved onto to lay on his side facing Qrow, with a hand under his head and his elbow down so Qrow could use his upper arm as a pillow. The red eyed man carefully turned over and tucked his face into Ozpin’s chest in a very Ruby like action and closed his eyes. Ruby shifted over and snuggled up to Oz’s back with the same posture as Qrow. While Oz moved a leg to trap Qrow’s underneath and carefully wrapped an arm around him.

“Why did you do that Oz?” Ruby asked softly, she was having a hard time getting the image of Qrow’s sliced up back out of her head.

“Because he asked for it.” Oz answered softly, he moved his hand to pet Qrow’s head, he knew the younger man was close to sleep. The scene was exhausting for all parties involved, but it was best to talk before Ruby had a chance to think herself into a confused pit.

“But he didn’t enjoy it, I know you didn’t. You looked really ill at one point.” Ruby whispered, she traced a tattoo with a finger, feeling the flawed skin underneath.

“It wasn’t about enjoyment, I did it because he asked for it. He never usually lasts more than three
strikes with a whip, as soon as he asked for more I knew something was wrong. Then it went from a scene for 'play' to bringing him down to a point where he would talk. I could not force him to speak, there was nothing I could have said that would have changed his belief. We can’t change him, we can only be there and hope that someday he’ll understand that we do love him. That he hasn’t failed us, that there is only so much one man can do and we don’t blame him for what goes wrong.” Oz wove his hand into Qrow’s hair and felt the younger man relax his head onto Oz’s arm, a few pets later and Qrow was asleep.

“Why would he ask for that though?” Ruby wondered aloud but quietly as to not wake Qrow. The sound of that whip when it hit Qrow’s flesh, reverberated in her mind.

“He,” Oz had to phrase this carefully, some people enjoyed pain. Other’s wished to be punished for imagined failures or for their doms pleasure. Oz sighed and closed his eyes. “Qrow wished to share in my pain I think. It was his way too . . . feel, I suppose is a way to put it. He felt guilty for not finding me, for leaving me behind to burn.” He felt Ruby draw her fingers away, “Go ahead Ruby, it doesn’t hurt anymore,” her fingers returned. “I don’t like whips, as tools go they are hard to control and easy to inflict damage. While I do like the challenge at first, I do not enjoy hurting him, or anyone like that. I know Qrow takes no pleasure in that either.”

“So it was all just to bring him to a place where he could talk?” Ruby snuggled to Oz’s back, moving up to tuck her face against his neck. “That blood . . . but before after we visited you on the ship, I had to keep him from running away. I chased after him brought him to be and distracted him, why didn’t you do that?”

“Parts to a problem Ruby, I gave you the knowledge to distract him because you can’t guide him as I can. I don’t need to fuck him to get him to open up, sometimes he doesn’t even need the pain. This was a feeling of his, felt alone to stew much too long. He very rarely asks for something so extreme and I near never have to give it to him. I was worried what would have happened if he got away from you.” Oz nearly shuddered but only refrained to keep from disturbing Qrow. “I feared if he did, that I would be hunting for his body in the belly of a Grimm.”

Ruby shivered and hugged Oz, closing her eyes and pressing tight to him. “Probably. He wanted to drink again, he went through a whole bottle of vodka while he was triggered. Dad had to sedate him, there was one moment where I could see he just wanted to get it over with so he could run.” Her hand dung into Oz’s shoulder.

Oz couldn’t reach over, his hand on Qrow’s head would help keep the man asleep. He breathed deeply. “That is Qrow’s first instinct much of the time, but he can’t do that with me and I have no intention of ever leaving him again.”

“Thank you Oz, I would have lost him long ago without you.” Ruby sat up and kissed Oz’s cheek.

Oz turned his head and kissed her lips gently before she could withdraw. “And I would have without you, since you came he has been much more stable.”

Ruby leaned her forehead against his, as they both closed their eyes. “Thank you all the same, I guess ‘we’ are all better for having each other.”

“We balance.” Ozpin said softly. “I need someone who will give into me.Whenever I wish for it, that is not something Qrow will do. Qrow needs someone who will give in to him, is always steadfast, always there for him. You are that to him, you and your endless abundant love. We both need someone to protect and that is you. We both enjoy cuckolding, so there is no jealousy over that or who gets to have you the most. Well,” Oz shrugged slightly and smiled. “I do have a year to make up for, so maybe a little jealousy but I’ll soon catch up on that front I think.”
Ruby opened her eyes and pulled away giggling a little, she pressed her legs together her body already tingling at the suggestion of him ‘catching up’ to Qrow. Oz watched her fondly before saying, “The point being, we work well together.”

The silver eyed woman smiled and snuggled back down. “Sleep?”

“At least doze for a while, I have a feeling he will be wanting sex when he does wake up. It’s actually very useful in aftercare, sometimes there is nothing like making love to soothe the mind and body.” Oz let his head fall back onto his pillow, he needed a rest too. It had been an emotionally exhausting day and Ruby snuggled up snoozing behind him was comforting. Knowing they hadn’t scared her off and that Qrow as still wearing his collar. So Oz knew he’d be getting a second sub when Qrow woke up, thus he needed to be at the top of his game. He felt Ruby’s breath slow and her head against his back and let his own eyes close.

Ruby awoke to a soft moan, she blinked and rolling over she found Oz posed over Qrow kissing him long and slow. The moan had come from the smaller man, who had parted his legs letting Oz settle between them. Ruby noticed as Qrow’s finger lightly stroked up Oz’s arms that he wasn’t wearing any of his rings. The only thing he wore was the collar Oz gave him, the black leather looked snug and hugging.

Qrow basked in these gentle kisses, it was definitely a good way to wake up. He was sure it hadn’t been a long nap but he did feel much more relaxed and at ease for it. He could tell his back was healed, he felt just a little bit lethargic as Oz slowly woke him. The collar felt nice around his neck, reminding him of his role now, Oz made it easier too these kisses to soft to even stir his dominant side. He purred partly closing his eyes as Ozipin kissed over his cheek, he tilted his head giving the older man his neck. Not one tease of teeth or tongue, just the soft press of lips over and over. “I’ve a request.” Qrow said softly, this was so relaxing, he was trying to remember why he didn’t do this more often.

“Hmm?” Oz paused, raising a brow and pulled away slightly, shifting his arms so his elbows were on the mattress and his body pressed more fully atop of Qrow’s.

Qrow worried his lip, it was so mushy and out of norm but he did remember it fondly. He and Oz hadn’t done it much as it required Qrow to be a willing receptive partner. He took a deep breath and let it out slowly. “Tantra.” There he said it, bring on the spiritual mumbo jumbo . . . that also typically lead to some of the best orgasms of his life.

“Wow he really must in into it right now, I can’t remember the last time he asked for that. Not that I’m going to complain. “Twisted or normal?” Ozipin asked pressing his lips to Qrow’s neck again, he wanted to nip but he resisted best keep this as calm as he could.

“Normal.” Qrow slid his hands down off Oz’s shoulders, tracing over his collar bone. They paused trailing over the pits and cuts from Nito, this time he didn’t feel guilty for them. They were just a part of Oz, something that had happened to him, something they would all learn to live with. “I’m glad you are okay.” He said softly as Oz pulled away so Qrow could see what he was touching. Qrow’s hands were weathered but they touched with care, they brushed up over to Oz’s cheeks and held them.

Oz closed his copper eyes, this was one thing he liked about it when Qrow switched. He didn’t have
to worry about pace or gentleness, they had improved since their falling out. However it didn’t mean
the occasional mock fight to figure out wasn’t still fun. This however was something they hadn’t
done in a very long time, Oz leaned down and pressed another kiss to Qrow’s lips. “I’ll get some
pillows, there is milk you should drink it.” Slowly he drew away catching Qrow’s hands in his and
pressing a kiss to each palm, before getting off the bed. He briefly stopped in the bathroom to clean
his chest of the little streaks of blood from when he hugged Qrow and grabbed a towel, there were a
sticky pool of Qrow’s blood still on the floor. He covered it with the towel, out of sight out of mind,
someone would clean it later. Then stepped out into the hallway to seek out appropriate pillows for
Tantric sex.

Qrow sat up and looked over to Ruby. “Are you alright?” He asked softly, his usual rasp diminished,
his usual ‘I’m thinking’ quiet, his whole set of mannerisms changed. She took a sip, whipping the condensation off the cup with a thumb. “Are
you better now?”

Ruby sat up and took it silently, Qrow was so quiet, not his usual ‘I’m thinking’ quiet, his whole set
of mannerisms changed. She took a sip, whipping the condensation off the cup with a thumb. “Are
you better now?”

Qrow sat up as well, crossing his legs and picking up the other cup. He looked down into it and said
his voice low. “Yeah, we don’t use it very often or to that level but pain can be an excellent catalyst
for mental relief. That-” He bit his lip and turned his face away from her, he felt guilty for letting her
see that. “It had been on my mind for a while.”

“Why didn’t you tell me?” Ruby asked, this soft spoken Qrow was so strange, she couldn’t help but
ease her voice into calmer tones as well.

The red eyed man shook his head. “It was my burden to bare, I didn’t want you to feel guilt for it as
well. I did pick you over him, I should have gone back.” He let out a long sigh. “I did look for him
though, the hall was burning by the time I got there, glass and metal everywhere. I should have
noticed the signs that he got away, I am sure there would have been some. But I was too worried
about the both of you to be objective, to think clearly.” He took a sip of the milk, his lips were a little
chapped he needed to replenish the lost fluids.

“You know you did the best you could, with the dragon and the Grimm. If you had gone back they
could have killed you.” Ruby almost reached out to him, but she still wasn’t sure how to treat this
sub Qrow.

“I know, I know all these things, but guilt isn’t the most rational of emotions.” Qrow had a longer sip
and drew his legs up, resting his chin on his knees. “I guess that is where the pain comes in, gives
guilt a physical manifestation, a way to let it go.”

The silver eyed woman both did and didn’t understand, she understood what he was feeling and
why. However the whip itself still escaped her, she had been reading she knew there were less
dangerous tools. “Why a whip? Why that whip?”

“Have you touched his back? Really touched it? Taken the time to trace over it? I know you’ve held
it when he’s been inside of you, but outside of pleasure? Have you?” He looked over to her, for all
his questioning he was as calm as the sea after a storm.

“No.” Ruby said softly, remembering the nap before. “I did a little while you were sleeping but not a
whole exploration of his back.”

“I remember how it used to be, smooth, the muscles standing out as he moved. You could trace each
individual one, not a single scar marring him... I only took the time to touch his back yesterday but I
know the scars go further. I know how they twist and pit, you can still feel the muscles underneath
but it all feels wrong now.” He shivered and set the milk aside and hid his face to his eyes. “If I had looked for him more, helped with Cinder, gotten to him faster. Helped at all. He could have been spared that, he burned alive for us Ruby.” He took a deep breath and let it out, he wouldn’t fall into the guilt tripping pit this time. He closed his eyes and remembered the feel of the hemp rope on his skin, of Oz’s embrace, the strength of it, the safety in it.

“I know. I don’t know how I can help yet but I’ll find a way.” Ruby took another drink of the milk it was strange to talk like this with Qrow. Her soul twisted, she could feel him through it, how he was trying to stay calm to focus on the memories of the scene.

“I’m sure you will.” Qrow said.

“What’s Tantra?” Ruby asked softly and finished her milk.

Qrow unwound and did the same, taking both cups and setting them aside. “Tantra is a southern Anima spiritual practice, I know what you thinking me spiritual? Yeah no, but it’s actually got something to it, what we did to make Oz’s Ring was almost Tantric in nature. Anyway, Tantra embraces sex as a legitimate and effective path to enlightenment. It’s an embodied spiritual practice. It embraces all elements and aspects of life-including but not limited to sex as a way to experience direct knowledge of the divine. It’s not a religion, they tend to approach spirituality in a controlled and ordered manner, with a hierarchical organization and emphasis on a set of rules. As you know, follow the rules and you are promised a predictable goal of salvation, enlightenment or peace.” Qrow folded the edge of the blanket. “Tantra on the other hand as I said is a spiritual practice, it’s about uhh, hmm. It’s about stepping out of your ordinary reality into a realm of infinite possibilities. It’s letting go of everything and being in the moment.”

Oz returned two large pillows in hand, happy to let Qrow try and work his way through explaining it. Qrow on the other hand looked up and smiled. “A little help here.”

“Another aspect of it is to be conscious during the practice, to enter into a relaxed state of awareness with a quiet mind to be able to focus gently and easily on what’s going on in the present moment. It is mindfulness. Putting your attention on your intentions. To be conscious in this context is to go totally and utterly into whatever you are doing - whatever you are experiencing. Tantric sex is about applying this to sex, conscious sex, is a sexual encounter in which you are focused on each successive moment of your journey through pleasure. It is not a goal-oriented activity. In Tantric sex not even orgasm is the goal, because there is no goal. Though they certainly to happen, all of the time, but I’ve found that there are other erotic moments as exquisite as climax on this path.” He walked over to the space by the window and set the two pillows down so they were close together, then retrieved and opened a push top bottle of lube and set it by the pillow. Lastly he took out Ruby’s silk rope, a towel and set them beside the pillows. “Why don’t we just show you?” He extended his hand to Qrow.

Qrow smiled and got up, he resolved to not look at the floor or the towel upon it. He set his hand in Oz’s and felt smaller in this moment, the good kind of small that made a person feel special. First Oz turned Qrow around, gently removing the bandages from his skin, his back now completely and flawlessly healed. Then Qrow turned back around, they stood facing each other, for a moment before Qrow brought his hands together palms facing. Oz wrapped his hands around Qrow’s wrists firmly and their gaze met and held. Red to copper, together they breathed in deeply through their mouths, keeping their throats and mouths relaxed, then exhaled all without holding their breaths.

With each breath they focused on the moment, the sounds of each other, Oz could feel the slow calm thump of Qrow’s pulse through his wrists. Qrow could feel the calluses upon Oz’s hands, to prevent his mind from wandering Qrow focused on the feel of Oz’s hands. The power in them, the energy
and imagined that flowing into him. He let his own hands further relax his thumbs gently pressed against Ozpin’s wrists. This created a cycle for his own energy, he imagined it flowing through his thumbs and into Oz’s heart. He could feel Oz return it, breath after breath, they filled their bodies with the energy of each other.

Ozpin let go of Qrow’s wrists and in sync, they lifted a hand to each other’s heart and rested it there, while the others joined again between them. Fingers into woven, but the hold itself gentle, exactly at the resilient edge of resistance, that point between not too hard or too soft. Qrow found himself finding all the little flicks of darker brown or lighter gold in Ozpin’s eyes. His gaze was still relaxed, offering up himself to Oz’s more commanding one. His heart rate picked up as he felt Oz looking into him, the trust he put in this.

The copper eyed man exhaled deeply, this was so relaxing even as he let Qrow soul gaze him. He trailed his hand up Qrow’s chest and hooked a finger through the loop on the collar. He pulled the younger man up without breaking eye contact, that perfect point of force between helping Qrow onto the tips of his toes while not pulling him up brashly. Finally closing his eyes he pressed his lips softly to Qrow and smiled when the man made a low moan. So he remembered to use sound as well, Oz deepened the kiss with a soft moan of his own. “Ready to move on?” He asked softly as their bodies grew aroused.

“Yes.” Qrow said in a breathy voice as the pleasure slowly rose, this part was to build a connection to become in sync with your partner. Oz lead him to the pillow and pushed one out of the way, then sat on the other his legs out in a resting position before him. Qrow stepped over and sat nimble astride Oz’s lap, his own legs outstretched with his feet planted on the floor as well. One hand finding its way behind the larger man’s head the other resting above his heart. Oz’s arms wrapped around Qrow, one above his heart, the other wrapped around Qrow’s hips supporting him.

They rested their foreheads together and breathed again, differently this time. There mouths open slightly, they relaxed their jaws and faces. A deep breath in as much as they could, then a soft exhale letting the air fall out with a little sigh. They stayed like this for several moments, their gaze holding each other again. Oz started to rock then very slowly small movements of no more than a few centimeters. Imagining the flow of energy between them, and equal give and take, sending energy into his lover and taking it as well. They both grew yet more aroused at the high that came with exchanging power and the build of sexual energy.

Qrow’s body relaxed as he felt the energy move between them, if they showed their Aura’s they would be flowing together. Red and green, fire and water merging together entwined in growing ecstasy. He gave Oz as much energy as he received, both parties becoming both the active and receptive in this exchange. Qrow closed his eyes and kissed Oz chastely a little grind of his hips, his tell to the other man.

Oz stopped rocking them as Qrow moved his legs to kneel pushing up into Oz’s embrace, leaning on him. He brought both hands together palms touching like he was praying they hovered over Oz sternum and opened his eyes to look into those copper pools.

Oz stroked the clean sensitive skin of Qrow’s anus, gently rimming him at that perfect point of pressure again. Qrow moaned again higher than before, while flexing his pelvic muscles, trying to carry the sexual energy up out of his genitals and into the rest of his body. With each stroke of Oz’s finger, he squeezed his muscles, breathed deeply visualizing the movement of energy, up through him into his heart. Having it spread from there to fill every pore of his body, to guide it to his hands and share it with Oz. When Oz moaned again, following Qrow’s slightly higher pitch, the red eyed man knew Oz was going through the same process as he was. Moving the energy to fill his body but not yet sharing it back.
Oz had to focus to keep his breathing in tune with Qrow, they did not do this often enough and Qrow was always a very intense individual. He wouldn’t let it distract him though, he withdrew his hand from Qrow pumped lube over his fingers and returned them to Qrow ass. Bit by very slow bit working Qrow into a further receptive state for him. Listening as Qrow moaned louder and louder, his own member aching for release as the energy built between them.

Ruby felt it, her soul was twisting and turning, fluttering as Qrow felt and gave to Ozpin. It was like using the rose or ring, without having them on hand. She didn’t know how this worked, she didn’t active have their connection open. In contrast to the two men, her chest was heaving as she tried to breath through the sensations. Her skin was flushed her body ached, her hands went to her sex as she rubbed, how could Qrow feel all this and stay so calm? She couldn’t tell up from down, she was burning yet not, hot and cold, how did they feel this and still move together? Her eyes rolled back into her head as she felt orgasm sweep through Qrow, then promptly passed out for a minute or two.

Qrow was finally prepared and after Oz had liberally coated himself as well. He dried his fingers on the towel and lifted the smaller man up then gently down onto him. Qrow cried out his breathing quickening as Oz slowly pushed inside of him, when he was seated within him and still. Qrow force his breath to slow again to match Oz’s again, moving his legs so they were stretched out again. There foreheads pressed together, eyes open as Oz started to rock again. Qrow let a chorus of sounds escape him, for sound moved energy, up and up, through his heart, through his hands and into Oz.

Oz picked up the looped rope set it across Qrow’s chest then tightened it at the knot placing it above Qrow’s heart then grabbing it. This gave him a ‘handle’ at the heart chakra, with it he threw Qrow back, flexing his pelvic muscles then pulled him back. Using the action to return the energy Qrow had been giving him. Over and over, quickly almost to the point of overwhelming the younger man. He watched Qrow fly, felt how the pleasure built in his lover.

The red eyed man moved his hands to rest over Oz’s heart. Nothing existed to him but this moment, the circle flow of energy, the push and pull of Oz. The feel of him, within him body and soul, Qrow leaned back breaking eye contact, Oz’s free hand coming up to cup his head. Qrow kept his mind centred on this moment, conscious and aware of it. Pleasure washed through him again, lost to the sea of energy and connection. He was utterly relaxed in Oz’s tender hold, the physical sensation of the bigger man moving in him, heightened, he fell into a pattern of breath deeper faster in time with Oz’s strokes, but never strained.

Oz felt his own pleasure wash through him, the higher moan from Qrow and the flux of energy as Qrow gave of what he felt. Oz slowed down, pulling Qrow back to him, a hand moving to the smaller man’s hips as he pulled Qrow up and kissed him soundly. He felt Qrow’s hands slide over his chest up around into his hair and moaned softly flexing his pelvic floor. Returning the energy, helping Qrow move it by running a hand up his spine, then feeling Qrow pass it on to him.

Ruby watched her own body aching, she watched Qrow come again and again, Oz as well though his largest tell was the longer moan. Sometimes it was fast, Oz manipulating Qrow with ease, other it was slow as they moved together. Give, take, push and pull, rise and fall, always and endless cycle of energy, she watched the sweat collect on their bodies. She could have spoken and neither would have heard her. She stroked her clit, while she could not match them the pleasure and energy leaking off of Qrow was more than enough to help her along.

They moved together till their bodies were too exhausted to continue, till even Ozpin’s stamina was at its end. Once more they came together, then slowly they let the energy tapper, bit by bit easing themselves down, till again they were still looking into each other’s eyes then sharing a long kiss. Their breaths fell out of sink and Qrow snuggled his face to Oz’s neck to exhausted to even dream of moving.
Oz pulled the silk rope off of Qrow, set it aside, grabbed the discarded pillow and set it before him. He wrapped both arms tight around Qrow and moved forward easing himself up then back setting the red eyed man gently down on the pillow. Qrow let out a sleepy purr already mostly asleep, Oz kissed his forehead and withdrew. Grimacing at the mess, he cleaned them both up and looked over to Ruby. She was rolled onto her back a hand on her breast the other on her clit. Poor thing. He had to leave her for a moment to wash his hands and himself more thoroughly but quickly returned moving onto the bed to lay beside her. He listened to her breathy gasps only keeping her from her goal. He reached out and brushed her hand away from her sex. “Calm your breathing, in and out through your mouth. Do not hold your breath.” He did not touch her clit instead drew little circles over her venus mound. “A part of Tantric sex is to move the energy through your chakra, here is your Muladhara. The root of yourself, the start of any flow of energy. When you breathe out try to imagine the pleasure here moving up your body. Breathe Ruby.”

Ruby tried but it was so hard to relax as her body edged, she breathed through her mouth she had to really focus on breathing to not hold her breath. His touched tingled, felt strange and energized, her eyes fluttered closed as she slowed her breathing.

Ozpin’s fingers moved up to the middle of her hips. “Here is Svadhishthana, the centre of sexual energy. When you breathe in flex your pelvic floor, imagine pushing the energy up through your chakra.” He moved his hand up touching her diaphragm, over her heart, throat and forehead. “I will help you this time, but you must master your breathing. Imagine your body as a vessel, with each breath you are filling it with this sexual energy. When you hold your breath you are unable to fill it, but by breathing deeply and calmly you can expand it.” He moved to kneel astride her, a hand moved to her sex, he slid two fingers easily inside, gently stroking his thumb over her pearl. Ruby tried to breathe, to imagine what he had said but it was so hard with this burning pleasure from Qrow racing unchecked through her. She felt his Aura above her Muladhara, felt it sinking into her meridians of her body. She took slow breath after slow breath, in through her mouth and exhaling without hold it. She felt Oz press his fingers up along her body and her breath stuttered when she felt the burning energy move as well. Her eyes flew open as she looked up at him, their gaze locking together. Silver to copper, though with the energy moving around him Oz’s eyes looked near gold. “Breathe.” He whispered softly his fingers slowly but firmly thrusting into her sex, he moved his other fingers up to her diaphragm drawing the up through to that chakra.

The silver eyed woman gasped and her breaths grew deeper quicker, all on their own. “Flex your pelvic floor.” Ozpin said softly, working his fingers over her most pleasurable places. Ruby bore down on them and as cried out a high “Ahh!” as the energy swept up the path Oz had opened for her. Oz moved his fingers again, drawing the energy up to her heart. He paused there for several minutes, letting Ruby regain control of her breath, calling the energy up through her body. “Imagine this energy spreading from here, down to your fingertips and toes. Here.” Again with his Aura he opened up the paths and Ruby did as he asked clenching her pelvic floor, the erotic energy moving through in time with her breathing. The burn ebbed in favour of a smooth more encompassing pleasure, that hummed through her body.

Oz finally moved his fingers up to her throat, helping her open another path for the energy. Ruby’s eyes glided shut, she was starting to feel as if she was floating, she didn’t need to focus on her breathing so hard. She felt Oz move above her, his own breath tickling her cheeks and she found hers slowly to match it. “Our breath is what gives us life, it is the fuel for everything we do. Breathe deeply for me.” He whispered and Ruby complied.

She felt him press his lips to her forehead, her third eye and the energy swam over her senses, she cried out arching under him as her body tensed and released pushing the energy through her. She knew nothing but it for several long minutes.
Oz drew away and watched her climax, carefully withdrawing his Aura from her. He glanced up and found that Qrow had his arms folded on the edge of the bed, his chin rested upon his hands. “Beautiful.” He said softly.

Ozpin had to agree, as he watched her relax muscle by muscle, it took a few minutes more and eventually she blinked up at him with a sleepy wide smile. He smiled in return and chuckled softly. “Welcome to your first full body orgasm.”

Ruby purred and stretched she felt so good, her brain a bit of a blur and her body limp and happy. “Can we do that again?” She petted the covers of the bed, turning head to watch her fingers. The tiny pulls and dips of the fabrics were suddenly so fascinating.

Ozpin chuckled again at her sated slow state as the afterglow remained in her. “Qrow and I need a rest, but ask me again tomorrow I am sure I will be able to work something out.”

Qrow heaved himself onto the bed and flopped onto his front. “Master, will you please remove my collar now? I need nice long nap after that.”

Oz smiled and moved over, unbuckling the collar and setting it aside. Qrow rolled over when it was off and Oz kissed his lips once more. “Thank you.”

“Hmm.” Qrow purred. “If we do that again, I might be convinced to switch more often.”

The older man chuckled, his limbs trembled slightly he then moved to Ruby’s other side and flopped. The bed bouncing so much that Ruby lifted up slightly into the air, she giggled and crawled over on him. “I’ll believe that, when I see it.” Oz pulled Ruby onto his chest, a Ruby Rose blanket, he had a sneaking feeling it might be his new favourite blanket.

Qrow huffed pushing his bangs back with hand and moving over to rest his head on Oz’s shoulder. “I guess we’ll see.”

Oz reached up and ruffled his hair. “I thought you were tried, cause I’m knackered. Wake me up when we have to make dinner.”

Ruby giggled at Oz’s extremely causal language. Qrow huffed and closed his eyes as the all relaxed to sleep.

“OZY, QROW, RUBY!!! WE BROUGHT TAKE OUT, COME GET IT WHILE IT’S HOT!” Nora’s loud voice, echoed up the stairs and assaulted their ears.

“AND BEFORE NORA EATS YOUR SHARE!” Jaune yelled up the stairs.

The three groaned at set about getting up and mostly dressed.

Chapter End Notes

Ardy: Thank you too: Bucky_Barnes, Sportsfangirl815 and darkvampirekisses. For all your comments, next chapter we get finally get into a the new content!
Yang rode on her bike through Anima chasing rumours of the Branwen Tribe. Thanks to the consistent effort of Taiyang and Glynda she was doing better, enough she felt she could leave home. She drove slowly down the dirt track, she had heard this was where the Branwen’s made camp but so far hadn’t seen any walls or obvious human structures.

BANG.

Yang swerved her bike as a bullet hit the ground where her head had been a second earlier, pulling it to a stop. As she looked around for the shooter a voice from above her called out. “Don’t move, state your business!”

“I’m looking for my mother, Raven Branwen.” Yang called out looking around but not seeing the source of the voice.

“Wait there.”

Yang turned off her bike and pulled up her Aura, all she could see was just more plain forest. After a minute to her shock her mother came running from out between the trees. “What are you doing here?! You need to leave now!” Raven snapped at her.

That was not what she expected of her mother, she scowled and said fine. “Just open a portal to Qrow then, my dad told me about your Semblance, I need to get to him. Open the portal and I’ll leave.”

“Fine!” Raven had one hand on her sword when another voice called out. “You’re really going to send her off without even introducing her?”

Yang looked over to see a tall woman though only a few centimeters then herself. Her hair was straight and black, she wore a steel coloured kimono cut at the hips revealing brown leather leggings while the rest flared out behind her like a coat. Her right eye was a brownish red the other was covered with a plain black eye patch. Her features were softer than Raven’s but the resemblance was clear.

Raven swallowed and did a short bow. “Mother.”

The bandit chieftess barely spared Raven a look, instead focusing on Yang. She walked over with long steps, the ground crunching under her boots. She stopped before Yang and lifted the chin of her grand daughter with a finger. “Hmm.” She turned away from Yang. “I recall sending you to Beacon to learn how to kill huntsmen.” She spoke through thin lips. “So why, do I only learn now, that you not only discarded that mission but had a daughter without telling me?”

“I did not discard my mission.” Raven said with clenched fists.

“Get distracted then.” Hawk Branwen said.

“I felt she would be safer with her father.” Raven said glaring her mother down.

“So you robbed the Tribe of one of its own.” Hawk said flicking her fingers.
“I am well aware of how you treat your children. Yang was better off with Taiyang and she will be going now.” Raven said reaching for her sword again.

“No. I don’t think so.” Hawk said. “She should meet her grandfather don’t you think? Or would you rob him of that experience as well?” She looked at her daughter daring her to challenge the order.

Raven tightened her grip on her sword, the two elder women glared each other down for a long minute. Yang spoke up. “I’m fine with meeting more family.”

“Come then.” Hawk turned on her heel and walked ahead. “Don’t stray from the path, you’re of no use to me yet. Turning you into Grimm bait is still an option.”

Yang looked at her mother who gestured for her to go first. The blonde grabbed her bike and followed behind Hawk. Walking through the trees now she could see all manner of traps woven into them. They came upon the camp after a few minutes and whatever Yang had expected of bandits was not what she got.

The camp was built in rings, fine tents with high ceilings and round shapes made up the other layer. Glancing into them she could see weapons and armour, tents devoted to hunting, stables, others for skinning and preparing food. The second ring was crafting, a large area that had a forge almost as big as Tai’s kitchen sat in the centre with three teams of four people working together on separate projects around it. The last ring was made up of more triangular tents, with three or four beds within them each. Lastly in the centre of the camp was a round house tent dyed in black and red. A large red raven was embroidered on the side, with its wings stretched out behind it wisps of flame coming from the tips.

Before it stood a tall lean man that instantly reminded Yang of Qrow, though taller still then her uncle. His short curly black hair had a white streak on the left side. Unlike his wife, Falcon Branwen wore a tight black shirt with a heavy black scarf wrapped around his neck. At his hip lay a broadsword. The rest of his outfit was black only with the red Branwen raven embroidered on the thigh his right pant. He looked over and blinked once at the three women a smiled played over his lips. “Who do we have here Raven?” He asked his daughter.

“Father this is my daughter Yang.” Raven said through gritted teeth.

Falcon only raised a brow and looked Yang up and down. “Yet more family, why haven’t you mentioned her before?”

“She was to stay with her father.” Raven said.

“Still at least she come of her own will, unlike your utter failure to bring Qrow back. Or find out where Ozpin got his magic from.” Falcon stood straight like a soldier his hand tucked behind his back.

“At least I didn’t completely fail on that last one. Qrow is a lost cause though.” Raven grumbled.

“Yes it seems you used your vagina to accomplish a few things.” Hawk snapped at Raven.

Yang blushed although she missed the real suggestion in that statement.

Falcon had the decently to look annoyed by his wife’s choice of words. “Hawk! Please, not in front of the children.” For a bandit he had a kind smile, it reminded her of the one Qrow wore whenever he played video games with her and Ruby.
Hawk only scowled. “You’re so full of it Falcon!” It looked like she was going to say more but a sharp rap on the poles holding up the tent pulled their attention. “I’ll see to it.”

Raven controlled the urge to drag her daughter from the tent and back to the main entrance. Now that her parents knew of her existence it was going to be more difficult to separate them. “I’ll make sure she doesn’t kill anybody.”

Yang looked at the man who was her grandfather, while she could see a lot of her uncle in him there was something harsh about the line between his brow. His eyes were a pale red just like Qrows and now he turned those familiar orbs on her. “So tell me Yang, how did you find this place?”

“I had some help from my dad but basically I have been traveling around Anima and asking about the Branwen Tribe. It wasn’t too difficult once I asked the right people.”

“Hmmm and would your father be Taiyang Xiao-Long? I assume he taught you to fight if you’ve managed to live this long and made it here, all alone.”

“Yes and yes he did. If you know so much about my dad how did you not know about me.” Yang asked.

“Oh I assure you I had heard nothing about you or your father from my daughter. Raven was never very forthcoming with how she spent her time in Beacon. Aside from teaching us what she learned. Qrow however is another story or at least he was. Before he left the tribe he gave me the names of his teammates, along with some other useless information he probably didn’t think I would remember but he tends to forget, that son of mine where he gets such a good memory from.”

“I thought it-” Something about the way this man was talking suggested that he was hinting to gain more information then she was trying for from him. “Very sneaky Gramps.”

The Chief chuckled. “Not as daft as the hair would have people believe hmm. Still it is a pleasure meeting you Yang. Maybe after supper you can show Hawk and I how well you fight. Strong fighters last a long time here.”

“Oh I wasn’t playing on staying-” Yang backpedaled as Hawk re-entered the tent.

“Oh of course you’re staying. You are family Yang and you belong here, with your people.” The softness to her grandmother’s tone was eerie as she came to stand by the blonde haired woman. Raven followed in shortly behind her mother though her expression was much more guarded then before.

“You can share the room with Raven and her little ‘friend’ I’m sure the two of you have much to catch up on but for now,” The elder woman clapped her hands. “Supper. Come along husband we must introduce our granddaughter to the rest of the tribe, else they think of her as an intruder and I’d hate to clean up the blood afterwards.”

Falcon dusted off his hands. “Raven do show Yang where she can keep her bike, I expect the two of you to join us presently.” The elder couple walked with arms linked together towards the tent in the centre of the camp.

Yang waited, her hand still balancing the bike. “Well where can I park Bumblebee Mom?”

Raven gestured to the outer skirts and walked with Yang silently. Once they were as far away from the tent as possible she gripped her daughters coat collar. “What the Hel are you doing here? Didn’t Qrow ever tell you to stay away from this place.”
“Why are we whispering?”

Raven tipped her head in the direction the other Branwens had gone. “Mother’s Semblance is ‘Echolocation’. If she is using it right now and I wouldn’t put it past her she can use it to pick up sounds and conversation from a great distance. So answer me. Why. Are. You. Here?”

With a sharp push Yang disentangled Raven’s hand from her coat. “Like I said I need to get to Qrow. He’s somewhere in Anima with my sister and friends and I need to find her. They left weeks before I did but there is no guarantee they made it to the kingdom. That’s when Dad told me about your Semblance, how you have a portal to each of us, one for me, one for dad and one for Qrow. Ruby is with Qrow, I find him I find my sister.”

“Your a fool Yang, of course they made it there. Damn Qrow and damn Ozpin. If you go to them you might just find yourself on the side of a war you want no part of.”

The younger woman only crossed her arms and glared at her mother. “Nothing is keeping me away from my sister.”

“Then your an even bigger fool!” Raven snapped. “Not that it matters now anyway, don’t think for one moment Hawk and Falcon are going to let you walk out of this place alive.”

Okay, Yang hadn’t expected it to be easy but get out alive. What kind of people where these bandits that called themselves family? “I thought they were family.”

Raven took another look around, ensuring no one was paying them any heed, her furious face on her daughter. “Exactly! And now that you’ve turned up and they know your family too they will demand you stay. This is no place for you Yang, you should have stay on Patch with Tai.”

“Too late for that Mom. Send me to Qrow.”

Raven looked torn between accepting Yang’s request and cutting her down when a young woman with a short boy cut brown hair stepped behind the tent. “Raven, the chief’s are waiting for you.” She took in the similar faces, one framed with the black familiar hair and the other younger with blonde locks. “Is she your . . .”

The elder woman sighed. “Yes Vernal, she is my daughter. Yang this is Vernal, one of the tribes own.”

“Pleased to meet ya.” Yang held out her human hand but Vernal only looked at it with disdain and ignored the younger woman, turning back to Raven.

“You should hurry back to the tent, Chieftess said get your ass inside for supper before she drags you in.”

The thought of Hawk dragging her mom inside like a bad child was almost enough to get her laughing but she did grin. “Woah! You go Grandma.”

Vernal didn’t seem to like the way Yang referred to their leader and rounded on the lilac eyed woman. “Pft- Grandma! How dare you speak with such disrespect. You will refer to her as Leader or Chief Branwen but never ‘Grandma’!”

“Alright alright Jeez, who stuck a bee in your bonnet Miss spring flowers.”

Red cheeked and furious Vernal stormed off ahead of them. “Whatever just hurry up!”
When Yang focused back in on her mother Raven had one hand pressed against her face. “You know Yang, that’s not the best way to go about making new friends.”

“I thought you didn’t want me anywhere near here, now your changing your mind about me being friends with bandits.”

Completely finished with the conversation Raven didn’t spare her daughter another look as she rounded the tent. “This world is not a forgiving one Yang. Come, you must be hungry.”

That was all the motivation her stomach needed gurgling loudly. Raven was her ticket to getting to Ruby but there was something more going on here than met the eye and Yang was interested in knowing more before she left. Not that she could leave without her mothers help now anyway. “I could eat.”

The next few hours were filled with Yang meeting the Branwen side of the tribe. The way Falcon explained it to Yang was that the tribe was made up of four different family names, Mana, Bran, Wydan and Branwen. They were people from different walks of life who had chosen to band together when Hawk and Falcon had first met. Some like the Bran family came from Falcon's previous tribe. Hawk was a loner but her mother's maiden name had been Wen making Branwen. The Mana and Wydan family had been later additions and while each family had their own name the whole tribe came under one leader. If anyone in the tribe wanted to challenge that Leadership they were encouraged to do so but as yet no one had managed to beat Hawk let alone Falcon as they were the two strongest fighter in the tribe.

Raven was quiet during the entire meal, even when Hawk attempted to draw her daughter into the conversation the older twin gave shortstop answers and went back to her meal. Vernal’s position in their tribe was also explained to Yang. Since she was not part of the other families but someone Raven had picked up many years ago Hawk and Falcon had ‘adopted’ her into their family when Vernal expressed a desire to join their ranks. Since she was strong in her own right and able to keep up with the rest of them she was trained from a young child and now sat proudly as a member of the tribe. Yang was surprised when Hawk told her Vernal was barely two years older then herself.

“Of course now that you’re here Yang I suppose you would be the youngest member. We will see to your training tomorrow. I know you’ve been taught by your father but I imagine there are many holes in your fighting. Not to worry we will have that fixed in no time.” Falcon lifted his earthenware cup up watching the growing tension on his daughters face.

“Oh thanks.” Yang said.

Hawk gave her grandchild a smile. “So tell me Yang, what do you like to do? What’s training with your father like?”

“Oh err, it’s good. Dad’s style of fighting is very punch first ask questions later.” That earned her a quiet chuckle from Falcon. “I also train with my sister.”

“You have a sister?!” If it was possible, Hawk’s eyes narrowed even more on Raven.

“She ain’t mine.” Was the only answer the accursed gave.

Quickly noticing how it might be mistaken Yang blurted out. “Oh no, Ruby is my half sister. Her mother Summer Rose raised us together.”

“Summer Rose huh. Wasn’t she one of the people on your team back in Beacon, Raven?” Falcon asked resting his head on his hand.
“Yes she was and a Silver eyed Warrior at that.” Raven declared, happy to direct the conversation towards anyone else so long as it wasn’t herself.

There weren’t many silver eyes left in the world, for Yang’s half sister to be one. Hawk could hardly keep the smile out of her voice. “Where is your sister at now Yang?”

“Ruby is with Qrow.” She almost added that they were somewhere in Mistral but since she wasn’t sure where her uncle stood with the tribe she didn’t feel it wise to bring up their location.

Raven’s smirk was accompanied by a short chuckle. “Oh yeh sure~ She’s ‘with’ Qrow.”

Hawk turned the cup in her hand watching the grin on her daughter’s face. “What do you mean Raven?”

“Only that my dear brother isn’t just still with Ozpin, he’s also with Ruby.” The memory of Qrow and Ruby made her feel a little ill but it was a topic that further tarnished her brothers image. She wasn’t really thinking about the implication of her words. That she had been in contact with Qrow.

Falcon however caught onto the tone and pressed. “Isn’t he a little old for her?”

His red eyed daughter only smirked at him. “Didn’t seem like she had any problems while he was fucking her senseless . . .”

The table went silent as Raven swallowed, realizing her mistake. Hawk leaned over in close to speak to her, her long black hair brushing the table. “And ‘when’ were you going to tell us you had seen your brother, Raven?”

Yang thought her mom looked like she had just shot herself in the foot for revealing so much. Raven only leaned back in her seat after composing herself as best she could. “I told you I met up with him and attempted to bring him back. He refused.”

“Was this before or after you saw him fucking Yang’s sister?” By now everyone else sat at their table was equally frightened and intrigued. Qrow was a sore subject in the tribe and it was known that Hawk still harbored a grave ‘disappointment’ about her son’s desertion.

Steeling herself Raven looked into those eyes so alike her own and rose from the table in a bid for dominance. “What does that even matter?”

“Well maybe it shows that you simply didn’t try hard enough. Qrow was always better at seducing his targets. Perhaps you should take a page from his book, maybe if you had you wouldn’t have failed so poorly with Ozpin.”

“But I didn’t fail with Oz!” Raven snapped.

“Yet your brother’s magic has been evolving, we’ve heard rumours about what he has become capable of. Yet yours is not.” Both women stood from the table leaning together and glaring.

Falcon who had been sitting back and watching the argument unfold was struck with an idea, gently laying a loving hand on his wife’s arm. “Now now Hawk. Why don’t we give Raven another shot at bringing our son home to us . . . and who knows maybe he will bring his Ruby with him. Wouldn’t you like that love, a Silver eyes here in the tribe?”

The chiefest’ face seemed to melt with something close to desire, her smile widened, almost transforming her face into one of childlike delight. “Yes! That sounds like a wonderful idea Falcon. This is such a great day, first meeting my grandchild Yang and now the prospect of having a silver
eyes in our tribe. We will grow stronger still. Raven!”

“Yes Chief?”

“Don’t fail in bringing your brother back this time my girl, if you must take young Yang and Vernal with you. I imagine seeing her sister would be enough to sway Ruby and if she and Qrow are as you described then perhaps he will follow like a puppy on a leash.”

Yang had to control the urge to jump on and defend her sister. There was no way on Remnant Ruby was joining bandits. Not only that but Ruby would never stoop so low to work with them, not that she wanted to reveal that kind of information, especially when so many questions were being answered. If this was the reason why her Mom had left her with Tai all those years ago she could almost understand it and yet so many other things didn’t make sense. All she knew right now was that she had to get out of here, the sooner the better.

So while Hawk, Falcon and a few others were drinking and after the rest of the tribe had gone to bed Yang grabbed her pack and coat before shirking away from the tent while Vernal slept. Qrow had taught her that the best way to go unnoticed was to be more then invisible. Instead of sneaking around you simply walked normally and without intent. It supposedly drew less attention than slinking around and if you were seen people would ignore someone who looked like they were supposed to be there rather then someone trying to sneak around.

Just as she was turning the corner to where her bike was a hand from the nearest tent to her shot out and dragged her inside. Ready to punch whoever had grabbed her Yang pulled back a fist before she saw the familiar glint of red eyes. “Mom, what are you doing?” Whispering she stood with her back to the tent flap.

“You need to leave but I can’t afford for them to notice you leaving, come on we will have to do this quickly.” Together they reached the gleaming yellow bike and Raven removed her sword. “Tell Qrow to watch his back and that the next time he sees me I am not to be trusted.”

Yang’s eyes widened, was this her mother’s way or telling Qrow that she was sorry? The conversation at dinner had been a tense one and the thought that Ruby and Qrow were about to be dragged into this mess didn’t sit well with Yang. In fact she was subtly terrified and prayed her uncle would understand and know what to do. “I’ll tell him.”

Raven used the slash of her blade to open a portal for her daughter, indecision flared inside her. “You, you could stay you know. Mistral isn’t safe, Hel nowhere in Anima is but you would be safer here.”

The blonde brawler shook her head, unlocking her bike. “Why don’t you come with me?”

Her mother sighed. “This is my home Yang, these are my people. It’s where I belong.”

Those lilac eyes glared at her mother’s red ones again. The sound of loud cheers could be heard in the distance. Huffing a breath she said no. “And I belong with my sister, my friends and the family you left behind.”

The sound of her portal was quiet but Raven still glanced over to where she could hear the merriment. “I don’t know if it’s too late for your sister but don’t side with your uncle. This isn’t a battle he can win, even with Ozpin.” She added the last in a barely heard whisper, just under her breath.

Yang wasn’t sure what to say, how did her mom know Oz was alive? Instead she just wheeled
Bumblebee as quietly as possible through the portal. She needed to reach Ruby and that was what she was going to do.

The Silver Eyed Warrior lay in bed reading a comic. It had been so long since she had a chance to read in private, everyone was out exploring but Ruby decided she needed some ‘me’ time. Only it seemed like it was not to be, her Scroll rang and the name ‘Lydia Ivanova’ flashed on the screen. Ruby rolled over and picked it up. “Hello?”

“Hello Ruby dear, I was wondering if you had time to meet me at my office today.” Lydia said.

“Um sure, but why?” Ruby asked.

“When we last met I couldn’t tell you everything that I wished too. Ozpin is both a powerful and vulnerable man. I didn’t want to disclose to him yet another vulnerability he now has. This however is personal and just between us. While I am sure you would have figured it out on your own with time. I feel it would be a kindness to you all to inform you.”

“Of what?”

“In person my dear. This is no conversation for a Scroll. I’ll be at my shop for the next three hours.” Lydia said.

“I’ll be there in half.” Ruby said. “Goodbye.”

“Goodbye.”

Gretchen showed Ruby up to Lydia’s office when she came to the store. Then left Ruby to enter alone, the room was smaller than the one she had been in last. There was a couch and armchair was well as a desk and computer. Lydia was already sitting upon the couch stirring a pot of tea. She was wearing a sweater today and jeans.

Ruby thought she looked tired when she smiled up at her. “Come sit please my dear.” She patted the couch beside her.

Ruby walked over and sat as Lydia poured the tea. The old woman took a deep breath. “This isn’t really a conversation I expected to ever have. But tell me my dear, what do you know of Souls and the different forms they come in?”

“Only what is taught at school and that Ozpin’s is odd.” Ruby said.

Lydia took a deep breath and poured the tea into fine earthenware cups. “Souls come in three forms my dear. Passive souls, are often newborn souls. Created when a child is conceived. Aggressive souls however are souls that have traveled in the In-Between and taken a turn through Berath’s Wheel. They reincarnate into children and absorb the passive soul created. Take Ozpin for example, not only is his soul a very aggressive but is also one that has absorbed many many other souls. We call his type of soul a Strong or Pure Soul though I believe it is also a Traveled Soul. This means he has many lives behind him, many souls. Which in turn gives him rather enormous power. For it is in
the cradle of the soul where magic is born.” She took a sip of her tea. “I am telling you this because we share something very rare. We are both Vessel Souls.”

Ruby blinked at her stunned. “Okay, what does that mean?”

“Vessel Souls are not like the others. When they absorb other souls it is a… kinder process then that of a Aggressive Soul. They are often souls that travel for unlike passive or aggressive souls. They can not be absorbed by either and in turn they do not destroy the souls they reincarnate into. It is difficult to explain. Think of a Vessel Soul as a cup of water and a aggressive or passive soul two different oils. If you stir the latter together they will become one being. For a Vessel Soul that new soul will remain as oil but become incorporated into the water. Still it’s own force, this is how Vessel Souls gain age and power. They take into themselves souls with no personality, just destroy nothing yet cleanly gain energy.” She took a deep breath. “This is not why I called you here though.”

Lydia looked over to Ruby. “Vessel souls do one other thing that no other soul does. They seek out… soul mates. I suppose would be the simplest way to put it. Souls of great power, usually they end up choosing Aggressive Souls that also belong to strong people. The owner of a Vessel Soul will look for the most powerful individual or individuals they know and seek to form a bond with them. I call this process the ‘Recognition’ the phase a Vessel Soul goes through shortly after maturity to seek the optimal genetic and soul partner. To ensure the strongest offspring. You may of noticed, thoughts of people you cared about change when you matured. You would have started seeing people more sexually, those who you touched Aura with even in small amounts would have been tested by your soul for compatibility.”

Horror dawned on Ruby’s features and she covered her mouth with a hand. “Qrow.”

“Yes, he was the strongest soul you met up till Ozpin. He already loved you, genetically you two are a fine match from what I have seen in both yours and Ozpin’s mind. He awoke your Aura, trained you in it. By the time you came to maturity your soul knew he was the one for you. Thus forming the first steps of a bond.” Lydia’s heart ached watching Ruby finally understand.

Tears gathered in her eyes. “So was everything I felt just a lie? Did my soul make him love me?” Ruby hugged herself and started to cry.

Lydia reached over and hugged her gently. “No my dear. He could have refused the Recognition at any time. He loves you for you. If he had you would have moved on as well.”

“But if my soul had already bonded to Qrow. What about Ozpin?” Ruby asked.

“Vessel Souls seek out the strongest of souls to bond too. There is no soul stronger then Ozpin’s, at least that I have ever encountered. It would have started slowly, your soul seeking his when you both touched each other. It would grow into a sense of empathy, till the Recognition was either accepted or rejected. Ozpin accepted you and the Recognition, and your soul formed the bond.” Lydia pet over Ruby’s hair. “I called you here to explain the bond. For what I felt when I read you and Ozpin. Was that your bond to him is… weak. While also from what I felt through you, your bond with Qrow is nearing it’s last stages. I highly recommend next time you are intimate with him to try for a full merger. For all the inherent gentle approach of a Vessel Soul they are the most powerful form of soul. As a Silver Eyed Warrior your soul will give you an edge that no one else will have.”

Ruby drew away and cleared her eyes. “What are you talking about?”

“As a Vessel Soul you can take another into yourself without damaging it. That translates to Aura, Semblance, skills, even the mind of the person. Think for example that Qrow is injured and unable to fight, put on bed rest for an extended period. You have the ability to move his soul into yours. Take
all that he is and turn it back against the enemy. This is of course a dangerous thing to do as it leaves the body just an empty shell and vulnerable without a mind to guide it. Think of the potential in that. Think of what you would be able to achieve if you and Ozpin got to that point.” Lydia said.

The Silver Eyed Warrior shivered violently. “It would be…”

“You’d probably be the most powerful person on the planet.” Lydia said. “Or at the very least a force to be reckoned with. But as I said, you are still only at the stage of empathy with Ozpin.” Lydia folded her hands together. “Do not get tied up in the potential power though Ruby. If something happens to you, they will feel it. If you are hurt and you don’t shield the bonds. They will feel it, if anything happens to them. You will feel it. Pain can be debilitating in battle, you must be prepared to shoulder not only your own pain but theirs as well. Leaving bonds without shielding is a very dangerous thing.”

Ruby looked over to her and softly said. “It happened to you didn’t it. Something happened to your bonded mate.”

“Yes. I felt him die as if it was my own death. It was the most horrible experience of my life, I feel empty now where he was in my soul my bond to him. To lose a bonded, something in you just breaks.” She dabbed tears from her eyes. “I would not wish it upon my worst enemy.”

“Will you teach me to shield?” Ruby asked softly.

“Yes. We should meet at least twice a week to practice it.” Lydia said then looked over to the clock and sighed. “But not today, you should return home. Ozpin enjoys having someone to come home too.”

Ruby wondered how Lydia knew when Ozpin would be home but didn’t say anything on it. “Thank for tell me all this.” She stood and Lydia followed.

“I will call you when I have time for a lesson.” Lydia said.

Ruby stepped up to her and hugged the older woman. “Okay, I’ll see you then.”

Lydia returned the hug and drew away kissing Ruby’s temple. “We shall have to speak about minor bonds as well, but not today. Goodbye.”

“Bye.” Ruby said softly and headed out. Leaving Lydia her mind turning over what she had been told.

Ruby hummed as she pulled the tray of crispy brussel sprouts, she had dressed them in olive oil and pink sea salt. They smelled lovely and would have a perfect crunch when they were consumed. She was trying not to think about what she had learned from Lydia, she just wanted to make everyone food and for things to be simple again. Not think about her soul having made her act differently then she might have otherwise had. Not think about how it had chosen partners for her based on their strength and the chance of their offspring being even stronger as a result. No she just wanted to think about how to cook dinner, when people would be home. Nice normal things.

Qrow and Ozpin weren’t home yet. Qrow was doing some recon looking into the underworld a bit for word on Salem and Cinder. While Oz said he had business to do with Lydia, though he had been
very tight lipped about what it was. She expected everyone back soon, the steaks were resting, potatoes mashed, with a side of corn. She had the plates out with silverware ready, all that she was waiting for was the brussel sprouts to cool and for her lovers and friends to come home.

She heard a key turn in the lock, think of the devils and they shall appear. She tossed her oven mitts on the counter and turned just as Oz came in. “Hello!” She bounded over and threw her arms around his neck.

Ozpin chuckled and kissed her gently, his hands coming to rest on her waist. “Having fun with the house to yourself?”

“Yes, as much as I love company it’s nice to have some time to oneself.” She slid her hands down his chest to his bandoleers and started undoing them. “How was work?” She asked looking at the buckles, trying to shove what Lydia has said about their bond being weak out of her mind.

Ozpin let her take his weapons off and set them aside, she was just wearing a red tank top and grey slacks. “Good, Lydia can be a cruel taskmaster but she knows me well.” Ruby stepped back and he took off his boots and grey cloak, the black armour of his left side shined softly.

“So boring?” Ruby took his armoured hand and led him over to the sofa.

Ozpin sat and pulled her onto his lap having her sit astride him, her nimble fingers already working on the buckles that held the armour in place. “More or less.” He raised a hand letting her remove gauntlet, his other hand pushing her shirt up to trace absent minded patterns on her belly.

“When is she paying you?” She asked working her way up his arm, the armour always felt cold to her touch, she wondered how Ozpin could stand to wear it.

“End of the week. She wants me there for a few hours every evening. Worry not, my savings as well as Qrows will cover this house for several weeks yet. We will all have to work at some point but it is not urgent.” He leaned forward helping her remove his pauldron.

Ruby set it with the rest of the armour on the coffee table. “You want to wait for everyone else for dinner?”

“Probably wise, as much as they’ll probably eat all the food.” He slid his hands around her waist to her behind and pulled her flush to his groin. “I don’t know about you but I can think of things to do while we wait.”

Ruby giggled and played with a button of his shirt. “Do you think about anything else?”

“Of course, but I’ve near a year to make up for.” He dipped his head down and started kissing her neck softly.

The silver eyed warriors eyes fluttered and she let out a happy little sigh. She started to pet his hair, she did like the silver better, she pulled away slightly and smiled at the little grumbling growl. “As much as I’d like to indulge you, I’m hungry and I should at least put some of the food back in the oven so it doesn’t get cold.”

“It will be fine.” Oz leaned forward and nipped at her neck, knowing full well how much she liked that.

“Oz~.” Ruby put a hand on his shoulder and pushed him back.

“Alright fine, tend to the food stuffs.” He let go of her hips and watched her climb off him a little
awkwardly, with an extra wobble in her legs. He leaned back into the couch and stretched so his arms lay along the back, with a little grin on his lips.

Ruby caught the look, “Oh hush you.” she flattened her shirt down and started off backwards the kitchen.

Ozpin titled his head back so he could watch her. “I hadn’t said a word.”

His woman turned back to him with a hand on her hip. “But you were thinking it!”

“I haven’t the faintest idea what you are talking about.” He smiled watching her huff and turn away from him, the extra sashay of her hips indicating she wasn’t actually mad at him.

Ruby pulled out a bowl and started putting the brussel sprouts into it. “Why don’t I believe you?” She called over her shoulder, as she put the steaks on the tray, with the corn. Then put the lid back on the mashed potatoes.

“Because you know me so well?” Ozpin narrowed his eyes at the evil mini cabbages coming his way.

Ruby oblivious to his dislike came over and put them on the table, before popping one into her mouth and letting out a happy purr. “Yum.” She licked the salt and oil from her fingertips.

Ozpin subtly shifted over, putting as much space between him and the brussel sprouts as was physically possible while staying on the couch.

Unfortunately for him he had not been subtle enough, Ruby looked between him and the sprouts a slow smile that struck fear into his heart growing on her face. She reached over and picked up another brussel sprout. “Something wrong Oz?” She climbed over into his lap.

His gaze was fixed on the sprout and Ruby knew she had him. “No, nothing at all, could you just eat or put that evil mini cabbage back?”

“Evil mini cabbage? My dear Ozpin do you not like these yummy crispy balls of olive oily goodness?” She waved the sprout between them watching Oz’s eyes track the sprout.

“I did not say that.” The black haired man squirmed, cursing himself for letting his weakness slip.

Ruby grinned and offered the sprout. “Then you won’t have any issues trying my recipe.”

Oz turned his face away. “Now I wouldn’t go that far.”

She wiggled the brussel sprout. “Come on Oz, just one little bite. I promise these are better than those boiled abominations.”

Oz paused for a moment contemplating, then grabbed her by the waist put her beside him and vaulted over the sofa with a loud declaration of. “NOPE!”

Ruby laughed and gave chase. “You really don’t like brussel sprouts! Ozpin Headmaster of Beacon, struck low by a vegetable!”

Ozpin put the kitchen island between him and the brussel sprout wielding maniac. “I don’t know what you are talking about.”

The red head laughed with the evil of all her kind. “Liar liar.” She started walking around the island and Ozpin moved to keep it between them. “Come on it’s just one little sprout.”
“I’ve had more than enough of them at formal dinners, I am not eating them of my free will.” He glared at the evil vegetable, keeping moving with Ruby so she couldn’t sneak up on him.

“But think of all the good vitamins and minerals in it!” Ruby activated her Aura and very carefully readied her Semblance.

“I do not care, I will not eat brussel sprouts without extreme duress.” Ozpin made the mistake of looking at the vegetable and not the woman wielding it.

Ruby activated her Semblance in her Rose-Petal-Burst and clobbered Oz. The poor man went down with an undignified thump while Ruby materialized with an evil laugh. “HAHAH! I have found your weakness!”

“No no!” Ozpin batted the brussel sprout away as Ruby counted to attack him with it.

They were both so involved with their scuffled that they didn’t hear Qrow come in till he was standing above them with a smile on his face.

“Qrow help! She’s trying to make me eat evil mini cabbages!” He looked up to his lover with big pleading eyes.

Ruby took this opportunity to pin his arms down under her knees. “Open up.” She ordered.

Oz looked up to Qrow for rescue. Qrow smiled and shook his head. “She made me eat sauerkraut all winter, you can suffer with one brussel sprout.”

Ozpin pouted but opened his mouth and let Ruby put the sprout in it. He chewed and had to admit it was much nicer than he was used to, still hot and crispy.

Ruby giggled and sat down on his chest. “Was that so bad?”

“No.” Oz grumbled swallowing, letting the evil little vixen have this victory.

She got up and letting up him as well, then yelped when he swept to his feet, grabbed her and put her on the counter. Ruby barely had time to gather her wits before Ozpin kissed her. “Oh.” She let out a little squeak as he deepened the kiss and a hand cupped her head.

Slowly he drew away nipping her bottom lip. “There, you made me eat the evil mini cabbage I should at least get a kiss out of it.”

“Could you be bribed to eat more of them with kisses? They are good for you.” Ruby asked resting her arms over his shoulders.

“I’ll consider it.” A kiss for a sprout did seem like an okay idea.

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Jaune walked through the mid ranges of Mistral. The carved stone of the city’s foundations peeking out between the finer wooden buildings. It was getting late and he knew he should be really heading back to the house but he wanted more time away from Ozpin. It was so hard not to lash out at the older man. They only thing that had stopped him so far was that Oz was… scary now. The mild manner of his Headmaster was gone, this new Oz oozed power and confidence. He made Jaune feel small.

Lost in thought he didn’t see his attackers till a club was bashed him over the head. Only his Aura
shrugged off the blow, he whipped out his sword and spun to face his opponents. They wore fine leathers with tall boots that went mid way up their thighs. They both wore sashes like Pyrrha once had and like the one around Jaune’s own waist. “What do you want?”

The two bandits just smiled and attacked him again. Jaune blocked one blow with his shield and dodge another, he struck out with this sword but they two were faster than him. Jaune ducked behind his shield only for his attackers to fly back punched by someone else.

The man was huge, standing at eight feet tall he towered over Jaune. The two bandits came to and scrambled away. Hazel looked down at Jaune and said. “You’re guard on your right is terrible.” He turned and walked away heading up the hill.

Jaune stared after him, thinking that most all of Mistral’s Huntsmen had gone missing yet he was sure this man was one. He scabbard his weapons and followed Hazel from a distance. He was no Qrow but he managed to follow Hazel to a fine bathhouse in the middle upper reaches of the city. Standing outside of the bathhouse was Mercury, he spoke to Hazel. “Watt’s is waiting for you inside.”

Jaune ducked behind a stone carved column before he could be seen. If Mercury was here it must mean that Cinder wasn’t far off. He peeked around the corner seeing that Mercury wasn’t looking his way and made a quick retreat heading come to report to everyone.

He burst into the house just as everyone was setting the table for dinner. “I found Mercury!”

Everyone’s gaze snapped to him.

“Where.” Oz said firmly.

“Sigismund’s Bathhouse.” Jaune said kicking his boots off.

Ozpin and Qrow shared a long look. “Watts?” Qrow finally asked.

“Probably, it would be his style.” Ozpin pursed his lips thinking.

“Who?” Ruby asked looking between the two of them.

“Arthur Watts.” Qrow said shrugging. “To the best of our knowledge he’s Salem’s resident tech head. He has a fondness for the finer things in life from what I’ve found of him and was a Atlassian scientist at one point. Sigismund’s Bathhouse suits his character perfectly, was it just Mercury or was there anyone else?”

“I followed a tall guy, freakin huge. He beat up some bandits that had jumped me with a single punch and sent them running.” Jaune sat down with everyone else and Ren and Nora brought out the last of the food Ruby had made.

Ozpin clenched a fist. “Any chance he wore a two toned green coat with large black belt?”

“Yeah how did you guess?” Jaune asked.

“Shit.” Qrow hissed under his breath.
“Agreed.” Ozpin crossed his arms over his chest, his brow furrowed.

Everyone else looked at them confused. “Care to fill us in?” Ruby asked and started to fill her plate with food.

“Hazel Rainart has a bit of a personal … vendetta against me.” Ozpin said. “He is also an extremily capable fighter and has sided with Salem.”

“Seems old Sigis’s bathhouse just ended up being a point of interest for us.” Qrow mused. “How to get in though? I’m too well known, you can’t Oz.”

“Lydia doesn’t have any girls there unfortunately.” Ozpin mused aloud. “We’ll have to get in on our own.”

“Why don’t we try getting jobs there?” Nora asked. “It would be cheaper then just visiting lots and people don’t focus on the help.”

“That idea has merit.” Ozpin said filling his plate, he was getting hungry. “Though not more then two of you, one of each gender. Furthermore not of the same team either, you were seen working together at the Vytal festival. If you were seen at a new place of work together it would beg the question why you aren’t hunting.”

“So we are stuck with Ruby or Weiss, and one of team JNR.” Ren said frowning for a moment. “Then I volunteer. I’ve drawn the least attention of my team.”

“I’ll go, Weiss is too recognizable and people are already looking for her.” Ruby said.

“That won’t work Ruby. Hazel and Watts will know what you look like.” Ozpin said, he wanted her nowhere near them. He wasn’t sure what lengths Hazel would go to hurt him.

“Well…” Qrow started and bit his lip. “They’d probably be working almost nude. And any photo’s they’d have a Ruby would be old.”

“So I dye my hair and get some contacts.” Ruby said, she wanted to do this. Wanted to be useful in the efforts to figure out what was going on.

Ozpin crossed his arms and flatly said. “No.”

Qrow looked over to him and sighed that was a sulky expression he knew well, he stood up and grabbed Oz by his upper arm. “Start without us.” He told Weiss, Ren, Jaune and Nora; Ruby got up with him and they headed to their room.

Ruby was last in and shut the door behind them. She wrung her hands and said. “Before we get into it. I’ve something to tell you about. Lydia had me visit her today.”

“Why did she do that?” Ozpin asked looking over to her sharply. Lydia hadn’t mentioned anything to him when he saw her.

“She wanted to talk to me about the different kinds of souls.” Ruby said stepping towards them. “Particularly my soul.” She took a deep breath. “She told me about Vessel Souls, what we are and what we can do.”

“What are they?” Qrow asked.

“They… they can take other souls into themselves and all the skills, knowledge even the mind of
the person comes with. That these souls do is, pick people with great power and that are a good genetic choice to bond with…” Ruby trailed off hugging herself.

Silence settled over them.

Ozpin spoke first. “So when I tried to teach you Aura… when we started to connect. That was all your soul.”

Ruby pursed her lips together and nodded. “I’m sorry. I- I didn’t know.” Tears gathered in her eyes. “It just all feels like a lie now.”

Their arms were around her the instant later. Qrow petting her head pulling her tight to him. “Love. It’s just a part of who you are. Sure you’re unique but that doesn’t make this any less real. If anything it gave us this, and I will always be grateful for that.”

Ruby cried into his shirt holding it tight. Ozpin could tell Qrow had said something to her mentally, he was jealous of that connection but at least now they knew where it came from. Knew that someday he’d could have it too. He tightened his arms around her. “It’s alright Ruby, we can’t choose how we are born.”

“Thank you.” Ruby said shifted her head to rest it on Qrow’s chest. “Lydia said that Qrow and I should try and complete the bond. To see if I can carry his soul.”

Silence was the first response followed by Qrow pulling away and starting to pace. “Wait wait wait, this could work!”

“What do you mean Qrow?” Ozpin asked, he was still trying to think it all through. He wondered just what else Lydia had told Ruby, there was no way it was that simple.

“I get that you don’t want Ruby to be in any danger any more then I do, but at the same time she is perfect for the role.” Qrow started to grin.

“I still don’t see how that is going to sway my opinion about her not going.” Ozpin said. “If anything we should keep her out of trouble even more so now.”

“I can go with her! If she can learn to take me within her then she’d have my instincts and power backing her. If there is a problem or a moment when I think she is in danger of being found out I can help her get out of there. Watts won’t see me because only my soul will be there.” Qrow said smiling. “My skills her body, no one would see it coming.”

“It would be very helpful since I don’t have a lot of experience with this sort of thing and we do need as much information as we can get.” Ruby added.

“What part of ‘she is not doing this’ don’t you get Qrow. It’s too dangerous.” Ozpin said. “We don’t know how this works!”

“What choice do we have Oz! We don’t know their next move, it could be coming today tomorrow, next week for all we know. If Watts leaves Mistral while we’ve done nothing isn’t that then on us?” Qrow said. “We’ve got no other leads.”

“She’s still vulnerable and if my hunch is right we are through her as well.” Ozpin said. “Putting her anywhere near Hazel is not safe.”

“I know you want to keep her safe and protected but in this world while the threat of Salem is at its greatest there is no safe place. She needs to be able to learn about the world and experience it herself.
She can’t do that if we are holding her back.” Qrow said, he’d been doing that very thing for long enough.

“And what if something happens to her Qrow?”

“She’s strong Oz and we will help make her stronger. Starting now. It’s the best chance we have at gaining an upper hand Oz, we need to take it.” Qrow said raising a hand and clenching it.

“I want to help Oz.” Ruby said looking up to him. “I’ll be safe, I won’t be alone.”

Ozpin sighed, he wasn’t going to be able to talk them out of this one was he? “Alright fine. But first we need to figure out if you can even host Qrow’s soul.”

Ruby’s stomach growled. “I vote dinner first.”

“Yeah.” Qrow said and they headed back downstairs.

As they moved back to the table a loud THUMM filled the air and Qrow instantly went for his weapon whipping it out and extending the blade. A red portal appeared in the room and Yang walked through with her bike.

“Oh.” Qrow said and put Harbinger away.

“Yang!” Ruby flew at her sister and Yang had barely any time to side stand her bike before her arms were filled with her sisters body.

She laughed as she hugged her little sis tight. “Hey sis.” Yang drew away and looked Ruby up and down. “Hey you got taller!”

Ruby blushed and fiddled with her skirt. “Yeah only a few centimeters though.”

“Still five something is better than five nothing.” Yang ruffled Ruby’s hair.

“How are you doing?” Ruby asked softly.

The blonde smiled warmly. “Better, not completely but enough to get back to you.”

“Hey what I’m I? Chopped liver?” Qrow asked.

Yang answered him with a clobbering hug and snuggled her face into his chest. “Never uncle Qrow.”

Ozpin watched as Qrow visibly relaxed and held Yang for a long moment. He thumbed the red ring around his finger, his heart warmed at the love between the family. While he was sure when next he and Taiyang met, there would be a reckoning. He was only a short step from this becoming his family. Yang drew away from Qrow and looked over to Ozpin. “Don’t think you’ve escaped.”

“Huh-oof!” Ozpin braced himself as Yang also attacked him with a hug, though much more brief than the ones she had shared with Qrow and Ruby.

Yang stepped away, colour dusting her cheeks. “Welcome to the family.”

Oz rubbed the back of his head. “Thanks.” He lifted his hand showing the red ring. “I think any chance you had of getting rid of me is long gone.”

“Given how much those two missed you, that makes me very glad.” Yang looked over to Qrow,
her smile fell. “I ran into mom and the rest of the tribe.”

Qrow visibly paled. “And?”

“Mom caught you and Ruby together. Now Hawk and Falcon know. Hawk wants you and Ruby and will be sending Raven after the two of you soon.” Yang said.

“Who?” Ozpin asked.

Qrow walked over to the couch and sat with a flop bowing his head with his hands hanging between his knees. “Fuck~.”

“You don’t know?” Yang looked over at Oz surprised.

“Huh no, Qrow’s never really talked the tribe.” Ozpin said and walked over to Qrow sitting beside him and reached out rubbing over the smaller man’s shoulders.

“I should have known this would happen.” Qrow said. “Stupid Semblance.”

“Hawk and Falcon are my grandparents.” Yang said.

“Your parents?!” Ozpin’s brow flew upward his gaze locked on Qrow. “I thought they were dead.”

“No, Gods that would make life easier.” Qrow mumbled.

“Hawk wants you back. Falcon I had a harder time figuring out, he seems pretty laid back.” Yang walked over. Hearing a commotion Weiss and Nora peered out from the kitchen. Nora squealed in excitement, bounding to the blonde haired woman not unlike Ruby had done moments ago and squeezed Yang in a bruisers hug. "You're Here! how did you get here?"

"Long story. Hey Weiss, pfft nice hair." She pointed out the strawberry blonde her usually colder friend had dyed.

"I'll have you know that I've recieved many compliments for my style . . . I've missed you too Yang." She added with a smile, granting the other woman a sincere and warm hug.

The rest of the teams gathered up their dinner and moved over to the couches. Ruby sat on Qrow’s other side. “You okay?”

“No.”

“Raven said that next time you two met you shouldn’t trust her.” Yang took a plate of food from Nora when she offered and picked on of the few empty places left beside Weiss. The smaller girl leaned happy on Yang as a way of saying hello.

“Hawk won’t give up. We should be ready for a visit.” Qrow said. “She has a twisted version of the meaning of family.”

“Seems to take it pretty literally. She wanted me to stay just because I was family.” Yang said.

“Only she never lets go.” Qrow said. “Getting away from her was one of the best moments of my life. I mean she named me ‘Qrow’ she might as well have written ‘blame this one for everything that goes wrong’ on my forehead.”

“Well both your parents seemed to want you back pretty badly. From what I gathered they’ve
been hearing about you and see that you’re stronger how. That your magic has been evolving they said anyway, while Raven’s hasn’t been.” Yang said after taking a few big bites of dinner. She had eaten before coming but she was never gonna turn down Ruby’s cooking.

Qrow looked up at Ozpin, who pursed his lips their gaze held for a long moment before Ozpin turned away. “That’s interesting to know. That Raven has not changed beyond what I gave to her.”

“Hawk wants to know why.” Yang said. “... And I think Raven does too.”

“I have a few ideas there, but they are not for present company.” Ozpin said, his insides twisting painfully. Just how much had he changed Qrow? And how much had Qrow changed himself?

“What we aren’t allowed to know what’s going on? When it could bring a tribe of bandits down on our heads?” Jaune snapped.

Ozpin glared at him. “Personal information is still personal. Nothing gets more personal than magic.”

“So we stick with our plan and try to avoid Raven if we see her?” Ruby asked.

“Yeah, unless we have a reason to leave the city we should be fine. The Liyr and Penarddun will keep the Branwen’s out of the city.” Qrow said. “It’s damn unlikely that Hawk and Falcon will show up on our doorstep.”

“What is your guy’s plan?” Yang asked.

“We found Mercury and a guy named Hazel who works for Salem. It seems that Hazel and other one of Salem’s people Watt’s visit a bathhouse for meetings. Ren and I are going to try to get jobs there, I’ll probably bleach my hair.” Ruby said.

“Are you sure that’s a good idea? What do you know about working in a bathhouse?” Yang asked. “I could go instead.”

“Yang, you shot Mercury after the fight was over, on live television. You’re WAY to recognizable.” Ruby said.

“And you beat, Qrow, Ozpin and James on live tv.” Yang countered.

“I’ve also change a lot since then, plus I won’t be going alone... Uhh, I’ve kinda learned that I might be able to take Qrow’s soul into mine. So I’ll have all his skills at my disposal. Between the two of us and a disguise, I’ll be okay.” Ruby said.

“How can you do that?” Ren asked.

“I learned from Lydia, who also is one. That I’m a Vessel Soul, so with people who I am really connected too. I can house their souls.” Ruby said. “The downside being it leaves their body empty.”

“So we keep on the lookout for Cinder and her cronies, maybe take some Grimm bounties. Ozpin goes to do his work, and Yang gets to stay here and protect Qrow’s body while he’s with you! It’s perfect!” Nora said with a bit to much glee, this magic stuff was cool.

“When you put it like that.” Ozpin mused. “It does work out rather well.”

After that talk eased way, everyone thinking on what had been learned. Ruby, Qrow and Ozpin gathered their plates and Nora had the brilliant idea to put a movie on. After all with now busy life was going to get, they all knew the importance of making time for downtime. The three bond mates,
ended up in a pile of limbs with Ozpin on the bottom idly petting both his lovers hair. While Qrow
dozed his way through ‘Much Ado about Nothing’ while Ruby watched it from his chest. Weiss and
Yang also ended up snuggled, though Weiss put her feet in Jaune’s lap and was letting him massage
them. Nora and Ren ended up in the love seat also snuggling.

Chapter End Notes

Kry: Thank you too: darkvampirekisses, Bucky_Barnes, Sportsfangirl815 and
Mysty_Sinclair for all you're lovely comments. It's always nice to see.
Ardy: *crackles knuckles* Now I probably shouldn't be posting this early but think of it
as celebrating the volume 6 trailer (as plain a trailer it was). A number of things in it
made me very happy, the biggest one being team RWBY pissed with Oscar/Ozpin. I
knew that he was not coming clean about everything and if it wasn't a lie by omission,
I'll be really surprised. I feel like just the anger from team RWBY made this rewrite so
worth it. I'm willing to bet I'll have to adapt my plans very little for v6 content. I wrote in
a few fail safes for learning more Oz lore as we go, so yeah. Totally called that!
Now in other news, both expect a slowing down of chapters for them to get REALLY
dense. This arc is already really busy and I always leave room in my outlines for new
ideas. See you all around!
The Crimson

Chapter Summary

Tags are updated, keep in mind these are only fictional examples and not to be treated as fact.

Chapter Notes

Ardy: So I pitched a rather kinky idea to my rather large board of directors over a year ago now. Only now do you all get to see said idea, sorry in advanced for the shifting pro nouns, I did what I understood.

Lastly: https://3.bp.blogspot.com/-oK4OR8Bp2gU/Wqgit58C46I/AAAAAAAAeM0/vOdIqEMXVGc2BVJTNbcXt05T_R55EABkv of-the-Lustrous-Antarcticite.jpg

Ruby's new hair colour, if you don't like links just look up Land of the Lustrous Antarcticite.
Oz's tune list
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JNYOVEXJBBM&t=0s&list=LLg88LFcMyUvhJiSZ-jHyzww&index=3
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ccY25Cb3im0 (Explicit)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Ruby paced back and forth, Ozpin was sitting in a chair in the corner of the room on his Scroll, headphones covered his ears with his foot tapping away to a song. The sound of water running in the bathroom was the loudest sound in the room. Lydia had said next time she and Qrow were intimate to try for a full merger but she hadn’t said HOW to merge. She grabbed at her hair in frustration, after dinner the three of them had returned to their room. Qrow dodging out for a shower and Ozpin took one look at her flustered state and had pulled out his Scroll and headphones, sitting with one leg crossed over his knee. She watched him and found it oddly soothing, he was just oozing calm. “What are you listening too?”


Ruby walked over in all her nude glory. “Can I listen?”

Ozpin lowered his leg and patted his lap. Ruby climbed in and Oz took off one of the isolated headphones and handed it to her. She put it on and found herself slowly bobbing her head, the vocals were in a language she didn’t know but the beat was nice, not so slow to be boring not to fast to get her heart racing. “I like it.”

Oz purred. “They are my go to, when I’m trying to figure something out.”

The door to the bathroom opened and Qrow strode out drying his hair. He looked over to Ruby sitting on Oz’s lap, suddenly nervous his guts twisted themselves in knots. “Okay Rubes. Any idea
how to do this?"

Ruby took off the headphone and shook her head. “No, Lydia helpfully left that bit out.”

“Why don’t you try what we did when I gave you magic Qrow?” Ozpin said eyes still closed as he listened to his music having moved onto a piano piece.

Qrow swallowed and rubbed his chest, he wasn’t sure he could go through that again. It had been… intense when he had done it with Ozpin. “I errr. I guess we could try that.”

Ruby looked between them confused and then Qrow sighed. “Come on Ruby, I’ll lead for a bit and we’ll see what happens.”

The Silver Eyed Warrior let out a nervous breath and crawled into the middle of the bed with Qrow. “So how do you want to do this?” She asked.

“Umm, well I was in Oz’s lap when we did this. So I figured that would be a good start, it’s not really about action of the body soo… yeah.” Qrow sat and crossed his legs loosely. “Let’s just start normally.”

Ruby nodded and leaned up and kissed as she moved into his lap. They kissed slowly for a long minute both too nervous to really get aroused. Ozpin watched and rolled his eyes, he changed the tune on his Scroll then called up his Aura letting his whisper through the ring. He had plenty of built up lust to lend them, he could thank Lydia for that.

The two upon the bed moaned in unison. They could feel the beat of what Oz was listening to reflected through what he sent them. Qrow grabbed Ruby by her hips and pulled her up flush to him, his lips seeking out her neck, his teeth scraping along the pale column. Ruby moaned and tried to turn her awareness inward, to open that bond to him.

The feeling was instantaneous when it opened, she could feel herself in Qrow’s lap. The pulse of his heart against her chest, the arousal burning through his body. Qrow teased her sex testing it for a moment before drawing her down on his erection. Their Aura’s flared as their bodies joined, Ruby’s reaching out and sinking into Qrow calling his out and into her. Self blended away as their souls beat together. Memories again rose up, though they weren’t tied to a emotion this time.

It was more encompassing this time, Qrow found it strange to be the one viewing rather then being viewed. He wasn’t sure what he expected to see but Ruby’s pain hadn’t been one of them. Pictures and clouds of memory breezed through him and Qrow saw for the first time a side to his younger lover that she hadn’t allowed anyone to see. A toddler, barely two years old tugging at her sisters dress, a pair of lilac eyes streaming with tears as she told her baby sister that mommy was gone. There was confusion in those memories, a concept she hadn’t understood until much later.

Years later when Ruby had realized that Summer wasn’t ever coming home, how final death was she understood and yet she had been unable to grieve. Heads of spun gold Tai and Yang had already accepted Summer’s demise but a young Ruby who had been too small to understand felt she couldn’t open to them for fear of bringing frowns and tears to those she loved so much. So instead she had bottled it away and focused on life, letting only the few happy and fuzzy memories she had left of Summer grow into a dream, her dream. She would live the life her mother fought for and in doing so be as close as she could to the woman death had taken from her.

Qrow would have wept for her, as it was he could feel his heart almost break in two as he pulled her closer into him, trying to give all that he was. He felt a responsibility for her suffering and wished he could change what was. How was it, that no one had noticed this? How Ruby had never been given
the chance to say a proper farewell to Summer. His anguish over it leaked through and Ruby picked up on the silent cries.

Where as Ruby’s memories were like clouds, sometimes fuzzy and out of focus Qrow’s were clear and precise, almost as though she were watching them as they happened. She saw herself for a moment but internally shook her head when a flowing white cape fluttered behind her. Qrow watching from his place on a cliff she knew too well. “Summer I’m sorry but I can’t do it. Things are not so ‘controlled’ at the moment and I worry my Semblance would strike at you. Please take Tai with you or better yet don’t go at all. You have two girls to look after and that area is too Grimm infested for you to take on alone.”

A pair of silver eyes rolled back as Summer drew her weapon. “If you don’t want to go then fine but those people need our help and it’s my duty to protect them. I’m going Qrow and if you want to follow and have my back then that’s fine but I’m not leaving until they are safe.”

Another image showing Qrow and Oz arguing about Summer, a Scroll going off in Qrow’s pocket. He removed it and answered the call. “Qrow! Please hur-” Before he had even registered the line going dead he was jumping from the window and flying as fast as he could towards the Grimm infested town.

“Tai . . . she’s not coming. I’m sorry.” Rain splattered the ground as Qrow dropped his Scroll into the mud, his legs unable to hold him up and he fell to his knees in front of the un-moving body of Summer Rose. “I’m sorry . . .”

Ruby didn’t let her sorrow fester, there would be a time for that later, right now she needed Qrow and he needed her. Instead she slipped her Aura deeper, their matching wisps felt like joined hands that encircled one another. She could hardly tell where she left off and Qrow began, so intune and joined together as they were.

A garbled cackling echoed loudly as the picture of a Faunus crept in. She had the palest skin and eyes, with sharpened teeth and gills on either side of her neck. Blood dribbled from her smiling mouth as Qrow’s hands literally pulled her to pieces. “Sanguira. You sick bitch!”

She laughed. “Everyone knows you Branwen and your sister, you are no better than I.” She screamed when Qrow tore her arm from its socket. “You and I are nothing alike.” He snarled, discarding his sword and grabbing her other arm as he dropped the other bloody limb.

“What you didn’t like the girl? I think she looked a rather lot like your niece? Is that what pushed you over? You couldn’t bare the thought of your niece bending over without a fight for a man, on her knees so willing and ready for a cock to be shoved down her throat?”

Ruby felt a loud thudding between them, was it her heart? His? She couldn’t tell but she knew Qrow had stilled and was now quietly waiting for something. The sounds of the Faunus screaming pierced her ears.

Qrow kicked her over and wrapped his hands around her head. “Think of this when you fuck your little Ruby, think of this moment when she is on her knees before you. Know that I was right, the only reason you saved that girl tonight is because you want her. You’ll hurt her, you’ll give in one day and you’ll take her and you’ll hurt her. Because that’s the only thing you know how to do.” Qrow tightened his hands shoved his thumbs into her eye sockets so he would have to look at them anymore.

He stared at her as he tightened his hands more and more, listened to her screams with a smile when her skull cracked and exploded brains and bone fragments splattering his face and slipping through
his fingers.

“Qrow . . .” Ruby felt a rising anger as the memory faded but not towards Qrow. No it was directed to the Faunus, a cruel and evil soul who had ripped apart many lives and when Qrow had been there to stop her she had planted seeds of despair inside him. They had talked about this back on Patch, she had knew about this and yet still it seemed that Qrow had yet to accept. “Qrow please let this go.”

“Can’t.” The word was whispered into her mind and Ruby nodded, understanding. Qrow literally couldn’t forget. Being both blessed and it appeared burdened to have a flawless memory meant he had to not only live with the actions of the past but remember them day after day. Ruby felt a stirring of compassion and did what she assumed was the equivalent of a embrace with her Aura. Letting it cradle Qrow in the warmest and most accepting hug she could muster.

Their souls rose together as even memory faded away and they were simply energy, Aura and soul. Qrow’s Old Soul drawn in and cradled within her Vessel Soul. Pain faded, self faded, the union of body reached it’s crescendo and Ruby’s eyes snapped open, pale red interwoven with silver. Ruby eased Qrow onto his back and drew off of him, his body appeared to be sleeping.

“Well, this is one way to have an out of body experience.” Qrow mused in Ruby’s head.

Ruby giggled. “Well I guess we can say this worked.” As she moved to get off the bed her foot slipped off the edge and she fell with a thump and sprawled limbs. “Oww.” She felt sympathy radiate from Qrow. “Welcome to my Semblance love.”

Ruby picked herself up only to find that Ozpin had finally moved. His headphones and Scroll discarded, he took her chin in hand and made her look up at him. Qrow found the sensation of Ozpin’s hand on Ruby’s jaw very different from what he was used too. “Wow you are small and this is so weird!”

“I take it, it worked?” Oz raised a brow.

“Yes. Qrow said my falling was probably his Semblance and Lydia did say that Semblance would travel over.” Ruby enjoyed the feeling of Oz touching her.

“Hmm, how very interesting. It would be intriguing to see if it is possible to move just his Semblance. I think he’d enjoy a day without it looming over his head.” Oz traced his fingers down Ruby’s neck.

“Oh I like that idea!” Qrow all but shouted in glee in her head. The sensation of Oz petting down her side started to register… he had a sinking feeling in his gut. “Uh Ruby, I think Oz is plotting something.”

“Huh-.” Ruby’s thoughts were sidetracked when Oz stooped down and kissed her. His hands going to hips and he lifted her up wrapping her legs around his waist.

“Hold up, hold up, hold up! Ruby! Uh no no no no!” Qrow could feel how hard Ozpin was and wondered just how long he had been like that.

“Qrow says no.” Ruby said as Oz pinned her against the wall.

“Aww, why ever so? I think this presents a very unique opportunity. Does he have a legitimate reason to say no? Or he is just panicking?” Ozpin dipped his head to kiss her neck again nipping the slender column in a way he knew Qrow liked. He held Ruby by her butt the other hand reaching down to undo his belt and shove his trousers and underwear out of the way.
“He’s mostly panicking.” Ruby said and moaned when Oz teased over her clit with a finger.

“Holy hells in a!” Qrow was overwhelmed by the little touch, he had no idea she was so sensitive that touching that felt like THAT. Ruby moaned though she almost giggled in her mind. “I wonder if I can let you drive.”

As she said the feeling of Qrow did grow more potent, he reached out and saw Ruby’s hand moved to grip Oz’s shoulder. “That is so weird.” He said and Oz pulled away took at him. “Qrow?”

“Uh huh.” The dumbfounded expression did not suit Ruby’s features.

Ozpin smirked and hiked Ruby up and pushed his erection into her at the same moment. “FUCK!” Qrow cried out, this was different oh so different, the stretch hurt and they ached through the stretch to accommodate Oz. His respect for Ruby sleeping with both of them typically in quick succession skyrocketed. He panted and Oz ground his hips, pressing that hypersensitive nub against bone of his hips. Silver red eyes flew open wide. “Uhhh.” Qrow grabbed at Oz’s shoulders, he felt so small against the tall man it was a new strange feeling.

“For one who was just saying no, you seemed to have changed your tune awfully quickly.” Ozpin smirked but did not move.

“You are having way too much fun with this.” Qrow said glaring up at him.

“Yes. I thought that was evident. Is it still a no? Ruby seemed to be completely on board.” Ozpin ground his hips smiling as the woman gasped and writhed.

Qrow was struggling to compute the sensations, he knew women were more sensitive. More nerve endings and all that jazz, but this was turning his brain to goo. “Yes yes, just move already!”

Ozpin chuckled and started to sharply thrust knowing short and deep was Ruby’s favourite. Qrow wailed her head thumping against the wall, sure he had been pounded into a wall plenty of times before but this! “You are so having fun.” Ruby said smugly.

“Fuck fuck fuck.” He leaned forward and bit down on Oz’s collar to keep from alerting the whole house as to what was going on. “Shut up!”

“Na, now you know how it feels. I think this very poetic.” Ruby said very cheeky in tone, she felt everything he did but was more used to the sensations. The pleasure burned through them, sharp stabs of electric sensation rocking through them.

Oz groaned softly shift his grip sliding it behind her knees then pushing them up towards the wall. “Brace yourself.” He uttered, the thought of fucking them together had him so hard. He ideally wanted to get Ruby to the point they could both take her together but he knew that would take time and this was a pretty awesome substitute.

Qrow scrambled to grab the wall and push off it of with their upper back. Ozpin shifted his legs lowering himself a little and then hammered up. They screamed out at the harsh movement, Ozpin ground up leaving Qrow breathless. “How does that feel?” Pausing for a minute to let Qrow recover.

“Different then anal that’s for fucking sure.” Qrow said through Ruby’s mouth, though not as weird a feeling as it could have been.

“Hmm interesting.” Ozpin mused and started to move again, this time slower with a longer stroke. “And this?”
“Nuuuhhh.” They squeezed their eyes shut, moaning more softly. Qrow could feel how wet they were, the flutter of Ruby’s silken walls around Oz’s member was totally new to him. The slowly stroke accented how the head of Oz’s member felt.

“Words Qrow.” Ozpin said smugly, after all Lydia was putting him through. This was WAY too much fun.

“Fuck you.” Qrow said breathlessly. “You’re having too much fun.” His brain was slowly coming to a crawl as the pleasure built and built, a ache new to him blooming in their sex. “Come on, more please! Just give him want he wants!” Ruby pleaded, they were so close if only Oz would stop teasing!

“Mmmnnn.” Ozpin didn’t even try to deny it. “I get fuck both of you. Furthermore I get to fuck you, feel how you would respond if born female. I’m finding it highly enjoyable, not an experience I’d ever thought we’d get to share.”

Ruby pushed forth Qrow surrendering control without much say in the matter. “Less torture more sexing please. I’m sure we’ll do this again!”

Ozpin laughed, the shift in personalities was easy to spot. “As my lady commands.” He moved to a quick paced that sent them crashing over. Qrow was overwhelmed by the intensity of it, control blurred as he ached their back as Ruby’s sex squeezed Oz for all her worth. Oz pressed tight to them but did not follow head long into pleasure, watching smugly as tells of Qrow’s played out over Ruby’s face.

“Wow.” Qrow eventually said breathless even mentally.

“Mmm.” Ruby purred blinking exhausted up at Ozpin. The tall man let go of one of her legs that she wrapped around his hip and reached up to stroke her face. “You two really do mesh well.”

Qrow spoke. “You can tell that easily?”

“Little changes in expression.” Ozpin started to rock his hips again.

“I’m sore.” Qrow shoved ineffectively at Oz’s shoulder with a tried limb.

Ruby giggled. “Come on Oz, let the poor man rest. He’s not used to the sensations like I am.”

“Then what am I to do with this?” Ozpin pressed forward till his partner was gasping at the heavy feel of him inside of them.

“Ruby can always put me back in myself.” Qrow said breathlessly.

“Na, this fun.” Ozpin said that smirk returning.

Ruby felt just how much Qrow agreed with that statement and mentally giggled it must have shown on her face. “What?” Ozpin asked.

“Qrow is just in agreement with you. I dare say he likes having a vagina.” Ruby giggled.

“I DO NOT!” Qrow shouted, though they both knew the lie in that.

Ozpin was too busy laughing to see the shift in Ruby’s expression. He withdrew and let Ruby down off the wall. Qrow was distracted by just how sore she felt. “Is that normal?”

“Unless you or Oz are really gentle? Yes. I don’t mind, it usually goes away after an hour or so.”
“Huh.”

“Someday I am going to want in on those mental conversations you two have.” Ozpin said stepping back thinking about what else he wanted to do to Qrow and thus Ruby.

“Oh I’m sure you’ll get our turn.” Qrow said stepping up to Oz and running their hand up Oz’s member.

“No thanks, I’m not the submissive type.” Ozpin said as Qrow started to stroke Oz’s hard erection tightly.

“We are so remembering that.” Ruby said as she let Qrow drive, having long since caught onto his plan.

“Revenge is a dish best served hot and throbbing.” Qrow thought back at her and then knelt to lick the thick mushroom head of Oz’s cock. “You’re mouth is tiny.”

“Make do.”

“Yes Ma’am.” Qrow purred and took that thick head into their mouth. Oz’s hands weaving into their hair was a more familiar sensation. He sucked with determination and quickly earned a long moan from Oz, licking in quick full strokes over all that he could fit into their mouth. He brought both hands up and found that if he eased forward he could override Ruby’s gag reflex. “That’s useful.” Qrow thought as Oz’s member teased the back of Ruby’s throat.

Evidently Oz thought so too, he pulled them way and shoved Ruby back towards the wall pinning her too it. Silver red eyes looked up surprised before Qrow caught on and parted his lips letting Ozpin push his member down their throat. The moan that resonated through the air was deep and long. Ruby’s sex gushed in response as Oz started to carefully move his hips. She hadn’t seen him look like that before, his jaw had relaxed and the moans kept tumbling free. His eyes were dark and lidded. Qrow’s expertise kept her from gagging and helped her breathe. While she was too small to take all of it, she could take more then enough to make Oz happy.

Qrow lifted a hand and stroked over Oz’s scrotum. He wished they had the rose on them. “Come on Oz, just come. You know you want to.” Qrow leaned toward and carefully let Oz down into their throat mindful of Ruby’s comfort, her lips were sore as it was.

That did it, Oz’s fist tightened in her hair and he moaned loudly, filling her mouth with hot seed. Ruby almost panicked but Qrow just swallowed it down with practiced ease. He pulled away and Oz let go of their hair and braced himself against the wall, his chest heaving.

Ruby sat back on the ground rubbing her sex with a hand. That had been so hot, she never thought she’d like that so much, well the thought was hot. The extension of said thought had always intimidated her. “Thanks Qrow.”

“Anytime, that was fun. Though your mouth is too small. Though if you would be up to returning the favour. I think I’d fit down your throat.”

“Hardy har.” Ruby said and rubbed her throat.

Ozpin knelt and gentled brushed the side of her face, then down to her throat testing for swelling. “Are you okay?”

It occurred to Ruby she hadn’t said anything aloud. “Yeah, that was all Qrow.”
“I could tell.” Ozpin said looking over her aroused state. He reached down and replaced her fingers with his. “One more for you? Then you should put Qrow back and get some sleep. You and Ren will head to the bathhouse tomorrow.”

“Okay.” Ruby moaned softly as his expert fingers brought her and Qrow to one last finish. After which she stumbled a little but moved back to Qrow and kissed him, that was all it took. His soul departed her and he kissed her long and deeply, holding her gently to him. Ozpin moved onto the bed and Qrow all but pounced on him stealing another long kiss. “That was incredible.”

“I thought you were against the idea to begin with.” Ozpin said laying down his lovers picking a side and snuggled up.

Qrow pulled the duvet over them. “It was more the idea that stunned me a bit, once we got to it. Ohhh such a good idea. Plus I have new ideas for pushing Ruby’s buttons in the future.”

“Eep!” Ruby squeaked at the mere thought of what he’d try next.

Ozpin chuckled a very warm sound. “Sleep you two, tomorrow is going to be busy for everyone.”

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“Oz give it back.”

“I think not.”

“Ozpin.”

“Using my whole name does not scare me Miss Rose.”

Ruby put her hands on her hips and glared up at him. “I still need that.”

“I am not letting you ruin your lovely hair. I like it just as it is.” Ozpin was holding the bottle of hair bleach as high above his head as he could manage in the bathroom. She, Yang and Weiss had gone out to buy some, along with a touch up for Weiss’ red roots. Since it was just a temporary evil Ruby had picked out one that she hoped when applied would be similar to Yang’s golden locks.

Unfortunately just as soon as Oz had seen the little box of chemicals he jumped up from his place in the living room and followed her upstairs before snatching it from her hands.

“Be that as it may, it’s not very good for a disguise.” Ruby looked at him, miffed but more amused then anything.

“Then let me change it.” He reached out and brushed a hand through her hair. “I’d rather use a little magic here then risk your hair becoming ruined.”

“I thought your magic wasn’t infinite?” Ruby asked.

“Ruby, I haven’t used any magic at least of my own in two decades. I think I can spare a little for the woman I love.” Ozpin set the bottle aside and wove his hands through her hair. “I’m thinking silver, not my old silver or your eye colour. But a jewel silver, something that will shine.”

“It will be easier to remove when all this is done.” Ozpin said and closed his eyes, he imagined a diamond in full sunlight and called on his magic something he hadn’t done in a very long time…

There was more of it, by a large margin. He stood stunned for a little bit, he wasn’t aware of his magic on a day to day basis. Unless he needed it, it was something he largely ignored as watching it slip between his fingers was rather depressing. Still to have so much, all without knowing where the new resources had come from was worrying. However that was mystery for another day, refocusing on his image of diamonds and silver. He stroked through Ruby’s hair root to tip, under it like ripping water the black and red were changed to shining luminous silver.

Ruby opened her eyes and stared, she looked like there was stars in her hair. It all but glowed. “Uh Oz, I think you took it a bit too far.”

Ozpin blinked a few times then hummed. “I like it.”

“It kinda stands out.” Ruby said. “Though it is pretty.”

He brushed through it once more, it dulled very slightly. Ruby was sure it was still gleam in the sunlight. “There.”

“Fine. Thank you.” Ruby turned to face him, stretching up on her toes to hug him.

The following morning Ruby called Qrow’s soul into her and it was as simple as a kiss. The morning was a blur of Ozpin getting ready to leave, Ren and Ruby getting ready to apply at the bathhouse. Jaune, Nora and Weiss were going to put their ears to the ground for the Huntsmen, Qrow had given them a list of people to check in on. This found Ruby and Ren alone at Sigismund’s Bathhouse.

It was styled in very old Mistral style, the interior was made entirely of stone. With arched vaults and columns, tanks filled with warm and cold water, that was endlessly cycled. Ruby let Qrow drive as the nude state or near nude of the help made her nervous. She had never been a place both so rich and so blatant about sex. The main room was warm and spacious steam curling through the air, one either side were three doorways and above each a small mural depicting a sexual act.

It was easy to see people within having their fun. Ruby peeled her eyes away, between Ozpin and Qrow she was very happy. “I wonder how they keep it all so clean?”

“Lots of hard work I imagine.” Ren said from beside her. He was less phased by all the nudity and sex, being from this region he was accustomed to it.

A bald man with a double chin and fine if ill fitted clothes walked over, he had a book in one hand. “This way please, Mr. Dijkstra will see you now.” His voice was high, he bowed to each slightly and turned on his heel.

Ruby and Ren followed, he lead them out of the bathing area and into a small study, the walls were lined with books and sitting in a wide cushioned chair was a tall man, even taller than Ozpin. However he too was bald but also sported a large beer keg for a stomach. His eyes were azure and beedy. He looked the two up and down and gestured for them to sit.

The two hunters sat in much smaller wooden chairs across from him clearly for guests. He spoke in a deep voice. “You’re resumes say you trained as Huntsman and Huntress in Beacon.”
Ren nodded. “Yes, but after the fall. We both decided that we wanted less dangerous work.”

“What position are you looking for in my establishment?” Sigismund Dijkstra asked.

“Really whatever you have.” Ruby said. “Or where you think our talents would be of the greatest use.”

The pig like man looked at her. “You’ve the most remarkable eyes, I’ve never seen that shade of red before and I’ve had a few Branwens visit this place. Have you considering my sex workstations? I’ve a number of clients that are interested in Huntresses the more unique the better.”

Qrow assumed control as Ruby turned bright red. “No, but I am skilled in massage. I could assist in bathing and relaxation jobs. I’m not adverse to working in those areas but my lovers are against the idea of anything else. Neither will Ren be performing in such a way.”

Ren was totally alright with Qrow laying out the boundaries of their work. The older man clearly knew more than he did.

“Noted, I need people of more varied talents anyway. I get too many girls that come in here thinking that their trimmed cunts will earn them all the Lien they could ever want. Two massaures are worth more to me.” Sigismund said turning his attention to Ren. “However you’re both be working near nude or nude. Viewing is part of what the people here pay for. So if you want the job you must be prepared for that and I’d like to see what you have to offer.” He gestured lazily.

“This feels so wrong.” Ruby said but let Qrow remove her corset and shirt, followed by the rest of her clothing. “Sorry, but you wanted to work here. Not like you’re going to be the only one nude. Look at Ren.”

Ruby did and blushed. Ren was very nice, no Oz mind you but he was still very good looking and had a healthy radiance to his skin.

Sigismund looked them over dispassionately. “Good enough, dress.” He waved his hand again. “At least you weren’t lying about being Hunters. When are you available to work?”

“Both of our hours are completely open.” Qrow said dressing again as quickly as he could for Ruby’s sake.

“Then you’ll both start now. Satine will be your trainer. Happen!” Sigismund yelled out.

The bald short man from before returned. “Yes Sir.”

“Take these two to the lockers and show them to Satine.” Sigismund picked a weathered book up off of his desk.

At the clear dismissal, Ruby and Ren followed Happen back out into the main bathhouse. He guided them into a back room, the middle had a rectangle of lockers and one the walls were showers. A number of men and women were scattered around the room, some taking showers others sitting and chatting. A few stared at Ruby, her hair wasn’t the most subtle of things it caught the warm light and reflected it. A tall woman with blood red hair and equally red lips looked up when Happen walked in. Her skin was even paler than Rubys. “New recruits?”

“Masseurs. Test them. They will not be offering sexual favours to clients.” Happen summarized.

“Sounds like a plan.” Satine said, she pointed at two lockers. “Those two are empty, get undressed. I’ll get you both new loincloths, do either of you have a preferred colour?”
“Rose red.” Ruby said instantly.

“Dark green.” Ren said as he stored his clothes in one of the lockers.

“That’s easy.” Satine said and left.

Ruby undressed again Qrow lurking in her mind. She looked over at Ren as the young man sat on a wooden bench with his hands in his lap. Blush burned her cheeks again as she distracted herself putting her clothes away. Ruby walked over and sat beside Ren. “This is so odd.”

“I will admit I never imagined myself here. At least it is not forever.” Ren said. “Though I will feel bad if we are forced to leave in a hurry.”

Satine returned with two cotton loincloths edged in silk. “Red for you and green for you.” She handed them their respective colours.

They were essentially two knee length regular pieces of cloth centered on a smooth rope band to be tied by one’s hip. The two tightly secured the belt and Satine led them back out onto the floor point as she went to other rooms. “Lotions, oils and towels over there. Break room is over there with the private washrooms.”

Satine paused when they came to the main room. “Hmm, you to will probably be working in the more private rooms. This way. Feyd-Rautha is in, he’s a regular and a good one to test you on. As you’ll probably be working with him often.”

Satine led them into a side hall, the room it opened up into was very large. A single raised stone bath in a hexagonal shape, the stone was dark grey and the whole room was lit in red. A huge man stood in the tub, his extremely muscled back to them and butt facing the newcomers. Two women were already attending him, unlike Ruby and Ren. They wore loose silk shawls and nothing else.

Ruby had to admit the man was glorious, about Qrow’s height but built like Ozpin before the fall of Beacon. She was had to swallow to keep from drooling. “Hey! Just cause that view is fine, don’t go getting any ideas. Ozpin will fuck us into next week if he feels threatened.”

The formerly silver eyed woman pressed her legs together at that thought. Feyd-Rautha looked over his shoulder at the newcomers, his facial features were just as handsome his orange hair in a short buzz cut. He smirked looking Ruby up and down, his eyes lingering on her breasts and hair. “Trainees Satine?”

“Massagers. I had a feeling you wouldn’t mind if I use you as their first client.” Satine walked the the steps and sat on the edge of the tub.

“I don’t mind, the red eyed one’s pretty, such a remarkable colours.” Feyd smiled.

Ruby blushed and approached with Ren. the women attending Feyd stepped away and out of the large bath. He sat with his back to Ruby and Ren and picked up a martini glass and had a sip of the contents.

“Large glass flute, plain red liquid. Probably rose lotion.” Qrow helpfully supplied. Ruby reached over and picked it up pouring a small amount into her palm. “Be mindful of my Semblance make sure you place it back, and take any actions around breakable things slowly.” Ruby made sure to place the container back where she found it. Feyd watched her lifting an arm for her while sipping his drink. “Do him like you do me. Well not like now you do me, Oz is one thing, a stranger no way in Hel. You know what I meant.”
Ruby found herself smiling as she rubbed the oil over her palms then took Feyd’s hand between hers, massaging the lotion into his skin before starting small with his fingers and working down to the small muscles. Meanwhile Ren stepped up and into the water, he knelt to Feyd’s side and started massaging the man’s shoulders.

Their subject hummed happily, admiring how the red light reflected through Ruby’s hair. “They’re good Satine. Mind if I keep them for a bit?”

“Neither perform sexual acts.” Satine informed him with a little purr to her voice.

“That’s alright, they have lovely hands.” Feyd leaned back and closed his eyes.

Ruby moved into the water as she worked down his arm. A sudden crash had them all looking over. A vase had fallen from it’s pedestal.

“Nightshade, Lily get Azure to clean that up. You are dismissed.” Satine said.

Ruby only just managed not to wince, how Qrow coped with that she didn’t know. Feyd steadily turned into a happy puddle as Ren and Ruby worked. Satine looked on with a smile.

The rest of the day was easy on Ren, less so on Ruby. For Qrow’s Semblance kept showing up, it was only because Qrow’s mind lingered so close to the surface that nothing catastrophic happened. While they were still both employed by the end of the day, they had not seen hide nor hair of Watts or Hazel. Together Ruby and Ren walked up to the Great Elevator, it wasn’t the fastest way up the mountains but when you just wanted to watch the sunset it was lovely.

The two Hunters leaned against the stone railing as the platform below them paused, meeting up with two more letting people on and off it. “Well that was… fun.” Ruby said.

“I think Nora would like it there. We shall have to all visit as a group at some point.” Ren said looking down to the shorter woman.

“I like that idea.” Qrow said and Ruby smiled. “Qrow’s says he likes the idea. It would be nice just to have a day to relax as a team.”

“Jaune would do well to relax. While I doubt he would know what to do at first, I have a feeling a few of the girls there would be able to… push his buttons just so. He would benefit greatly from the attention.” Ren said as the platform started to move again, he could feel the rush of water through stone under his feet.

“Getting him to accept it would be the hard thing.” Ruby said.

“Those girls have their talents, I am sure they’d manage.” Ren said and they felt the rail to move to the side of the elevator where their stop was. They joined the masses of people heading home after work, the tight streets opened up as they traveled up the mountain till they came to their home.

Everyone was home upon first glance, Nora lazing on the coach, though she woke enough for a flying leap at Ren with a hug and kiss when he walked in. Jaune was watching something on his Scroll and Weiss was reading curled up in a corner of the couch.
Ruby bit her lip admiring the way Weiss bit her lip as she read tapping it with a finger before thumping the page. The Atlassian was wearing a long green dress, it was bunched up at her hip and Ruby wondered if it was lace she spied peeking out. She walked over and kissed Weiss on the cheek, hearing Qrow purr in her head. “We need to have a talk.”

“Gonna invite her to play?” Qrow asked.

“Yes, I mean we still need to talk about it. But I want too and I know she wants too. So we should figure it out.” Ruby said mentally and as Weiss put her book down with barely contained enthusiasm.

“OoooO.” Nora said from Ren’s lap as Ruby and Weiss walked up to the former’s bedroom.

Qrow’s body lay in bed, with the duvet over him. Ruby walked over and climbed onto him, pressing a long kiss to those still lips. The sensation of his soul leaving her, was akin to a gentle wind that left her breathless.

Qrow opened his red eyes and groaned reaching up to rub them. “Right, no doing that for whole days. I’m stiffer then Glynda’s cunt.”

The jaws of both women dropped as Qrow sat up, Ruby tumbling out of his lap with a laugh. He swung his feet out of bed and stood, stretching like a cat after a long nap. His stomach growled loudly. “Ugh.” He patted it. “We definitely need to work out a better system.” Without another word he headed into the bathroom and closed the door behind him.

Weiss inched into the room, she hadn’t been in it yet. The bed was rumbled and the well used lube bottle by the bedside table made her blush. She sat on the edge of the bed and Ruby crawled over to sit beside her. “So James?”

“We kinda… became lovers? Well he became my Dominate, we never admitted any love though.” Weiss hugged herself. “I should have said something but, I don’t know. It just never managed to,” she raised her hands in a holding gesture. “come out.”

Ruby reached over and hugged her. “I’m sure you’ll get a chance.”

Weiss looked over and smiled, leaning into Ruby’s embrace. “Still it leaves me able to explore.”

The Silver Eyed woman said. “Well I want to explore too with you, Qrow is totally on board and I know Oz is too. Though it’s weird that he’s not here yet.”

“How would that even work? Something like what James had with Ozpin and Qrow?” Weiss asked.

“Something like that I think would work. Just you know… you can ask or we’ll invite you and after we go our own ways again.” Ruby said and Qrow came out of the shower.

“That would probably work the best for now. We can always feel it out as we grow to know each other and want we all need when we are together. Is there something you want to start with? Something you really miss?” He toweled his hair roughly before hanging the item on the door.

Weiss blushed and said. “Well as silly as it sounds. Cuddles, I miss just cuddling someone.”

“We’ll definitely be able to work with that.” Qrow said as he set about getting dressed. “Hey Ruby want to call Lydia? Oz is usually home by now.”
“Sure.” Ruby pulled out her Scroll and dialed. “Hi Lydia, is Oz gonna be home soon?”

“No, he was late coming in this morning but you are both welcome to come visit. We are both at The Crimson, in high city.” Lydia purred.

“Sure, we’ll be up in a bit. Send me the address please?” Ruby asked.

“Of course dear, seen you soon.” Lydia hung up and a moment later Ruby’s Scroll beeped with the address.

The Crimson, for it Qrow had made them dress up. Not hugely mind you but into the gear they wore as huntress’s. Even he had summoned up a black long coat for the occasion. The line out of the door made Ruby pale, everyone was dressed to impress. Just what was Oz doing at place like this? They came to the door and pulled out their ID’s, after a quick look over they were allowed into the place.

It was huge, a stage took up the most of the space. A bar to one side, tables and chairs organized around. There were relatively few people in this area. Upon the stage were a man and woman. The man was wearing red trousers and a black vest, with a raven mask hiding his features. The woman was in white spandex bodysuit with the front cut out to showcase her breasts and torso. She was also blindfolded and tied to a dancing pole. Her dominate made her lift her head with the end of his riding crop.

Watching the man upon the stage had both girls ensnared. His body language just oozed an air of confidence and a almost predatory elegance. It was only Qrow grabbing at his mouth, his jaw had hit the deck with an almighty thump. “Oh my gods.”

Ruby and Weiss followed his gaze and they froze in shear shock.

Ozpin was waiting on tables. Furthermore he had not but a g string covering his ass and had clearly been forced to wear a cock ring as well. His heels were not as steep as they would have normally been, but then he was a tall guy to begin with. What really caught their attention though was the collar around Ozpin’s neck.

This was no simple black leather collar. Ruby could see ribbing going up the back that was forcing Oz’s head down. Straps anchored on a weight just under his clavicle, further keeping his head down. The rest of the collar fanned out over his shoulders and back, a elegant design of black leather and cobalt blue lace that screamed money and status. Whoever the other patrons of the club didn’t seem to pay him any attention as he delivered drinks or wordlessly took orders.

“Oh. My.” Weiss said pressing her legs together and grabbing at the edge of her skirt. She couldn’t recall the last time she had seen something so hot.

Oz tried to lift his head but winced as the harness dug into the back of his neck. There was confusion on his face as he took a step towards them when another voice called out. “Ruby! Right on time.” Lydia strode down from the upper levels her dress fit her form like a glove, that same cobalt blue formed the majority of colour with a stripe of silver going for one shoulder to her hip.

Ruby stepped up and embraced Lydia. “Lydia this is Weiss and Qr-”
“Qrow!” Lydia smiled broadly looking Qrow up and down. She reached out and curled a black raven lock around her finger. Her eyes were locked with his as she purred. “It is a pleasure to meet you at last. I can see why Ozpin is so head over heels in love with you. I’ve heard all about you.”

Qrow blushed. “Only the good things I hope?”

“Only my dear.” She snapped her fingers, Ozpin quickly walked over and knelt beside her. His head bowed even lower. “I’ve been administering some corrective lessons to this one. When I learned of how he used my training upon you I was most… displeased.”

Again Qrow’s jaw collected to the floor, he pointed at Oz in shock. “That’s for me?!”

“Yes. As I said he needed some reminders in how to behave. I have told no one why he is being punished, that is a matter that I have decided will remain private. However he is not to serve as a dominate for anyone till I give the word. Aside from you and Ruby of course. I am confident he won’t let his ego damage his relationship with you. Come, I’ve set aside a booth for you.” Lydia turned on her heel and snapped her fingers again.

Ozpin stood and didn’t move till after Ruby, Weiss and Qrow were following Lydia in front of him. Ruby looked up to him and saw that his cheeks were burning with blush. Lydia led them up to a VIP booth where they could see the performance upon the stage. Ruby could see in other booths, groups or couples talked with drinks. Even a few were openly if quietly having sex. Each booth was partly closed off from the others giving the occupants some privacy. The light up here was a warm red and gold toned.

“Drinks for us all. Then tell Phos that you are off for the rest of the night.” Lydia said and Oz bowed and departed.

“That’s so weird.” Ruby said sitting down on the comfy high end leather.

“Tonight has been a good night. I haven’t had to take him aside to see what shade of red I can make his ass once. Though the poor man spends most of his shifts thinking about all the ways he wants to fuck you and Qrow when he gets home. I do wonder where his mental discipline has gone. Or perhaps he doesn’t care if I see his fantasies anymore.” Lydia sat across from Ruby.

“With how sulky and horny Oz has been lately it’s probably the latter.” Qrow said.

Lydia hummed. “Very likely. He knows I do not control him outside this club, so he takes what he can get. I swear he only learned moderation when he met you. That man used to fuck like a bunny in heat.”

Weiss and Ruby couldn’t help it, they burst into giggles leaning on each other.

The older woman smiled at them. “He’s much improved from those days. He has figured out he is not the gods gift to anything mostly human with the parts to fuck.”

As if on que Ozpin returned; a glass of red wine for Lydia, a whisky on the rocks for Qrow, a Long Island Ice tea for Ruby and a glass of Brivari for Weiss. Weiss lit up at the drink. “How did you guess?”

Ozpin dipped his head and smiled.

“Come sit with us. Your bird wishes to play with you and I am inclined to let him.” Lydia said standing and gesturing for Ozpin to sit at the back of the booth.
“What I am allowed to do?” Qrow slid over as Ozpin settled, he just had so many ideas.

“Whatever you wish, just don’t allow him to reach his satisfaction. Edging him is the only way to really teach him I’ve found.” Lydia said her ‘fat cat with the cream’ smile returning.

“OOoo boy!” Qrow grinned. “Where have you been all my life?”

“Here.” Lydia said.

Qrow leaned up and licked along the edge of the collar, while stroking over Oz’s lower stomach and hips. They could hear the leather creak as Ozpin gripped it.

“Don’t you dare damage anything Ozpin, or I will have you spread with the ankle bar and your nose to the floor for a week. I may even let Sunstone have at your ass, for when my arm gets tired.” Lydia said sternly.

Ruby had never seen Oz move so fast, his hands were behind his head less then a blink later. She turned her attention back to Lydia. “What's to stop him from disobeying your orders? He isn't normally one to be so . . . submissive.”

“Well for one, Ozpin has a level of respect for me and this lifestyle. I trained him and showed him this world but more then that, he dares not disrespect me, or lose my favor. No one would ever serve under him again. I can forgive a level of ignorance, it can cause mistakes and pose a poor light on our lifestyle but he knows better and should strive to uphold all the rules, not just the ones that suit him.” If it was possible Oz further shrank under the glare the elder woman sent his way.

“So this is… punishment for breaking those rules?” Ruby asked.

“Yes. He abused his Aura control with you several times. Where do you think he learned that my dear?” Lydia raised a brow. “What he did to you was near enough to rape in my book. Had Qrow not intervened I shuddered to think what he would have done. You were not in your right mind and he was on a rather self destructive streak.” Lydia pursed her lips and did glare at Oz who flinched and bit his lip to keep the whimper at bay. “Had he acted as such in my presence I would have sent out word that he was dangerous and not to be approached. I have the power to destroy his reputation with but a few words. He is extremely lucky I have chosen to show mercy on that matter. The only reason I have been lenient is because I do see he has been working to make amends to you both. And I know he will never make a mistake like that again.”

“What exactly did he do?” Weiss asked, Ruby hadn’t mentioned any of this to her. They would definitely be talking about it later.

“You’ve had a good experience with James. Apologies I make a habit of passive scanning the minds of everyone I come into contact with. He is a good example of a Dominate. He made no demands of you, you both talked at length before you tried any scene. He made a point of after care and to check in on you after the scene as well. He did very well on being aware of sub and dom drop. I can find no flaws in his communication with you… well at least in terms of BDSM. You really should tell him you love him next time you see him. The point being he took care of you, checked in, communicated with you and respected your boundaries.” Lydia said. “Ozpin however. Failed to maintain communication, let his own emotions surpass his duties. Failed to check in, allowed his own emotions govern his actions in situations where trust in him was paramount. He hurt Qrow… mentally and came very near to do much more to Ruby. He violated their trust, though there is more to it then that, it is not my place to say. To summarize he failed to respect and care for his Submissives as he should have done. He prefers a High Protocol way of life, yet discarded that out of fear and pain. Had he adhered to what I taught him a great deal of pain could have been avoided.”
“High Protocol?” Weiss asked as Ruby watched Qrow tease up and down Oz’s leg. Just brushing the stifled erection, Qrow grinning like a loon while Oz was tenser than a hooker at church.

“It is exactly as it sounds. Ozpin and myself prefer High Protocol. This is a lifestyle rich with ritual and etiquette. For example a ritual could be for the submissive to dress the dominate in the morning. Or a kiss upon leaving the home and returning. As you saw here, I need only snap my fingers and Ozpin knows to come to my side and kneel. He will not speak without my permission, he is not allowed to raise his head. Normally I would not be so strict with him but this is a period of punishment for him. The level of protocol varies between partners, this is by no means the perfect example. It is merely how it works between Ozpin and myself.” Lydia explained.

“I’ll dress Oz, fold his clothes when I do, makes sure the drawers or cupboards don’t bang. All that is protocol between me and him. I address him as Master in a scene, though he prefers to use my name.” Qrow explained, then shrugged. “Where we are in public I always take up on his right side.”

“Ohh. That’s why you were so careful around his flat.” Ruby said and when she thought back on it, she could remember that Qrow did always position himself on Ozpin’s right when they walked anywhere.

“What you experienced with James was more of a low to medium protocol. You both formed informal rituals and took names to address each other as in the scene.” Lydia said to Weiss.

“I think I get it.” Weiss said.

Applause filled the air and Lydia turned her attention to the stage. “Ah, Harper and Tanya never fail to perform.”

Ruby bounced over to Weiss. “On that topic. You said you wanted snuggles but just how involved do you want to be with Oz, Qrow and myself. Have you thought anymore on it?”

“Well. After all this. I think I would like to explore sex with you. And maybe try being your dom if you’re okay with it? I like the idea of ritual and I never got to try doming James. If Qrow or Ozpin want to have sex with me sometimes I would be alright with that. But I think it would be best if when we play Ozpin and Qrow are present.” Weiss said.

“You may speak Oz.” Lydia said. She was aware how nervous he was about his scaring. As his Mistress, she had removed him a few times from the floor to give him and help him cope with his fears. This required her being in his thoughts all of the time.

“Thank you Mistress.” Ozpin said first then to the others. “I think that is a very wise idea. It is perhaps less imitate but given how you are not seeking to be a permanent addition, I am not sure if I would be comfortable with anything else.”

“I second Oz on that idea. Ruby and I do share a head-space but that doesn’t change that she is ours first.” Qrow said

“We should arrange play times in advance. So everyone is prepared.” Ozpin said templing his fingers together and furrowing his brow in thought.

“And we need to think of ground rules. Will, Want, Won’t lists.” Qrow said.

“Huh?” Ruby asked.

“Will do, Want to do, Won’t do.” Qrow said. “I haven’t done any BDSM with you because I don’t really desire to see you that way right now. Call me a Fluffy if you have too. But if we are going to
start playing we have to make and share those around so everyone knows what everyone else is comfortable with.”

“I'll have to get more toys and condoms, darn it.” Ozpin mused. “Never share toys.” He said when Weiss threw him a questioning look.

“If you like, I’ll make a few outfits for them.” Lydia said, having privy to Ozpin’s mind at all times she was pleased to see his brain switch over into dom mode. Furthermore with how aroused he was she was impressed he wasn’t thinking with his cock. Needless to say his behaviour with his two subs present was pleasing her greatly. This was turning out to be a wonderful and so far successful test for him.

“That would be lovely. Thank you Lydia.” Ozpin said.

Ruby and Weiss meanwhile were occupied with each other. With at least one ground rule set, both women were thinking about playing. Ruby inched over and Weiss leaned over and for a deep kiss, her head reaching up to weave through Ruby’s new luminescent locks. Ozpin and Qrow were quickly distracted, while Lydia just nursed her wine with a small smirk.

Ozpin was so hard he hurt, the ’stupid cockring’ as he had coined it in his head prevented him for growing completely erect. Lydia looked over to him but wasn’t about to take pity on him yet. Qrow shifted his attention away from Oz as well, coming up behind Ruby and pressing a kiss to her neck. “May I play with her too, oh Mistress Weiss?” He purred.

Weiss’s heart skipped a beat at the formal address. She withdrew out of the kiss and looked into those pale red eyes. “Yes you may. Show me how she likes to be touched.”

Qrow pulled the lacing of Ruby’s corset undone in one long smooth motion and set it on the table. Her shirt came undone with the same deliberate action, Ruby sighed a soft moan and reached up behind her threading her fingers through Qrow’s black locks. He teased up her stomach with just two fingers mirroring each other. Then up over the underside of her breasts, to settle over the large areola’s of her nipples, catching the nipple itself between the two fingers and massaging in small circles. “Like this upon her clit as well.” Qrow purred.

Weiss’s eyes were busy taking in the lily white expanse of skin, Ruby wasn’t as pale as she was. She reached out and brushed two fingers up the inside of Ruby’s thigh. Listening to the breathy moan the small woman let out. She traced over Ruby’s plain white panties, she could feel them grow wet already. As Qrow had said she traced over Ruby’s clitoral hood before capturing it between two fingers and rolling it gently.

Ruby wailed but from behind a bit lip, as she tried to quiet herself. That didn’t help poor Oz though, he was pulling his hair so hard just to keep from touching himself. He didn’t dare with Lydia present and he knew she was lurking in his thoughts. Ruby threw her head back on Qrow’s shoulder trembling like a leaf on the wind.

“Can I taste you?” Weiss asked easing off to just brush Ruby through her sodden panties.

Qrow too eased off, he wanted to see where Weiss would take this.

Ruby blinked a few times as she came back to herself, her core throbbed in time with her pulse. “If you’re sure you want. Maybe on the table would be easiest?” She looked over to Lydia.

“It is completely fine.” The older woman said and reached over clearing the drinks. Setting them on a side table that’s very purpose was to keep them safe from activities like this.
Ruby shifted to sit on the table and Weiss and Qrow make short work of her boots, while she removed her skirt and panties. She parted her legs and Weiss shifted to kneel in the seat between them.

Weiss had to admit she was utterly curious. She reached out with both hands and spread the petal like folds of labia gently with her fingertips. They were so swollen and red, it reminded Weiss of Ruby’s surname. The skin was smooth and soft, like her own folds. Weiss teased over that already dilating vulva, just to see Ruby’s breath increase. In a careful quest she sank one finger in then two. It felt very alike her own, that silk wet feeling, the further interior dilation. She found she couldn’t quite reach that ridged spongy spot of tissue that made Ruby moan louder, she could brush over it but not quite enough.

Ruby was blushing and hiding her face as she moaned. The wet squelch of Weiss exploring her sounded so loud in her ears and she knew that Lydia was watching. It was embarrassing! Yet that fact made her all the wetter, she couldn’t help but feel like she was being shown off.

“Mind if I help?” Qrow asked moving to wrap an arm around Weiss’s waist while petting up Ruby’s thigh.

Weiss withdrew her fingers. “Yes you may.”

Qrow added two of his to Ruby quickly seeking out that place that made Ruby cry out. While Weiss shifted and bent closure to Ruby’s exposed core, curious she licked over that swollen red pearl. Ruby shrieked slapping her hands over her mouth trying to silence herself. Weiss’s exploratory licks, felt so good. She could feel the pleasure building quickly within her, as Qrow and Weiss worked together with surprising ease.

Meanwhile Qrow pet down over Weiss’s stomach and down to her own core. “May I?” He asked, Weiss pulled away just long enough to say yes, before returning to her mission to make Ruby orgasm. In time with his fingers within Ruby, Qrow slid two under Weiss’s underwear and delved them into her sex, twisting his wrist so she could grind into his palm.

Which Weiss gleefully did, feeling Ruby come closer and closer got her so excited. Having Qrow touch and please her, only made her more enthusiastic, moaning even as she tried to stay on top of her mission.

Ruby however came not a minute later in a beautiful expression of muscle. Weiss followed her over thanks to Qrow’s skillful fingers. He removed them and pulled Weiss into his lap to straddle him, grinding his crotch up to hers. “Would you please help me with this?” He groaned into her ear.

Weiss moaned at the hard member between her legs. “Yes, you’re welcome too it.” Her insides yearned for more.

Qrow all but ripped his belt and trousers open finally freeing himself. Then shoved Weiss’s panties aside before swiftly bringing her down onto him. Weiss arched her back and moaned out long but softly as Qrow swiftly forced his way up into her. Her walls gleefully tightened around him as he roughly sheathed himself in her pursing his lips to keep quiet. Weiss hugged her chest with another small sound of pleasure then quickly shifted her hips back and forth slightly to grind upon him.

Lydia rubbed her temple. Ozpin was filling his head with only please, please, please, please.

“Alright Oz, you may remove the ring and have your girl.”

Ruby yelped when she suddenly found herself yanked across the table and into Oz’s lap. Her lips were stolen in a kiss as Oz, yanked the g string out of the way and removed the cockring. The sigh
of relief made Ruby giggle, only for him to sink two fingers into her core quickly followed by a third. “Oz!” She wailed out straining in his embrace.

Qrow and Weiss’s gaze snapped over as Ruby cried out, they could see Ozpin further stretch the petite woman, her hair was catching and reflecting the light in alluring ripples. Ozpin broke the kiss to, move down to Ruby’s neck biting down hard enough to make Ruby yelp before he removed his fingers and eased her slowly down onto him. Ruby moaned loudly and buried her face against his neck, working with him easing herself down. Oz moved his hands to pet over her back as she took him within her. Slowly was the key, otherwise even he would lose control and come. What a bruise to his pride that would be.

The pale eyed man watched Oz but wove a hand through Weiss’s hair. Ruby had never had long hair like this he couldn’t help but wonder at it. He pulled it gently and Weiss moaned thrusting down into his lap. Qrow smirked and snapped his hips upward, setting a quick deep pace.

At the sounds of the other pair, Ozpin started to move, his hands moving to Ruby’s hips moving her slowly to grind in his lap. He moaned and closed his eyes, turning his head to nuzzle Ruby’s temple as she mewed with each movement holding his shoulders tight. He sneaked a thumb around her hips and stroked her pearl in tight circles as he moved. Even the slow actions set Ruby reeling, she was tired and already aching. She could hear Oz’s heavy breathing in her ear, she couldn’t remember the last time he had come this close so fast. Though she could barely think as he moved his finger and grabbed her hips tight and lifted her up only giving her an instants noticed before he bucked up fast and deep into her.

The scream Ruby just couldn’t contain anymore, caught Qrow and Weiss’s attention the former coming then furiously stroking Weiss’s clit to make her follow. While the latter’s eyes were locked as Oz biting down on Ruby’s neck again as they came together, fit so perfectly together. Weiss could see the white of Ozpin’s canines, how Ruby’s skin bruised. She was enthralled by how Oz cradled Ruby. An arm wrapped around her back, hand on her shoulder holding her tight to him as the other rested on her hip, as his hips gyrated upwards into her as he came long and hard. It seemed to last for him as Oz settled back into the leather, still holding Ruby tight. Eyes closed as he choose to pretend he was alone with her.

A waitress came by with a few cloths silently cleaning up the table and offering clean cloths to Weiss and Qrow, who took an additional one and set it beside Ozpin. He looked over to Lydia who was watching Ruby and Ozpin with a small secret smile.

Weiss and Qrow cleaned up and started on their own drinks. Weiss chose to stay snuggled up to Qrow as she sipped her own drink and decided this was nice. She was beginning to understand why Ruby liked Qrow so much, while he could be immature and silly like her sister always said he was. There was more to him and Weiss found discovering him to be a worthwhile idea. There was just no way she was ever telling Winter.

Eventually Ruby and Ozpin withdrew from each other and Oz helped her dress again. When they were done and Ruby had her drink Lydia spoke. “Come here Oz.”

Ozpin slid over without a word and was utterly surprised when Lydia reached up and removed the heavy collar and harness assembly. “You are forgiven.”

“Just what did you see in my head?” Ozpin asked rubbing over his neck. He was very glad to be rid of the tight leather.

“What I needed to.” Lydia said with that secret smile.
Ozpin opted not to question it and returned to Ruby, who happily took over his lap.

Not a minute later, a woman and man about Qrow’s actual age came over the man was of dark skin and had a buzz cut. He was of a medium build and height. “You up here on your own hiding the new blood Lydia?”

“Hardly hiding Harper, the new blood just had some things to work out.” Lydia said and moved inward on the bench to make room to the two newcomers. “A lovely show Tanya.”

“Thank you, though I think everyone heard the show going on up here.” Tanya the brunette was the submissive that had been performing. Weiss came to that realization almost instantly. She almost didn’t recognize the woman in a long black dress shirt and pencil skirt.

Ruby came to that same conclusion and asked. “Umm, if you don’t mind me asking. How did you know… to start going on the stage?”

“Honestly my biggest problem was… you know, you have this very specific sexual taste and... well to satisfy it you merely have to give away your freedom and completely trust your partner. And that’s where you hit that snag. In theory a sub can at any given moment reclaim control over the game. But in reality you are at your partner's mercy. There is always that shadow of a doubt you know.” Tanya said.

“Here here.” Qrow said drawing circles over Weiss’s shoulder with a finger.

“It is a game of trust… incredibly exciting, rewarding but again… based on trust. And all I can say is that Harper earned it well.” Tanya said with a broad smile.

“Sounds fun.” Ruby mused looking up at Oz.

“We’ve got a lot on our plate as it is. I doubt we’ll have time or energy to commit to a performance.” Ozpin said turning his attention to her. “Even if Lydia allows it.”

“I would allow it, but from what you’ve told me I agree with your doubt.” Lydia said.

“Oh you’re the one that I’ve got my girls putting their ears to the ground for.” Harper said clearly reevaluating Oz.

“Yes and thank you for all your help.” Ozpin said.

“It’s no trouble. The Fall of Beacon hurt everyone. I’m just surprised the way to help came through here and Lydia’s intelligence network.” Harper said.

“Well people talk when they are happy. Lydia is the best contact I have in Mistral.” Ozpin said and fought down a yawn.

Harper chuckled. “Too right there.”

Ruby sat up and stretched having finished her drink and worked up a buzz. “I hope you don’t mind Lydia, but I have work tomorrow and I’m buzzed.”

“Then to bed with you dear. Be sure to drink water before bed and we’ll have to arrange a lesson as well.” Lydia said. “Ozpin I still expect you here at least a few times a week. To check in if nothing else.”

“Yes Mistress.” Ozpin bowed his head low to his teacher.
With that the group stood and parted ways. Ozpin parting from them to get dressed before they all left together. Ruby wove her hand through his as she leaned on his arm as they walked home. She had a feeling that would not be the last she saw of The Crimson.

Chapter End Notes

Ardy: Thank you too: darkvampirekisses, Mysty_Sinclair, Sportsfangirl815 and QueenofSpades19 for your comments they are always appreciated.
Kry: Not much to report today, we hope everyone’s having a good day.
Sigismund Dijkstra sat high above the stage, The Crimson was not his usual local. He preferred to sell the action, not invent new ways to do it. However even he did not dare turn down an invitation from Lydia Ivanova. Still he appreciated the dancers, almost nude but for single pieces cover their groins. The body to body style was a rare one and very elegant, he didn’t doubt Lydia has chosen them for him tonight.

Even as he thought about her sipping his White Wolf wine, she appeared. A dress of black lace and cobalt blue, her full lips painted dark red. “Sigismund. What a pleasure to have you here.” Lydia slid into her seat with her own glass of wine held elegantly in one hand.

“Refuse an invitation from you? Why we so rarely converse I couldn’t help but be intrigued.” Sigismund said riley.

“That would be why I don’t invite you often.” Lydia said smiling. “How do you like the show, I’ve selected today’s ones for you.”

“Their adequate, they would probably draw clientele at my own establishment.” Sigismund said.

“Speaking of your establishment, are the bandits tribes still using it as a neutral ground?” Lydia asked.

“I fail to see what concern of that is yours.” Sigismund said.

“Tell me. How much do you know about Salem?” Lydia sipped her wine.

“Not as much as I would like. Though finding the files on Cinder was laughably easy if obviously fake.” Sigismund looked down as the show concluded and a silk rope dancer took the stage.

“Hmm, what if I told you that little lovely Ruby you hired is in fact a Silver Eyed Warrior and not only that but responsible for the frozen Grimm atop of Beacon tower?” Lydia smiled her Cheshire cat smile.

Sigismund returned his attention to her. “What is it you want?”

“An alliance. We have our ears and eyes all over the city. I want to find Cinder and to do so as quickly as possible.” Lydia said.

“Why?” Sigismund asked finally taking a drink of his dark beer.

“Because my favourite student was almost killed by her. Now he has returned and is hunting for her. I of course will be helping him.” Lydia said firmly.

“Ozpin is alive?” That finally got a reaction, even if it only was a raised brow.
“And out for revenge.”

“And what do you expect me to do if Ozpin is out for blood. I don’t need him destroying my hard earned work.” Sigismund asked, this did shed light now why Ruby and Ren were working for him. They were looking for someone, the question was who?

Lydia’s eyes glinted as she move closer to the bulky man. “Something dangerous is happening and when it all goes down, you’ll not going to be on the wrong side of things.”

There were very few people Dijkstra could be intimidated by and Lydia Ivanova was one of the most powerful people in Mistral. It wasn’t a loud sort of power but a more subtle influence that warned off bandits and more recently Salem’s court. Still she was only one head and a pretty one at that. “Looks to me like you’ve already chosen a side. Besides what if ‘you’re’ the one on the wrong end. What happens then?”

“Everyone has something to lose, even you . . . but if you help, if you choose another path then when the sun rises over Mistral your precious bath house will remain intact.”

Now that had Dijkstra sitting very straight in his seat. “Lydia . . . are you threatening me. It would not suit your cause.”

Lydia gave the portly man a deadpan look but it didn’t hide the sinister smile beneath. “Oh no Dijkstra I am not threatening you but if you think you'll be safe from them just because you sided away from us then you’re an even bigger fool then I took you for.”

He sighed loudly. “First threatening, now insulting, how do you stay in business? . . . Hmmm, I want Harper, he is a talented fellow and easy on the eyes. Two days in the week of my own choosing to work. He will bring in some wonderful business prospects.”

“One day in the week and it's up to him should he accept which day, though it cannot interfere with his life or his work here.” Lydia countered.

The portly man took a moment to make a decision. “Agreed. Seeing as I already have Ruby and Ren. I take it their roles in team RWBY and JNPR are no confidence?” Sigismund asked.

“You watched the Vytal festival games?” Lydia asked genuinely surprised.

“Recognized the pair from a mile away. Though Ruby’s age and hair did throw me to begin with.”

“None, they are looking for Hazel Rainart and Arthur Watts, they believe through those two they will find Cinder and have already identified Hazel and Mercury Black visiting your bathhouse.” Lydia said.

“I see. I’ll best not to put them on long term payroll then. You’ll have my help.” Sigismund stood. “I’ll look after your favourites. Goodnight Lydia.”

Whether it was sheer dumb luck or Qrow’s Semblance at work but a few days later Ruby found herself in a situation they had been hoping for and it terrified her. Right in front of her, with barely her red loincloth separating them was the back of Hazel Rainart and just a few paces from him, sharing the same bath was Arthur Watts.

Now she wished she hadn’t allowed Oz to change her hair with magic, the sparkling silver had drawn the attention of both men as Arthur asked Satine what her role was.

“Moonflower is a masseuse, we’ve had a lot of very positive feedback from those who have used her
services. We are lucky to have her talent.” All the staff of the bathhouse were given new names that both protected their privacy and matched Dijkstra’s design. With her sparkling silver hair she had been dubbed ‘Moonflower’ for when she was working. At least it was fitting.

“Fascinating, Hazel! Surely you could appreciate a good massage.” He turned back to Satine. “And Peony, she has the most talented tongue.”

“I’ll see to it she is made available.” The older woman bowed and turned to Ruby. “Moonflower, you escort these gentlemen to their bath.”

Thankfully Qrow was never too far and readily pushed up. To help Ruby with her bravery, “Please follow me.” he said with a slight bow.

Now she knelt behind the hulking giant, her hands scented with a woody oil Hazel showed preference for digging in and smoothing out the muscles of his back while ‘Peony’ sat in the bath, her head covering Watt’s crouch as she sucked him with the occasional wet sound. The other girl bobbed her head up and down but all Ruby could see was her brozened back and pink hair move in time.

Ruby really wished Ren was here, if for anything his calming influence would have helped her hands from shaking that tiny bit as they roamed over the large back. Unfortunately those tiny little trembles must have shown her nerves as Hazel tilted his head back and studied her. “You afraid of me?”

“Ruby? Want me to take over?”

The former redhead shook her head to both of them. “No . . . you are just so very ‘big’.”

There was a chuckle from the other man. “That’s not the only part of him that’s big, I’m not surprised you’re nervous.”

A bright dusting of red covered her cheeks as she struggled to be calm. Watts smirked at the woman. “You have the most remarkable hair colour. I don’t think I’ve ever seen a shade of silver like it and you’re eyes are so different. Are they real?”

“Qrow! What do I do?”

“It’s okay love, let me take over please.”

Ruby shut her eyes and let Qrow drive. Her voice dropped slightly into a pur. “A lady must keep some secrets, especially when they involve her looks.” Slowly Ruby rubbed more of the scented oil on her hands and with Qrow driving her body they slipped into the water. Almost hugging the giant man as Qrow settled into his lap, his arms coming up to wind around Hazel’s neck.

Softly he started to work on the muscles of either side of the huge man’s neck. Keeping her gaze low as she worked, pulling out every timid play in the book she had. Her more slender legs straddled his hips as Ruby slowly came back forward and played her hands over the larger chest. For a moment she could pretend he was Oz and that helped soothe out the last of her nerves as her actions grew more confident.

While Watts was enjoying the his own pleasure Hazel kept his eyes on the young woman in his lap. There was something different about her but he couldn’t place it. Still he had never had such tiny hands ease the tension he carried everyday and it was relaxing. Her hair was a bit damp from the water but it still sparkled like a diamond. Water clung to her full breasts, such lovely perky things. Full enough for him to bite and suck upon. His eyes were drawn downwards, the bottom piece that
had been roped around her curvy hips drifted in the water inviting his gaze on the otherwise covered sex.

With a hunger his hands left the sides of bath coming to hold the Ruby’s hips. Even with only one of his hands he easily spanned her hips and Ruby suddenly stiffened in his grasp. Slowly his hand inched inward towards her womanhood and the woman shifted. Hazel only tightened his hold, though not hard enough to bruise it would take some work to get out of his arms without her Semblance.

Carefully Ruby lowered her voice. “I am a masseuse, Sir. This is not a service I offer.”

With his other hand now coming to steady her back Hazel pulled Ruby closer to his chest, his gravelly voice low. “It’s the one I want, right now.”

Almost immediately Ruby felt the presence of his length against her stomach and nearly panicked at the size. "He wants me to do that! I don't think it will fit!” Watts had finished with Peony and the other woman discreetly left the bath leaving Ruby alone with the two men.

"Happy men are men that talk love. Deep slow breaths are the key. Rubes."

“I don’t think I can do it Qrow.” There was concern and her inner voice was tearful.

Qrow pushed to drive again, even he could not let her do this. “It’s okay Ruby, I have this.” With more confidence than Ruby had Qrow wiggled slightly. He had seen Peony run off, with luck she’d go get Satine. “Please Sir, I’m not…”

“Paid for it?” Watts said sinking further into the warm water, enjoying the show. Watching Hazel play with the occasional girl was always fun, the looks on their faces when he would bend the over. Awww priceless. “We can tip you girl, you’ve nothing to worry about, the medical requirements to even get in here are rather impressive.”

“That’s not th-” Qrow inhaled sharply when Hazel brushed their core with a wide finger.

“Moonflower.” Satine appeared in the doorway with Peony beside her.

Ruby almost sagged in relief. “Coming.”

Hazel let her go but watched her like a hawk, the soaked loincloth did nothing to shield her now. Satine addressed the two men. “Apologies for the inconvenience but Moonflower does not provide sexual services. I’ve arranged for one of the private rooms for you both and several other girls. VIP treatment.”

“Will she be back, she wasn’t finished with her task.” Hazel said in his usual gravelly voice.

“I need to speak with her first.” Satine said.

Two other women Nightshade and Dragonlily, both well named as they reflected their plant names led Hazel and Watts to a new room. All flirtatious smiles and easy charm.

“Thank you.” Ruby said hugging herself suddenly very cold.

“Are you okay? Peony told me what was going on.” Satine reached out and pet over Ruby’s shoulders.

“Yeah, he’s just really… big.” Ruby said looking away. “I’m not sure what to do. I kinda want to
see what could happen but at the same time…”

“They offered to tip you didn’t they?” Satine said pursing her lips. “I know the wage we pay for your skills verse one of our sex girls are not the same.”

“Yes and…” Ruby trailed off as Qrow spoke to her. “We do need back in there. Oz won’t be happy but he’ll understand. Better now then to lose the chance.” Ruby took another deep breath. “I’m sorry to have caused such a ruckus. Next time I shall not get so ahead of myself.”

Satine only waved her away. “That is not so much the problem here, you simply did a much better job then they had expected. Of course it doesn’t help with right now. I saw the way Mister Rainart looked at you. I doubt he would accept another now and he and Doctor Watts are some of our best clients, its not good for our business to refuse their ‘request’.”

Ruby knew she needed to get back in there, they could end up waiting weeks before this kind of opportunity presented itself again and if she spurned it now they may request she not be around next time. “Well if I make the exception just this once and satisfy him today can I have your word that my position won’t change? I am a masseuse first and foremost right? It won’t make the other girls angry?”

Satine’s blood red lips pursed as she looked back at the door her clients has exited. “You are not trained in working sex here but I agree that it could be a one off. I’ll ensure it doesn’t affect your position here if you satisfy our patrons today. Oh and don’t worry about the other girls, it's certainly none of their business.”

“Okay.” Ruby took a deep breath and let it out slowly, but to the other woman’s amusement. “I guess I’ll go…” She turned on her heel then stopped. “Any tips for big guys?”

“Foreplay, fingering, breath control and taking it slow.” Satine said giggling as Ruby’s cheeks turned a bright red.

“Right.” Ruby said and walked through the corridors.

“They’re in the same room that Feyd was.” Satine called out after her.

At that Ruby turned and headed up the stairs to the private rooms. When she came to the heavy metal doors she paused again for another deep breath. “We can do this. Let them exhaust themselves, sex first then wine. Loose lips spill truths, maybe another massage as well. We need to get them talking. Playing dumb might be wise as well, more likely to ignore us that way.”

“Right… Oz is gonna so take this out of our hides.” Ruby patted her cheeks twice then put on a smile and opened the doors.

Satine was right on the money when she guessed that Hazel would refuse another girl, he was back to sitting in the water letting Dragonlily massage his back. Ruby called out as she walked up. “I’m to replace you.”

Dragonlily nodded her yellow-orange hair falling around her head in a halo. “Thanks Moonflower.”

Ruby took her place as the other woman left, she poured a small amount of oil onto her hands and started on Hazel’s neck again.

“This mean you’ve changed your mind girl?” Hazel asked.

Ruby swallowed thickly and Qrow helped her out. “Yes sir.” She worked upon the base of his skull,
her heart beating thunderously against her chest.

“Then come around where I can see you.” Hazel said and Ruby carefully compiled, all she need now was for Qrow’s Semblance to surface and for her to trip. She stood between his parted legs, hugging her chest again.

Hazel reached up and pulled the knot holding the loincloth around her hips undone and tossed the fabric over the edge. He smiled looking her over, her shyness was refreshing. “You really haven’t done this before have you girl?”

“No.” Ruby said as that huge hand reached out and stroked through her hair. It curled around his fingers.

“Hmm my treat then.” He removed his hand from her hair and pushed her arms out of the way so he could cup a breast. “For how slight you are, these are impressive.” He brushed a huge rough thumb over her nipple.

Ruby bit her lip to keep any sounds from escaping, Qrow was lingering helping her keep still. Hazel smiled more. “Ah I like them quiet.”

“Damn this is gonna be a hard one.” Qrow said, he knew how much trouble Ruby had with staying quiet.

“I am really trying not to think about it! Oz can hurt sometimes and he’s not as big as Hazel, this IS going to hurt.” Ruby closed her eyes as Hazel’s hand drifted down her body.

“You know you should really get into the habit of saying something hurts when we all are together.” Qrow said, he was noticing that Ruby was calming down as they talked.

“Turn around, walk to the edge and stand on the second step.” Hazel said.

Ruby opened her eyes and wordlessly complied, the water sloshing around her hips. Watts was watching her as Nightshade was massaging his back. The older woman showed Ruby a fleeting look of pity. Ruby heard Hazel move and the next thing she knew his hand was holding her by the back of the neck pushing her down. Ruby grabbed the edge of the bathtub, the water caressing her breasts. She bit her lip as Hazel’s hands grabbed her butt cheeks, massaging them in wide circles.

“What a lovely body.” Watts mused, admiring the slope of Ruby’s back. “You may leave us Nightshade.”

Hazel pulled the lips of her sex apart with his thumbs. Ruby couldn’t keep the surprised yelp back as he pressed the flat of his thumb to her clit. “Quiet!” Qrow said he didn’t dare push forward, he still wasn’t used to how sex felt to Ruby. Ruby slapped a hand over her mouth and bit down on her fingers. “I’m trying!” She could feel her body reacting to the direct stimulation, her belly was full of butterflies and fear and arousal warred with each other.

“Smart one.” Watt commented.

“Hmm.” Hazel acknowledged him then pressed a single finger inside of Ruby’s channel as it slowly grew slick.

Ruby tensed up, she couldn’t help it. He lacked Oz and Qrow’s care when they first started stretching her, he didn’t seek out her g spot like they did. She knew they could see the tension running through her body, as it and mind had a war with the need to stay still and the urge to get away. “This was a bad, bad bad bad bad idea!” Ruby shrieked to Qrow as Hazel started to move
his finger.

“I don’t think he’ll hurt you. He doesn’t seem the type, plus if he does I get the feeling Sigi would kick him out. Just try and relax.” Qrow tried to hug her mentally and was surprised when he seemed to communicate that feeling when Ruby relaxed again.

Only for Hazel to push another finger in, this time she managed to stay quiet. “Oh gods please let this be over soon.” Ruby thought and shifted to grab the bathtub again.

“Just focus on me. It will be okay.”

The blunt head of Hazel’s cock might as well be made of fire for how much it hurt pushing into her. She had no idea how he was standing to bring his hips low enough meet hers. She could feel him looming over her, her core spasmed against the intrusion. This was worse than her first time with Oz by a large margin. She closed her eyes and brought her arms closer together so she could hide between them.

Meanwhile Hazel was pleased by her silence, no demands or begging. It was refreshing, he could feel how she struggled to take him and was taking it slow in response. He grabbed her hip and effortlessly lifted her so he could move to a more comfortable stance. He moved his other hand to wrap around her rib cage and back to keep her still.

Ruby had to lean on Qrow to keep the tears from her eyes. “Worst idea ever.” She wondered just how much more there was, she felt like she was burning up. She wasn’t even doing anything and sweat was gathering on her skin.

“Could be wor-”

Hazel sheathed himself and Qrow had to take over to keep Ruby from screaming in pain. He frantically tried to separate what she was physically feeling to what he felt. “Easy, easy. Breathe just breathe. I’m going to bring up our Aura, it won’t stop the pain as he’d probably notice a barrier but it will keep him from damaging anything.”

Hazel reached out and pet through Ruby’s hair, finally being still again. “That’s all little one. Just relax.”

“Easy for him to say, when next we meet I’m shoving Harbinger up his ass and then we’ll see how he can ‘relax’.” Ruby groused and took deep breaths, just happy he hadn’t broken anything.

“Just keep thinking those thoughts!” Qrow said happy that Ruby had gathered herself enough to make jokes.

Ruby almost smiled but then Hazel started to move. “Mmah.” She bit her lip and grabbed the stone tighter. As much as she hated to admit it, it felt good. Slow and steady, making use of his whole length. “Ohh.” Ruby finally lifted her head and let her body lean towards him.

Watt’s laughed. “I think someone likes it.”

“Hm.” Hazel lowered them again, letting the tips of Ruby’s toes brush the bottom of the bath, watching her strain was very arousing. He gave her one hard thrust, feeling her jerk under him, then followed it by another, pressing the entirety of his length into her making her mew. A smile crept onto his lips as he picked up the pace.

Watts felt himself grow hard watching Hazel fuck the smaller woman, moving from his perch so he could get a closer look. Seeing her mouth dropped open as she quietly whimpered at his side Watts
grabbed her chin, tilting her head towards him so he could watch her eyes glaze over and chuckled. “You’re fucking her brains out, she’s totally hot for it.” The gentle splashing as her breasts bounced in and out of the water was salivating. "I'm almost tempted to give you a round myself but I wouldn’t want to ruin Hazel’s fun.”

A particularly hard thrust ripped another squeak from Ruby and Hazel grumbled. “I don’t like it when she speaks.”

“Then how about I give her something else to occupy her mouth with.” Watts bit too gleefully and moved grabbing Ruby’s wrists and pushing her up and away from the edge of the tub. “Pull her back a bit.” Watts picked his place right where Ruby hands had just been.

Hazel yanked her back and hard onto him, Ruby’s yelped her mouth falling open. Watts grabbing her by her chin, hooking his thumb into her mouth. “Now be a good girl and stay still.”

“**Qrow!**”

“**Already here love, geez these two do love to up the ante. At least it’s clean cock.**” Ruby let Qrow have completely control as Watts pushed his member into her mouth. She closed her eyes tight, she really didn’t need a close up view of his pubic hair.

“**You’ve done this with not clean cock?**” Ruby asked, trying to falling back into the sensations and the comfort Qrow’s soul offered.

“**Ugh, don’t get me started on the things I’ve done for information.**” Qrow relaxed Ruby’s throat as Watts started to fuck their face, making their tongue dance over the thankfully much smaller cock. Still he wanted to get this over with, he grabbed Watts hips and started to suck.

Watts chuckled at the more whorish response. “Are you sure she’s doesn’t work in the sex stations because she’s really good at taking my cock down her throat. Perhaps next time we come she’ll be gladly working in the area. Maybe even thank us for providing her with a taste of what she deserves.” By this point the other girls that had been chosen to service the two men sat back and tried to keep their gazes off their smaller colleague, lounging against one another in attempts to attract the males attention.

Hazel watched as Watts thrusts became more shallow, signaling his near finish. “Don’t get any in the water.” Hazel said and started to pound into her as he felt his balls start to tighten.

Watts wove a hand into Ruby’s hair holding her head still. “Oh I don’t plan to.”

“**Next time you get to be the one that goes undercover. I am never letting this happen again! I’m fine with swallowing for you or Oz, or heck I bet I wouldn’t mind James. But these two act like… ugh I’m not even going to think it. I wish Hazel would do something to make me come, this hurts too much.**” Ruby thought at Qrow.

“**Agreed.**” Qrow felt the twinge of pain and tried to bring up memories of his own experiences, good loving ones with Oz. “**Here, see if you can focus on these.**”

Ruby came the very instant she felt Ozpin’s kisses, his kind hands upon her skin. Hazel grunted in surprise and orgasmed himself as she clenched tight around him. Spilling into her with large hot gushes of seed. Watts loved how doe eyed those red eyes looked in orgasm and hilted himself as his own pleasure washed through him. Qrow swallowed but even he hard a hide time keeping their eyes open.

Hazel withdrew and Ruby crumpled Watt’s cock falling from her lips. Hazel caught her by her
middle and sat pulling her into his lap.

Watts slicked back his dark hair as he caught his breath, looking at his companion. “We’re going to have to leave soon if we are to make this meeting on time.”

“Hmmm.” Hazel's large hand caressed Ruby's thigh as she buried her hands in his thick hair, her body finally calmed down though she was still hot and would be incredibly sore for a while. She just wanted to go home and sleep. She was trying not to appreciate how nice his big chest was for cuddling.

The other man took in the relaxed posture as Ruby snuggled up against him, petting his hair in an exhausted manner and grinned. “She must have been really good if you can’t string a sentence together.” Watts continued to eye the silver haired woman, his eyes taking in the slightly bruised hip and flushed skin. “It’s a shame we can’t take her with us, I wouldn’t mind seeing that ass bounce on your cock if it meant you were mellow like this more often.”

“Better for her.” The giant man shut his eyes under Ruby administrations. “She's quiet.”

Arthur nodded. “Shame young Cinder could never learn that specific skill.” The well groomed man sneered. It took all of Ruby's and Qrow's willpower not to react to the mention of her name, instead firmly pulling the dark brown and rubbing his scalp.

Hazel hummed under her, his fingers stroking a pattern over her thigh. “So long as she follows the plan I have no complaint.”

That made the doctor chuckle. “You're just saying that. What you're really thinking is you'd like to wring her fucking neck.”

Hazel opened drowsy eyes, his hand squeezing Ruby’s leg. He liked feeling those soft but toned legs quiver under his hand. “Why work with her if you can't stand the sight of her.”

“For the same reason you put up with Tyrain . . . Speaking of, any idea where he scurried off to?”

The olive skinned man shook his head. “Did he not return to Cinder?”

The doctor sighed again. “No, she is on her way to the Branwen tribe.”

“Has to find them first.” Hazel grunted.

“It won’t take too much longer, We've already got the coordinates, even if they've moved its just a matter of time before we find them and hopefully Spring as well.” Arthur said as he finally heaved himself out of the bath. Dragonlily and the other girls hurried over to him, wrapping his lithe body in warm soft towels. They were soon doing the same for Hazel as he finally let go of Ruby's leg and she curled onto her front and rested in the water letting it clean her, her head rested against the smooth stone side, too exhausted and sore to move.

Hazel dropped back to look at the pretty woman they had just fucked, the faintest smile around his lips. He didn’t say anything but finally left the room with his companion and Ruby let out a big sigh of relief. “Oh my do I hurt. Don’t think I can move just now.”

“You were brilliant Ruby, I promise you whatever you want when we get back. Don’t you see love we got all the information we need.”

“I'm holding you to that, especially when Oz finds out ‘how’ we managed to get this information.”
“Just rest for now love. As soon as either of us have the energy we’re going home.”

Tired and sore Ruby just lay there in the pool, trying to catch her breath as she curled into Qrow’s soul and took his advice to rest.

Ozpin stormed into Sigimand’s bathhouse. His black cape swirled around him, Happen and several of the girls scrambled to get out of his way as Ren all but ran beside him to keep up.

“Now wait you can’t come in here!” Satine tried to stop him but he grabbed her by the neck with his black armoured hand.


Satine looked at Ren for classification and the young man nodded. “This is one of Moonflower’s partners. Obsidian.”

Understanding dawned on Satine’s features. “This way.” She turned on her heel and quickly lead them to the break room. Ruby was wrapped up in a soft white bathrobe, her clothes in a backpack by her feet. Ozpin swept into the room startling the crap out of some of the other girls. He moved to her with inhuman grace and reached out, holding the side of her head with impossible kindness.

Ruby only let out a sleepy murmur, curling up tighter and wincing in her near sleep state. Ozpin whipped the cloak from his shoulders and wrapped her up in it. Then scooped her up into his arms. At that Ruby did wake just long enough to squint at him. “Oz?” She slurred, blinking a few times as he came into focus. She reached out and grabbed his shirt in a death grip and went back to sleep. Ozpin’s expression finally softened and he nuzzled her head with a little purr of his own.

Ren grabbed Ruby’s backpack and Ozpin led the way back out of the bathhouse. Sigismund and Satine watched the whole exchange from a alcove.

“Remind me to never put Ruby in harm’s way. I don’t think we would withstand her lover’s wrath.” Sigismund said softly.

“He is pretty terrifying, hung like a horse but terrifying.” Satine said. The older man just rolled his eyes, because of course that would be what the head of his serving girls would see first.

“Ruby love, wake up. You need to put Qrow back.” Ozpin pet over her head.

Ruby snuggled up tighter, her hands clenching up in his shirt tight. “Ruby~.” Ozpin called out softly again. The tiny woman shifted in his arms and woke up. She could tell they were in their room, she looked away and half fell out of Ozpin’s arms as he let her down beside Qrow.

Seeing how she pressed her legs together and almost crawled to the empty body, made his heart seize. Ruby hauled herself over and kissed Qrow’s lips, his soul departing her with ease. She slumped back into the bed her head ending up on his shoulder.
Qrow’s eyes snapped open and he turned to cradling her head, “Ruby.” he stroked her cheek slowly with his thumb. “You okay love?”

“Just tried.” Ruby opened her eyes a sliver. “Really painful exhausting day.”

“I’m sorry I couldn’t help more.” Qrow leaned down and kissed her temple chastly.

“I’m good, just need a nap.” Their little precious woman snuggled down into the bedding.

Qrow got up and was sent spinning as a fist connected with his jaw. “Oww Oz, what the hell? I thought we were past this?” Qrow rubbed his jaw as he righted himself.

“What the fuck happened?! Ren said Hazel requested your 'services.'” Ozpin snapped fury boiling under his skin. “Then the next text I get is that Ruby needs a pick up!”

“Yup, that's a thing that happened.” Qrow said rubbing his jaw. “Hazel wanted to fuck Ruby.”

“And you let him fuck her!” Ozpin shouted, waving his hand at her. “Let him fuck BOTH of you!”

“And Watts too.” Ruby sheepishly volunteered sitting up.

“AND WATTS TOO!” Ozpin stepped back throwing his arms up.

This time Qrow managed to duck, he wasn’t sure how to handle this, but he had a feeling they hadn’t gotten to the root of what was bothering Oz. “Yeah but we got what we needed.”

“I DON’T GIVE A DAMN!” Ozpin bellowed, his chest heaving as his breathing accelerated. “HE COULD HAVE KILLED YOU BOTH!” The energy seemed to fade as Ozpin backed up his back hitting the wall. He slid down it hanging his head. “He could have killed you both.” Tears dripped from his eyes darkening his pants. “He only needed to recognize you for one moment and he would have killed you both.” Ozpin coughed as he cried. “I-I can’t take that. If he had, if I lost you both…” He hid his face in a hand, he didn’t want to cry before them but he couldn’t make the tears stop. His breathing grew faster yet, his lungs working hard. “I can’t lose you. Either of you, not again.”

“Oz. It was alright he didn’t recognize us.” Qrow slowly approached Ozpin, Oz hadn’t had a meltdown like this since their falling out at Beacon. Even then this was worse, by a long shot.

“THAT’S NOT THE POINT!” Oz screamed harshly his voice breaking as the scarring from the fire showed as he yelled. Surging to his feet and stumbling towards the door. He couldn’t do this, he needed out of here, needed air, his lungs felt like they were on fire again. His voice turned to gravel as he yelled. “YOU BOTH JUST RISKED YOU LIVES! I BET YOU DIDN’T EVEN THINK ABOUT WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED IF SOMETHING WENT WRONG!”

Qrow chased after him and grabbed his hand. There was no way they were going to make the same mistakes twice. “Oz don’t go. We’re both sorry. We didn’t mean to hurt you like this. We were confident we could do it, he hadn’t figured it out before then. You are right, we didn’t think about the consequences if something had gone wrong. We saw that we had access to Hazel and Watts, that we could spend time with them and learn something about what was going on. We lucked out and got what we needed in one fell swoop. It won’t happen again Oz. I’m sorry.”

Ozpin turned and opened his mouth to speak. Only to double over coughing, red flying from his lips. The wet hacks were horrible and Qrow screamed out into the rest of the house. “AMBULANCE!”

Oz continue to cough his whole chest contorting as he coughed, blood hitting the ground and clinging to his lips. He tried to hold his ribs, his lungs screaming in pain in tune with his throat. Qrow hugged Oz, holding him trying to keep the older man’s violent convulsions smaller. “Breathe breathe
Ren, Yang and Weiss blasted into the room, the first holding the medical kit but no one could do anything as Oz coughed. Even Ruby crawled to the end of the bed her silver eyes wide in fear. Ozpin tried to stop coughing, taking huge gulps of air that only seemed to make things worse.

Qrow poured Aura into Ozpin but it didn’t seem to be helping. Oz only wretched up more blood. Jaune and Nora burst into the room. Ren asked as he pushed his way into the room. “What happened?” He had the most medical training of all of them.

“I don’t know, he was just shouting when he started coughing up blood.” Qrow said backing away. “I’ve been trying to hold his chest steady but he can’t breath.”

“Put him on his side! He’ll choke otherwise.” Ren immediately moved to Oz’s other side and turned the man onto his side facing Qrow. “Keep him there and bend his knee so it acts as a bumper to the floor.”

Blood continued to spit from his mouth in waves of coughs, some of it splashing on Qrow’s leg and hand. Everyone moved as Ren gave orders, warm water, blankets and most importantly space. Yang and Weiss went downstairs to wait for help while Nora and Jaune cleared the way in the street. Qrow helped hold Oz as best he could while Ruby sat by the bed near his side crying.

Ruby felt like she was watching it all from behind a pane of glass, this couldn’t be happening! Where was the ambulance! Oz continued to cough but it was the slight wheezing that now worried her. Minutes ticked by before a pair of medicals burst into the room taking over from Ren and Qrow. There were questions being fired in their direction but Ruby couldn’t bring herself to look away at the man she loved on the floor.

Within a few minutes the paramedics had Oz on a stretcher and were removing him from the room before Ruby launched up. “Is he going to be okay!?”

They ignored her and made for the door, Ruby threw herself into Qrow. “What do we do Qrow?”

“We’re going to follow them in, come on get dressed.”

Ruby frantically got dressed and Yang let them borrow the Bumblebee. They raced to the hospital barely obeying the rules of the road. They parked as close as they could get and ran through the hospital to the Emergency wing. Qrow raced to the receptionists “We’re looking for Obsidian Volern.” He said as he caught his breath.

“Relation?” The man behind the counter had to ask, he could see how worried Qrow and Ruby were.

“His lovers, the only family he has. Where is he?”

The receptionists fingers were already flying over the holo keyboard. “Still in OR. Please take a seat, someone will take you to him and the Doctor when he’s out.”

Qrow and Ruby sat in the un-comfy leather chairs, her own pain was dwindling and Ruby closed her eyes to devote her Aura to healing herself. Exhaustion still pulled at her so she curled up and tried to rest on Qrow’s shoulder.

The hour was far too long for either of them. A nurse finally came and collected them bringing them to Oz’s recovery room, the blinds were open letting the dusk light in. Ozpin lay in a dressing gown on his back, a oxygen mask over his face as he slept. A tall blonde female Doctor was standing by
Oz watching him closely, jotting something down on her holopad. She looked up when they came in and gestured for them to sit in the two chairs on the opposite side of Oz’s bed. “Please sit.”

Neither Qrow or Ruby needed to be told twice, seeing Oz so pale even under the tattoos was terrifying.

“Please tell me what happened.” The Doctor asked softly.

“He was shouting, he was angry with us. Because he felt we had taken an unnecessary risk, then he just started coughing blood.” Qrow said, he was so confused.

“What has happened to him in the past. He has scarring on over seventy five percent of his body, most seems to be from fire.”

Qrow swallowed thickly. “He was caught in the fall of Beacon, an Atlesian Knight exploded around him.”

“I see.” The Doctor said and sighed before continuing. “He had cysts in his lungs, probably from long standing infections likely caused by poor Aura healing. It’s a common thing with rushed Aura healing. From there it developed into a latent tuberculosis, though I am surprised a man of his age is even capable of contracting it. Everyone is vaccinated as a child.”

Qrow pursed his lips and thought back. “It’s possible he did not get vaccinated. He uses his Aura extensively, it is possible he didn’t think he needed the vaccine.”

The Doctor pursed her lips and picked up a clip board and made a note on it. “I will get that fixed shortly.”

“Will he be okay?” Ruby asked.

“Yes. We are treating him with antibiotics, he must be allowed to heal with only passive Aura. He needs to let his lungs heal slowly and naturally or he runs the risk of this happening again.” The Doctor said. “Physical activity should also be kept to a minimum.”

“What did you do?” Qrow asked.

“We had to perform a thoracentesis procedure.” The Doctor said.

“English please.”

“I drained the fluid from his lungs.” She said putting the clipboard back down. “Are you both vaccinated?”

“Yes.” Ruby and Qrow said together. Then Ruby said. “I’m also sure everyone else we live with is too, but I’ll ask just to make sure.”

“Good, then we don’t have to worry about him spreading it. I would like to keep him for observation at forty-eight hours then we’re see how his body his taking to the treatment. A further three or so days if there’s no complications.”

“What kind of complications?” Ruby leaned forward.

“Well there is the possibility that the cysts could return, they are essentially these little bags of water that latch onto parts of the body. In the case of Mister Volern his lungs. Yes we’ve removed the infected area and drained his lungs but that doesn’t mean they can’t reoccur.”
"Would . . . I mean could you give us an idea of what to be on the look out for if they do . . . come back?" Ruby’s voice got steadily quieter the more she spoke.

Thankfully the Doctor gave the young woman a kind smile and nodded. “That would be best, I’ll get you both a list. Then I would suggest going home and getting some rest. Your partner is going to be out like a light for at least another six hours, best make the more of the rest.”

Qrow shook his head. “If it’s all the same I think we’d both like to stay, I know I’ll not sleep until he’s woke up.”

“Of course just take a seat in ICU”

“ICU?”

“Yes, he’s needs to be on oxygen and monitors for his condition.”

Qrow bit his lip worried about his Semblance, luckily Ruby saw where his thoughts were heading. “I’ll stay with him, you go back and tell the others.”

“You sure? You’ve had a rough day too.” Qrow said, he could still feel flickers of pain from their bond.

“Yeah. With your Semblance it’s probably better to keep you away from delicate equipment. You could go get my pillow and the rose. I feel naked without it right now.” Ruby said quietly exhaustion pulling at her.

“That’s a good idea.” Qrow stood and they kissed for long moment before, he moved to Oz and kissed the sleeping man on the temple. “I’ll be back soon.” He whispered to the sleeping man.

After Qrow had gone the Doctor asked. “What is his Semblance?”

“Bad luck.”

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Qrow pushed the door open his head hanging low. He could barely believe that Oz had tuberculosis, something that could have killed him and they wouldn’t have been able to do a thing about it. A weight collided with his chest and he found himself with his arms full of Weiss. “What’s going on? Where is Ruby? What happened to Ozpin?”

Qrow sighed and hugged Weiss tight, burying his face into her hair. “Gods I need a drink.”

“Way ahead of you uncle.” Yang walked over and offered him a whisky.

“Thanks firecracker.” Qrow and took a sip walking over to the couches, Weiss staying glued to his side. With Yang taking up on the other, he sat slowly as if he was not immortal and actually felt all of his years.

“So what happened?” Nora asked.

Qrow ran a hand over his face, the coffee table broke again and he sighed deeply, before taking another steadying breath. “Ozpin had latent tuberculosis, there were cysts in his lung and they burst.”
That was met with silence. Nora’s jaw was connected to the floor, Ren looked equal parts shocked and worried. Yang tucked her face to his neck and had his arm in a death grip. Tears started to leak down Weiss’s cheeks, even Jaune was stunned into silence.

Ozpin had always been this figure of strength since they met him. When he came back it was like he was never going to leave, even death and the Fall could not keep him down. Now he’d been struck down by not Grimm, not Salem but an illness in his lungs of all things, it was terrifying. To have that invincibility that they just assumed was him, gone… that he had almost died, to something they all had immunity too… It was like a reality check about all their moralities.

“He’s gonna be okay right? We can treat that.” Weiss said.

“Yeah, he’ll probably be okay but I always thought Oz was using his Aura to keep himself healthy, I guess it can’t heal all things.” Qrow took a long drink.

“Where’s Ruby?” Yang pulled her face from Qrow’s arm long enough to look up at him.

“With Oz. He’s in an ICU unit and both of us agreed it wasn’t exactly safe for me to stay. I said I would come back and tell you guys what was happening.” The red eyed man finished the drink and put it down on the floor.

“What happened to make Oz so cross when he left to get you and Ruby?” Nora asked.

Ren who had watched from the side spoke up. “Ruby and by extension Qrow all but passed out at work. I had just been told that she was having to take a rest but some of the other girls were a little nervous so I texted Ozpin.”

“We managed to get the information we needed. We know where Cinder is going and we know roughly when but to get that we had to make a few . . . compromises.” Qrow shrugged his frown deepening. “They are going after the Branwen tribe. Somehow they have information that the Spring Maiden is connected to the tribe and are looking for them. I don’t know where they got their information from but I need to contact my sister Raven and soon.” He got up and cracked his back. He also needed some time alone, he needed to process all of this. “Just for tomorrow keep working on my list. Oz is in room two hundred and seven on the second floor, if anyone wants to visit him I’m sure he’d appreciate it.”

Ren and Nora all but bounced to their feet. “We’ll get started on dinner and make a packed lunch for him and Ruby.”

“We can go visit, how long is he going to be out?” Weiss asked as she and Yang got up, intent on helping Ren and Nora.

“About six hours.” Qrow said.

“So we can squeeze in before visiting hours end.” Weiss said finally smiling. “To the kitchen!” She lead the charge to the kitchen.

Qrow looked over to Jaune who had been silent through everything. The two glared each other down before Jaune averted his eyes and Qrow headed up to his bedroom. He shut the door softly behind him and sat with a flop on the bed. He closed his eyes and finished his Scroll out from his chest pocket, better get this over with. He had to scroll for a bit before finding the number. He put Scroll to his ear and waited.

“Didn’t Yang tell you to stay away?”
“Cinder is coming for you. For the tribe.” Qrow said. “Probably to demand an alliance.”

“And you want what exactly?”

“To… propose an alliance of our own.” Qrow ran a hand through his hair.

“We ar-.” There was a scuffle on the other end of the line. “Hello my little bird.”

Qrow bit back a groan. “Mother.”

“We should talk in person about this proposal, bring Ozpin and Ruby.” Hawk cooed into the speaker. Qrow could practically see her wide smile, how long had it been since they spoke? Then he pulled back again, there was a reason he had left them.

“Ozpin can’t leave the city for a few days at minimum. Cinder Fall is hot on your trail it will need to be sooner.” Qrow said.

“Then we will come to you, we have not visited Mistral in a very long time. Tomorrow morning perhaps.” Hawk said.

Qrow felt sick to his stomach but he forced the word out. “Agreed.” And hung up. He reached out to Ruby through their bond but found that she was already asleep. He let himself enjoy that feeling for a minute and before he knew it he too was asleep, soothed by her calm soul.

Oz became aware slowly, his body felt heavy like there was something tight over his chest. His limbs moved as though they were in quicksand, sluggish and after a moment he gave up trying to move, more interested in opening his eyes.

The first thing he noticed was that this was definitely NOT the room he shared with Qrow and Ruby in Mistral. It was too white and loud. Something was buzzing and beeping above his head but he couldn’t turn it enough to see. As he focused more on the room his heart started beating faster. Was he in a hospital? The beeping above him grew louder and Oz quickly realized it was monitoring his heart rate and forced himself to remain calm.

He tried to pull up his Aura, searching out the weakness but his body and soul was so exhausted he could hardly detect anything but the strong dose of drugs and painkillers in his system. Forcing his head to move was harder than it should have been but he was determined to assess his surroundings, seeing the wires and cables connected to his body brought a wave of panic over him. Turning his head he looked for the nearest exit, the window a few feet to his left was open the tiniest bit. He could pry that open if he could just get up.

Memories of the last time he had been stuck at the mercy of another set that monitor beeping loudly again and Oz turned his head towards the other side of the room worried someone was about to enter. His eyes had hardly taken in the closed door before they settled on someone else and Oz felt all the tension leave his body in one fell swoop.

There, curled up on the single and probably uncomfortable chair was a sleeping Ruby. She was dressed in her usual Huntress gear but she was using the cape as a makeshift blanket as it wrapped around her body. Her legs were bunched up and her head resting on her knees, one hand cupped around her legs while the other was stretched over the bed Oz was in and lay just inches from his
She appeared to be deep in sleep despite the most uncomfortable position and her soft breathing relaxed the last dregs of his panic. If Ruby were here then he was safe. He wasn’t in the hands of someone who wanted to hurt him. Copper eyes softened as he reached over to cup her hand in his. His thumb pet over her knuckles softly waking the sleeping woman. The way she yawned was so adorable Oz couldn’t help the light chuckle that escaped. He winced as the little action made his chest hurt.

Ruby’s eyes snapped open as she took in her smiling Oz and had to squeak back the sobs that rose in her throat. “Oh thank goodness you’re awake!”

“It’ll take more then this to keep me down.” His voice was very hoarse and his throat burned using it but he lifted his arms as best he could in invitation. Ruby gently moved from the chair, taking great care to slide in under Oz’s arms to cuddle. She could hear his heart beat as she lay her face against his chest, the raised areas from his scars familiar and soothing to her. Oz felt the still silver hair tickle his nose but breathed her in anyway, there was a tightness on his chest but it didn’t hurt so he pulled the woman closer to him and kissed the top of her head.

The two stayed like that for a while just enjoying their each others silence until the need for answers had Oz breaking it again. “What happened?”

The woman in his arms wet her lips. “You started coughing up blood, your body got so hot and you could hardly breathe. We called for help and they took you in for surgery. The doctor said you have latent t-tuberculosis.” She stumbled over the word but took it slow, she could feel Oz tighten his arms around her like she was a security blanket. “They said you have cysts on your lungs and they were infected. Your Aura wasn’t healing them and they couldn’t take it. They did a procedure that cleared the cysts and all the water from your lungs then gave you a butt-ton of antibiotics and painkillers.”

“I see. . . .” Ruby tilted her head up to look at him, there was a hard strain over his face and he looked so worried that she couldn’t help bringing her lips up to his cheek. Pressing soft slow kisses over his face, his lips, chin, everywhere she could reach. They were chaste and light but it was enough to rein Oz back in and relax. “You had us all scared.”

“I’m sorry Ruby. Where’s Qrow?”

“I sent him back to the house, his Semblance would have a field day in a ICU unit.”

Oz nodded with a little sigh. “ Probably best.” He waited for a bit then grinned at her. “So, when can I get out of here?”

Ruby scoffed but smiled. “Oh hell no! You ain't going anywhere until the doctor gives the all clear and don’t you dare give me those puppy dog eyes, your health matters more.”

“Oh come on please~ I can’t stay here, I’ll go mad.”

“Nope! I’m not letting you get out of this bed.” To empathize her point Ruby draped her body over Oz’s legs and hips. “Stay!”

“Hahaha, I’m not a dog Ruby and besides if you think holding my legs is going to keep me in bed then I’ll just drag you out with me.” He reached up and petted over her back.

The silver eyed woman crawled back up and purred into his ear. “What if I can offer you something else to stay in this bed . . . .” She was thinking very careful snuggles, as she didn’t want to lay on his chest to much.
“There is nothing you can do for me here that you can’t at home. Let me up.” Ozpin said, he hated hospitals, they had so much the needed to do.

“No.”

“Afraid I’m going to have to side with the young lady there Mister Volern, you understand right, doctor’s orders.” The same female doctor who had originally spoken to Ruby and Qrow entered the room, barely batting an eye at Ruby’s attempt in keeping her patient in bed. “You Sir are in no state right now to be getting out of that bed let alone leaving.”

Ruby sheepishly removed herself from Oz’s lap and retook her seat by his bed. “Hi Doc.” Ozpin said with a tired wave.

“Hello. Mister Volern, you suffered from latent tuberculosis, the amount of infected cysts we had to flush out of your lungs were immense and by rights you shouldn’t have even had them to begin with. They appear in bodies of more elderly folk and not just that . . . your use of Aura healing while impressive certainly made it worse.”

“I don’t understand, are you sure there isn’t some sort of mistake? I know what tuberculosis is and shouldn’t have been at risk of it.” Ozpin was sure there was some mistake, he had hardly caught even a cold in a few lifetimes. That didn’t stop Lydia from having him vaccinated for everything that could be passed around sexually though, she was one thorough Mistress.

“Well for one, you’ve had no such vaccination that I can find on file and healing with our Aura’s although it’s our best and first line of defense is not perfect. Mistakes can be made, things can be overlooked, especially when it comes to situations such as your own. You used an aggressive form of healing when Beacon fell, from that I can assume the tuberculosis formed then and while healing your superficial wounds you neglected your organs.” She paused and then said. “Which is why I am recommending only passive Aura use for the next week while your body heals naturally.”

“That’s not necessary Doc, now that I know the problem I can fix it, if you would just hand me the discharge papers Ruby can call my other partner to help me home.” Ozpin shifted and coughed slightly trying to clear his throat, his mouth still tasted tinny, like blood.

“Yeh . . . that's not happening. Like I said you should stop using such aggressive forms of healing as its not helping in the long run. As your doctor I am authorizing you to stay here for at least another forty-eight hours and if you are using anything other then passive Aura healing I will not discharge you from this hospital until more unnecessary tests have been done to ensure there was not more damage done during your healing.” The glare she gave Oz would have been enough to cut down any other person. As it was Oz looked like he was going to argue the point but in fact deep down he was terrified.

Tuberculosis! How was this possible, was his Aura failing him? How did he not notice something like this. Realizing how close to death he had actually been and his Aura wasn’t healing him was terrifying. The cheeky smile he held for Ruby just minutes ago fell as he tried to think back on any other time his Aura had failed. He was suddenly faced with the image of a child as he held the little body in his arms. Arien. Ozpin pressed a finger and thumb to his temple, he hated these unfinished memories. He remember that Arien’s mother… their mother had fallen to one of the plagues. He had a sinking feeling in his gut that was another time he had fallen to bacteria. Aura wasn’t full-poof.

“I understand.” Ozpin said softly.
After the doctor had left Ruby and Oz curled up on the little cot together just sharing in a quiet solitude. Ruby finally explained to Ozpin what had happened at work and although he was still pissed the older man tried to remind himself to be calm. The pain in his chest as also a good reminder. He knew Qrow had often done whatever he could to get information but that had always been during a time when they were not exclusive to each other. Still finding out Salem’s plan to have Cinder approach the Branwen tribe and capture the Spring Maiden was worrisome. He needed to speak to Qrow about possibly contacting Raven, they needed to keep Spring out of Salem’s hands. Preferably into a position where he could take the magic back.

Ruby played with the soft curly hairs at his naval, her fingers feather light on his skin, trying to ensure she wasn’t putting any pressure on her lover when there was a polite knock on the door. Ruby furrowed her brow before the door burst open and in ran Nora. “HEY! YOU’RE ALIVE!”

Both Weiss and Ren walked in behind their redhead friend. “Nora! Please keep your voice down, this is a hospital.” Ren carried in a small backpack that contained a few changes of clothes and toiletries while Weiss held a large box that smelled faintly of bacon.

“Blah! This place is like almost silent, it could do with some noise.” Yang strolled in carrying a small bundle of flowers in a blue and white vase. They were long stemmed daisies and tulips. Very bright and happy looking flowers that Oz clocked as the same flowers that had been in the flower bed outside their house.

Oz smiled at the young adults, within minutes they were sat on every available surface and filling the hollow room with enough laughter and noise to rival a party. Ruby just smirked at him and curled up closer, though her eyes did dart around the room. “Where’s Jaune and Qrow?”

Yang pulled up the seat Ruby had initially evacuated closer to her sister. “When I went to tell Qrow we were leaving he was fast asleep on the bed. As for Jaune . . .”

“He said he’d stay behind and watch the house.” Weiss finished. Those hadn’t been his exact words but he had not insisted on coming and instead stayed behind.

“Oh.”

“Well it was probably a better idea for someone to stay but I do thank you all for coming to visit.” Ozpin said.

“That’s okay Obi, we would have come anyway, you’re kinda like family now!” Nora cheered. Her hand snuck dangerously close to the boxed lunch they had brought but thankfully Weiss was faster though, playfully slapping her hand away and sliding over the window sill a few inches. Unfortunately that only made Nora follow and soon her hand was not so stealthily reaching for the food again.

Ozpin chuckled. “Thank you anyway Nora.”

Yang shifted in her seat, glancing over the people in the room. “Sooo . . . what do we do now?”

“What do you mean? We carry on as we have done.”

Weiss, tired of Nora’s attempt at stealing the food passed the box over to Ren from his perch on the other chair. “Well no offense Ozpin but we were talking about it on the way over here and all of us came to the realization that we’ve let you and Qrow do everything since we arrived.”
“Yeah. We didn’t really take much notice but you and Uncle Qrow have practically done everything you can to work out a way to stop Cinder while we’ve . . .”

“What the girls are trying to say is that if we are a part of this war then we should start treating it as the threat it is.” Ren sat straighter. “Training is all well and good but especially now with you being unwell the rest of us should learn to take more on.

“We already decided that Jaune and I will help Qrow with his searching and enlisting Huntsmen.” Yang perked up.

“I am going to continue working in the bath house, if Watts or Hazel return I’ll do what I can to learn more and perhaps with my ear to the ground I’ll find out other information.” Ren said.

“Nora and I were suggesting ways to get a foot into the blackmarket and see if we can gather any useful information there.” Weiss placed her hand on Nora’s shoulder smiling at the ginger haired girls wicked grin.

Yang had the biggest smile on her face Ruby had ever seen since before the Vytal festival as she held out the robotic arm, the one she had lost during the fall. “But we can’t do any of this without our commander and chief. So what say you Ozpin, ready to let us fight the good fight?”

Oz was silent as he listened to his students. Only they weren’t his students anymore. No these were this generation’s Huntsmen and Huntresses. Something bright and hot blew up in his chest and it had nothing to do with his lungs. No this was a feeling he knew and hadn’t felt in some time.

It was pride.

With as much care to his throat as he could manage Oz took the cold metal hand and smirked. “Let’s do this.”

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Ozpin wallowed… politely in Ren and Nora’s cooking, he was so not looking forward to five days of hospital food. Ruby nibbled on a plate of her own as the young adults had gathered up chairs and were sitting around Oz’s bed.

“Ruby?”

Qrow’s voice in her head was groggy. “I hear you.”

“I called Raven, her and my parents are coming to visit Oz tomorrow. To discuss an alliance.”

“I’ll tell everyone.”

“Qrow says that he called Raven, she and her parents are coming here tomorrow to talk with you Oz.” Ruby said.

Ozpin’s attention snapped over to her. “What?”

“He says that Hawk and Falcon want to meet you and are refusing to wait. They will be teleporting to him tomorrow then coming here.” Ruby said as Qrow filled her in on the details.

Oz tossed his silverware down and rubbed his hands over his face. “This was not how I wanted to
“Yeah, this is a bad idea. Grandma’s like… well a hawk. She’d leap on any weakness.” Yang said.

Ruby looked over to Oz studying his expression. “Don’t you dare speed your healing, I can see you thinking it.”

The tall man flinched, he couldn’t deny he had been thinking about it. “Sorry.”

“We’ll just have to figure this one out as we go.” Ruby said, taking charge. “Ren brought clothes, so you can at least be dressed. I’ll stay with you.”

“This is going to go terribly.” Ozpin said and promptly started to cough.

Chapter End Notes

Ardy: MUAHAHA! I bet you lot read the title and thought Tyrian or something. :P
Kry: Yes you are evil.
Ardy: You're eviler. As is proof in the next chapter.
Kry: I think that is up for debate.
Ardy: And what a debate that will be. Anyway thank you too: Mysty_Sinclair, darkvampirekisses and Sportsfangirl815 for your comments. I think some of the best lines in Emerald Rose are in the next chapter, I can't wait to share it!
Moves on the Chess Board

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Mistral’s mornings were always spectacular, especially when you lived in one of the higher districts. The sun rose over the mountain like it would be the last day, bathing the city in a amber glow. Unfortunately Qrow couldn’t bring himself to enjoy the sunrise as he normally would since he knew it was only a matter of minutes before his morning was going to be promptly ruined.

He and Yang had set out early, Yang because she was always an early riser and him because sleep without Ruby or Oz had not come. He also hadn’t wanted his parents, whichever of them arrived to know where he was staying. So the two of them set out early enough and left the others to their breakfasts.

Yang had her sunglasses on covering her eyes against the glare of the morning. “You alright firecracker? You can always head back if you don’t want to see them.”

“And miss this beautiful sunrise? Nah. Besides after the things I’ve heard them say about you I figured you could use some backup.” She said bringing her fists together.

“Just try to keep the fireworks under control okay? Let’s see if we can get through this meeting in one piece.”

Yang pursed her lips and removed the sunglasses, letting them perch on her top. “Are you sure you’re not just a tiny bit overreacting here?”

“Trust me if Hawk comes and I don’t doubt she will, she’ll chew me up and spit me back out and if my dad turns up . . .” Qrow shuddered. “I don’t dare give my Semblance anymore ammunition. They haven’t held their position for this long because no one had the balls to challenge them. Just try to keep their attention off you, I don’t want to have to explain to Tai why his daughter is spotting black hair and bandit clothes.”

Yang gasped, her eyes lighting red for a moment as she tried to cover her luscious blonde locks. “They wouldn’t dare.”

Qrow was about to say more, then the familiar sounds of Raven’s portal ripped open and out stepped three individuals. The first was most definitely his sister. She sneered at him and gave Yang a look of indifference before stepping to the side. The portal hummed as a woman, much older then he and Raven emerged. She was exactly as he remembered her and the wide smile that spread from cheek to cheek was just as false as he remembered too. Hawk took long strides towards her son and embraced him with a hug that was just that bit too tight. Qrow could feel her nails dig into his back as she leaned back and studied his paler eyes. “Hello my little bird.”

“Hello Mother.” Qrow’s head dropped into a slight bow and was not at all surprised when Hawk’s hand slapped against his cheek.

Yang was furious, she could feel her hair catch flame with it but the pointed look Raven sent her way quelled her fire. Hawk smiled at the lack of response from her son and swept that same hand over his cheek, smoothing the red mark she’d given him. “My sweet little crow, how I’ve missed you.”

“Hawk darling, let the boy go, there will be plenty of time to . . . visit with our son later. We have all
day after-all.” Finally Falcon came through the portal, letting it close on his back. His smile was smaller but no less fake then his mother’s had been and again Qrow dearly wished he hadn’t needed to meet with them at all. Falcon walked over and curled his arm around his son’s shoulders, his eyes sharp as he took in his son’s features. “Well I’d say it’s very good to see you again my son but I get the impression you wouldn’t agree. Still I must say,” Falcon looked somewhat puzzled and turned his head back towards his daughter then to Qrow again. “if I didn’t know any better I would think you’ve found a fountain of youth, Qrow.”

Hawk narrowed her eyes. “What do you mean my love?”

With his father's hands on his shoulder Falcon moved Qrow closer to his sister, seeing her eyes widen slightly. “For twins Qrow looks significantly younger then his sister. I wonder how that came about . . .”

“Good genes?” Qrow attempted to joke, giving his father a smirk which made the older man chuckle. The mirth quickly dispensed as did the smile.

“Not to worry, you’re tell us eventually. Like I said we have all day.”

Hawk, no longer interested turned her attention on her grandchild. “Yang dear! I was sorry to see you leave so suddenly and without a goodbye either.” The taller form stopped in front of the blonde headed woman as she jerked the youngers head up by her chin. Yang barely swallowed her wince. “That was very cruel of you and wouldn’t you again, that naughty children should be punished.”

Before Hawk’s free hand could make contact with Yang’s face there was a blur of movement as Qrow grabbed his mothers wrist and held it. “You don’t get to hit her, ever.” His eyes burned with an anger Yang had only seen a few times, even when her grandmother glared at him he didn’t let up. Hawk’s eyes slowly softened and the pout round her lips faded as she giggled, wrapping her son in a warm hug. “There’s my Qrow!”

Qrow remained still as his mother hugged him, this was her gentle side, her loving side and it still made him sick. After a moment she pulled away but her burnt red eyes were flashing with happiness. “Come, we must visit with your lovers. I am dying to meet them.”

Raven remained silent through the entire exchange and when they set off it was with Hawk holding onto Qrow tightly as though if she let go he would fly away, their father chatting with Yang and Raven bringing up the rear. She for once was actually looking forward to a reunion with the man who held her brothers heart. Maybe she might get what she wanted this time after all.

“Oz lay back down please.” Ruby was perched on the bed pushing Oz back into the bed.

“I am not meeting Qrow’s parents on my back!” Oz tried working his way up, the fact that Ruby was successfully hindering him spoke a great deal to his condition and he didn’t like it one bit. “Look just help me get dressed, I don’t want my butt exposed. I’ll lay back down till they get here and after they’ve gone again, I promise.”

Ruby hummed not trusting it but stopped trying to hold him down and helped him sit up. “Fine but you stay sitting till I say otherwise.”

“Deal.” Ozpin said as Ruby crawled off the bed and helped him swing his legs off and sit on the
edge. “This still sucks.”

“Well now you know for future, be more careful when healing yourself.” Ruby said zipping over to a vacant chair and opening the backpack Ren and brought pulling out a pair of Oz’s underwear and trousers.

“To be fair this probably happened within those first three days. I don’t even remember noticing any pain in my lungs, but then I was wrecked in so many other ways it is possible that it was just… shoved under the rug? I do remember being covered in fire, I could have inhaled some or some shrapnel could have nicked a lung. Honestly the more I think about it the longer the list of things that could have happened becomes.” He lifted his feet as much as he could and Ruby put his underwear and trousers on before working them up the rest of him. She pulled the hospital gown off of him and set it aside.

Ruby waited for him to lift himself before pulling the articles of clothing up over his butt and zipping up his fly and doing the button. “No belt?”

The silver haired woman smirked at him. “No, not like you’re going anywhere. As sexy as you look in them.”

Oz reached and pet over her neck, he loved the new hair almost as much as the old. “Don’t think you’re getting away scot free for letting Hazel fuck you. I don’t like others touching what’s mine. I will be reasserting my terf … just as soon as I have the strength to make a decent job of it.” His hand slid down to hold her by her shoulder.

“You won’t be doing anything other then walking for a while.” Ruby said and took his hand between hers before bring it up and nuzzling it. “Besides, your claim is not threatened. It won’t happen again, I did not enjoy it. It was only for the work, nothing else.”

“It still grates my nerves.” Ozpin said then started to cough. Ruby zipped away and returned with a white bowl just in time for Oz to grab it and hack up thick brown phlegm up into it. “Ugh yuck, that’s just nasty.”

Ruby took the bowl way and put it back on the bedside table. “Yup. You just focus on breathing for a bit. Don’t think I haven’t noticed you struggle after a coughing fit.”

“You don’t miss anything do you?” Ozpin said as Ruby went and grabbed his shirt.

“Well up till you were coughing up blood I did. I am trying to be better about paying more attention to your habits now.” Ruby said helping him put the shirt on then buttoning it up for him.

“Well thank you. Now I want to stand.” Ozpin said rotating his ankles.

“That was not our deal.” Ruby said standing before him with her hands on her hips.

Ozpin snapped his fingers. “Damn it.”

Ruby only smirked and blocked his view of the uncomfortable chair behind her, she saw the way his eyes flickered towards it like a goal. “Nope! You are dressed now, you’re getting back on that bed even if I have to sit on you.”

“Normally I wouldn’t object.” Ozpin said with a smirk.

“We’re almost there, if Oz wants to stand now would be a good time. Window would be a good place, give him something to lean on.”
Ruby’s smile fell. “Their coming, let’s get you up. Qrow recommended the window.” She shifted and braced herself, Oz grabbed her shoulder and together they worked him up to his feet. The drugs in his system made his legs a little unsteady. He grabbed his IV stand, because pain meds were so good. They settled him by the wall and Ruby stayed right beside him holding his free hand.

The door opened and Qrow led the way, he couldn’t help but smile at his lovers. Against his better judgement he ignored his parents and Raven. “You’re up and about.” He went to them and traced a hand over Oz’s slightly rumpled shirt.

“Probably not for long, my balance is shit.” He sent to Ruby and Qrow through the ring while saying aloud. “I’m not one for bed rest.” Oz reached out with his free hand and brushed along Qrow’s beard. “You don’t look like you’ve slept.”

Oz turned his head and kissed Ozpin’s palm, reaching up to hold that hand to him. “You know, what happened is ingrained into my memory. I’ll sleep when you can come home.”

“Ohh how sweet, makes me ill. You’ve changed Ozpin.” Raven said crossing her arms over her chest, sneering at the dark hair had covered the older man’s head.

“Oh get stuffed sister.” Qrow snarled at her.

Ozpin only gave Raven the barest glance. “You obviously haven’t.” He shrugged, dismissing the older twin.

“Ah I missed this.” The sarcasm dripped from Falcon’s voice.

“Qrow introduce us.” Hawk ordered.

“You don’t need an introduction. You know who they are.” Qrow glared at his mother.

Ozpin pushed himself off the wall, standing straight hurt but he didn’t dare show his pain. “My apologies Mrs. Branwen, Qrow only seems to use his manners selectively despite my efforts.”

“I tried for seventeen years, some children you just can’t teach.” Hawk offered her right hand.

“Hawk Branwen.”

Ozpin took it and forced a smile onto his lips when Hawk’s nails dug into his IV needle. “Just Ozpin.” He pulled his hand from Hawks and gestured to the collection of chairs that Ruby had gathered this morning. “Shall we get to business?”

“Why are you in here?” Falcon asked as he moved a seat for himself and Hawk.

“A case of tuberculosis that caught me unawares.” Ozpin moved to occupy the largest leather chair and tried not to show any relief at sitting. “Ruby go sit on the bed with Yang.” He sent with a whisper of Aura through the ring.

Ruby departed from his side and did as she was told, she patted it and Yang came and sat beside her. Offering her side to her half sister to snuggle up into.

The twins glared each other down, Qrow moved to stand by Oz’s left side. A hovering avenging guardian of black hair and red eyes.

“Cute.” Raven sneered and sat still glaring at her twin.

“Children.” Falcon said exasperated.
Silence settled over the room. “Shall we get to business then?” Hawk said with a sweet smile.

“It’s come to our attention that Cinder plans to go after the Branwen tribe because it somehow came to her attention that the Spring Maiden is with you. Logic would dictate that Cinder seeks the Relic of Knowledge also, we can not allow her to take it.” Ozpin said, resting his throbbing hand on an armrest of the chair.

“So you are seeking to take the Relic and you need Spring to do it.” Raven said.

Ozpin chuckled, as much as it hurt. “Raven, I can take the Relic whenever it suits me. I wish to keep the Spring Maiden’s power out of Salem’s hand. It’s come to my attention that I do not know as much about that energy as I should. Having it roaming the world unchecked was one of the most unwise things I’ve done in the last few millennium.”

“So you want to take the Spring Maiden’s power back?” Hawk asked, already hating the idea.

“I want to take all of the Maidens back. It was mine to begin with, the world will not suffer without it.” Ozpin said. “My proposal is that you return the Spring Maiden to me. And I will protect you from Cinder.”

Hawk laughed. “No. You can’t even protect yourself. You can barely even stand right now.”

“A temporary situation.” Ozpin grit his teeth.

“We have a proposal of our own. We want a foothold in Mistral, you and yours will help us create this. In exchange, our Spring Maiden will stand against Cinder and Salem.” Hawk said. “We will give you Raven and Vernal for this period and you will give us Qrow and Ruby. To… motivate you to be, effective in your efforts to help them. We will also be moving the tribe to stay ahead of Salem’s company, in such a time of flux Qrow and a Silver Eyed Warrior will be useful for Grimm protection.”

Ozpin pursed his lips. “You can have Qrow and Yang. Ruby remains with me.”

“You are not in a position to negotiate. You have our terms.” Falcon said. “I am sure Cinder and hers will help us even if you do not.”

Ozpin looked over to Ruby who nodded very slightly. “Alright. Qrow and Ruby, only for as long as it takes for the tribe to move.”

“Till we have a satisfactory base in Mistral.” Falcon countered.

“That is too open ended. The start of the school term, at the latest.” Ozpin said.

“I don’t get it what’s the problem here?” Ruby sent to Qrow.

“We’re gonna be hostages Ruby, insurance to make Oz and the teams help Raven and Vernal. Oz is trying to put a time limit on it so we have a way out if it all goes to shit.” Qrow explained.

Ruby paled and snuggled into her sisters side. Yang reached up and hugged her sister to her, she understood what was going on and hated the idea of being separated from Ruby again.

“Agreed.” Falcon said.

Hawk was paying more attention to Ruby then the two men. “What lovely hair, that can’t be natural. Has Ozpin given you magic like my Raven and Qrow?”
“Mom’s got magic?” Yang asked shocked by the casual statement.

Ozpin whined. “Much to my endless regret.”

That had Raven storming to her feet. “Oh right cause you’re so high and mighty, only giving it to your lovers.” Raven snapped.

“You were never that, if Qrow hadn’t talked to me into it I would have never shared it with you.” Ozpin said with a sneer. “If I hadn’t woven the magic into you so thoroughly I would rip it from you right where you stand.”

“You clearly didn’t do that good a job, or did a way better job with Qrow. Mine is not changing, and what right would you have to take it back-.” Raven said voice raising.

Qrow moved between them faster then they could blink, putting himself between Ozpin and Raven. “Back off Raven. You never earned it. You ran.”

“Earned it? Is that why yours has been changing cause you fuck him on a regular bases?” Raven snapped at Qrow while gesturing as Oz.

“You slept with my mother?!” Yang couldn’t help the shout.

Ozpin groaned and rubbed his temples. “Trust me. I still regret it. Next thing you know they’ll be arguing about who’s the better lay.” Ozpin covered his mouth so the Branwen’s couldn’t see it and mouthed. Qrow, at the two girls.

They both giggled. Raven on the other hand was glaring at Ozpin. “You didn’t answer my question.”

Oz looked back at her with an almost bored expression. “Magic requires intimacy. Giving you and Qrow your magic, the choice of the Maidens. What that requirement is, can vary. No I haven’t given Qrow anymore magic, what has happened to his magic, he’s achieved on his own.”

Ruby nearly smiled until she saw Hawk’s eyes on her, they were so still and unblinking that she hadn’t the first notion about what was going on in her thoughts. Though the elder woman did raise a brow. “Yes?”

“Are all the women of your line so small? You’re positively tiny! Don’t you agree Falcon.” Hawk stood and linked her arm through her husband pulling him closer to the youngest female. Had he been physically able Oz would have thrown Ruby behind him, as it was he could see Yang tighten her grip around her sister.

Hawk drew closer, her red eyes so close that Ruby could see each individual lash. “Well I don’t know . . . my mother didn’t have any family that she told me about but I get my slight frame from her.”

“Such a shame isn’t it child, to lose one’s only mother.” The chiepest said, softly stroking a hand through all that magic hair.

“I had my father and sister and now I have Qrow and Oz too.”

“So sweet~. Just look at those eyes Falcon. She’s like freshly fallen snow. Never been trampled on by dirty feet yet have you?” Hawk’s smile sent a chill down both girls backs. “Or maybe you have . . . and liked it.”
Ozpin had to use what strength he had to stand and hold his lover still, even as Qrow growled under his breath Hawk grinned wider. With her hearing his mother picked it up easily, sending a look towards her son. She was pressing his buttons and he always had the most honest reactions that she just couldn’t help but enjoy it.

“Tell me Ruby, why are you not yet with a child. You have two strapping men in your bed yet not a single babe, are you even trying?” Hawk was honestly confused by that.

"She's not some prized mare!” Qrow snapped, finally stepping away from Oz and pulling Ruby off the bed and behind him. Ruby squeaked but only in surprise.

Oz was also ruffled by the Branwen matriarch's suggestions but his voice was more even and controlled then Qrow’s. “And why would she have a baby only for it to be raised during a war?”

“Children are vital in war. If we had none we would go extinct, it has long been a custom in all the tribes to encourage procreation before a battle.” Hawk said her eyes landing on her son. “Protecting the Tribe is to protect your family.”

“You have never been my family!” Oz felt the change in Qrow too late but Ruby who craned her head back to see him gasped at the sight of Qrow’s normally garnet coloured eyes turn black with just that ring of red. Her eyes flicked down to his nails, sure enough black talons lengthened and cut tiny seams through her cream coloured blouse.

“Muninn!” Oz sent swiftly through his ring. Qrows near black eyes flickered to the man sitting behind him and with a grace that should have been impossible he slipped back, pulling Ruby with him so they could be as close to Oz as possible. He took his seat, arms sliding down to cradle the female body closer to him while he awaited his orders.

To the others in the room it appeared like Oz had just looked in Qrow's direction, the silence deafening as he sat in the vacate seat. Hawk and Raven had not so hidden looks of disgust and anger on their faces. Falcon however watched the exchange, his face completely passive and blank.

“It’s okay Qrow. We’re safe.” Oz dropped his hand on the younger man’s shoulder, the red ring shining as he sent Aura through it. Slowly the white returned to Qrow’s eyes, and his nails returned to normal. A bead of sweat clotted his brow and despite knowing it was a weakness, one he didn’t want his parents seeing Qrow leaned into Oz’s hand, almost nuzzling it, further relaxing his hold on Ruby.

Ozpin turned his attention to the others. “I think our business is concluded. Ruby and Qrow will need time to pack and I wish to speak with them alone. So if you’d be so kind.” He gestured towards the door.

Yang jumped off Oz’s bed, eager to give her uncle alone time with Ruby and Oz and quite frankly get the Chiefess away from her sister. “I’ll take them home.”

Hawk smiled at Ruby and Qrow. “We’ll talk more later.”

Raven and Qrow shared a glaring contest as the bandits and Yang left. Only when the door shut did Oz let himself cough, Ruby jump up from Qrow’s lap and grabbed the bowl again. Qrow moved to pet over Oz’s back and hold him steady, as the tall man hacked up a yellow and brown rainbow. When he was done, Ruby took the bowl and Oz leaned on Qrow. “Let’s not do this again. Can you help me Qrow, I want to lay down.”

“Of course.” Qrow and Ruby helped Oz back into bed, the IV stand made things a little tricky and
he relief on Oz’s face to be horizontal again made them both worry.

Oz closed his eyes and took some shallow breaths. “They’ll probably want to take you today.” He said softly, then reached out with an exhausted hand. Ruby zipped over and helped him put the oxygen mask back on and turned the machine back on.

“I don’t doubt it. From the look on Hawk’s face, I dare say she wanted to take us here and now. I still don’t think this is a good idea Oz.” Qrow crossed his arms.

“Because you don’t trust them?”

“No and neither should you.” Qrow held Ruby’s hand in his, bringing it up to his mouth to kiss her knuckles. “We can still back out of this, wait for Leo to get the council to pull their stick from their asses.”

Oz shuffled around on the bed, trying to make himself comfortable. “Bit too late for that Qrow. Besides I don’t trust Leo right now. Too many things have been to… convenient. We haven’t found any of your friends, yet Leo said they were in the Kingdom. There are dozens of outstanding Grimm bounties, Cinder and hers came from here. How did they get their ID? I remember looking over the other Kingdom’s students many times, yet they didn’t stand out. Why? No, we are not trusting Leo. Do not update him.”

“You think he might be working with Salem?” Qrow asked, Oz hadn’t said anything before, but then he had been pushing them to seek help on their own.

“I think when push comes to shove Leo will always take the cowards route. He used to be a brave man, but he dropped out of contact and from what you’ve told me … he’s changed. So yes I think he’s working for Salem, I just don’t have the proof yet. Think about it Qrow, how did Watts’ and Hazel know the tribe location? They’ve been able to stay off the map and out of Salem’s view for a long time. Only you knew where they were and when you first arrived who did you tell?”

“Leo.”

“Exactly. While working for bandits will be unpleasant and we can count on Hawk to try something while you are with her. Better the enemy we know.” Ozpin took a slow deep breath, he was so tired all his energy used in one meeting. “Remind me, to get all my shots next time I get a new body.”

Ruby couldn’t help the tearful giggle. “Count on it. Ren likes his medical stuff, I’m sure we can get a nurse to check his knowledge and authorize him to stab you on a regular basis.”

“Oh. Joy.” Ozpin groaned at the mere thought.

“What about you Oz? Will you be okay if both Ruby and I leave? Its bound to take at least a few months and mother will milk having us as much as she can. This means you being alone again.”

Oz held out his hand to his lover, Qrow immediately taking it in his. “I survived being apart from you for six months on a ship and my love for you and Ruby only grew stronger. This will be like a walk in the park in comparison.” His smile faded as he took on a more serious tone. “It won’t be easy but we will make this work. Being back in the tribe won’t be easy for you either and I know how hard it is for you to be around them. You’re going to need Ruby to ground you.”

“It’s my mother that I’m worried about.” Qrow said and lifted Oz’s hand to his cheek. “And you be careful, you forget you’re not invincible way too often.”

“Same to you. Just try to stay out of trouble, snuggle Ruby instead of trying to murder your parents.”
Ozpin said in jest.

“Ruby, be prepared for lots of snuggles.” Qrow said in complete seriousness.

Ruby grinned. “Oh how ever shall I manage?”

That got both men to laugh, though Oz made a face and stilled his chest as it ached. “Pass me my Scroll please?”

Ruby grabbed it from the bedside table and handed it to him.

Oz put it on speaker and called Lydia. She picked up quickly. “Is something wrong?”

“In a way. I just met with the heads of the Branwen tribe. They will be taking Ruby and Qrow and we will be getting two of their people, Raven and Vernal. They want to take some territory from the other tribes in Mistral. Any chance you know some targets?” Ozpin asked.

Lydia hummed. “Yes, I think I can help. You aren’t the only one that has been making alliances. Can you come by tonight.”

Ozpin cringed long and deep, this bit was going to suck. “Umm about that… I’m kinda in hospital right now and stuck here for a few days.”

“Why~.” The word was drawn out and Ozpin shrank further into the bedding. He’s rather face down a hoard of Grimm then tell Lydia why but her tone left no room for evasion. “Ummm I may of had… umm.” Ohh this was gonna hurt. “Advanced latent tuberculosis.” He rushed the words out.

“WHAT?!?” Lydia roared.

Ozpin tried to give his Scroll to Qrow, who backed away as if it was on fire. Ruby artfully ducked his attempt to give it to her… to get it farther away from him.

“OF ALL THE STUPID THINGS YOU COULD HAVE MISSED!” Lydia was furious. “YOU JUST GET BACK AND THEN ALMOST DIE ON ME!?”

“I’m fine, I’m fine, I’m fine!!” Ozpin panicked and then started to cough. “Ah Hell’s Bells.” He hacked into his elbow, pulling the mask out of the way.

“What hospital are you at and what room?” Lydia asked swiftly.

At that Ruby took the Scroll from Oz. “Mistral general ICU room two oh seven second floor.” She purred, Ozpin looked like she had just signed his death warrant.

“I will be there with tea in half an hour!” Lydia hung up.

“Well we know you’ll be looked after.” Qrow said and chuckled at the mortified Oz.

“You don’t know what you’ve done! I hate lemon ginger tea! She’ll be pouring it into me whether I want it or not! And don’t get me started on her cough remedies!” Ozpin said.

“I like her.” Ruby said putting her hands on her hips. “She’s the perfect person to keep you in bed.”

“I’m DOOMED!”
“We’re doomed Ruby!” Qrow whined again through their bond. Ruby imagined that if Hawk and Falcon were not right ahead of them Qrow would be trying to pull out his hair. It made for a funny picture but she just patted his arm and accepted the rucksack her sister passed to her.

Yang gave her sister a tight hug, glancing over to where Hawk was busy speaking in hushed whispers with her Mom and spoke quietly into Ruby’s ear. “Hawk’s Semblance is ‘echolocation’ she hears everything, be careful.”

The younger sibling only nodded, breathing in her sister’s warm embrace, they had only just reunited and again she was leaving. It wasn’t fair and she was going to miss all of them, especially Ozpin but there was little choice. Already Falcon waited, though he appeared like a pillar of patience whereas Raven seemed ready to start tapping her foot as she grimace over the cuddly goodbyes. Hawk immediately took Qrow’s arm again but this time weaving her other through Ruby’s free one and all but dragging them towards the newly opened portal.

Ruby got her first glimpse of Raven’s Semblance and almost shuddered, it looked so empty, like an abyss that howled like a sheer cliff. “Where is Vernal?” Hawk snapped to her daughter.

“Don’t worry mother, she’s probably just grabbing a pack for me since you’re so keen on my staying in Mistral with a bunch of half trained children.”

Jaune who had been none to pleased to hear what ‘arrangements’ had been made grit his teeth. Nora and Ren had equal looks of dislike while Weiss tried to remain calm and indifferent to the whole exchange. None of them were happy with the idea of Ruby and Qrow having to leave but what made matters worse was that they were going to be working with bandits for some time.

Hawk barely glanced at the affronted group but sneered at her daughter. “You should know better Raven, to use every means to meet our end. If you are really looking out for the tribes best interest then you know to use every hand whether they be human or Faunus, adult or child. You never know when the slightest and smallest sword is going to be the one to win the war.”

Raven gave her mother a slight bow as Vernal finally stepped through the portal. “Yes mother, I understand.”

“Good. Come Ruby, Qrow it’s time we were off.” Hawk said leading the way through the portal, Ruby and Qrow followed under Falcon’s watchful eye.

Ruby was stunned by the camp, she hadn't imagined a place so lean and organized.

Hawk set off with a determination stride into the main tent, then came out a second later with a heavy brass gong.

“I hate that thing.” Qrow sent to Ruby as Hawk banged in the gong once.

The effect was instantaneous, the people of the tribe appeared from tents or rushed in from the other reaches of the camp. They gathered by family, which was easy to see as was personal family crests were embroidered under the Branwen Raven, and in tidy groups.

Hawk spoke loudly and clearly, but did not need to shout. “We are moving! Though winter is closing in we will be moving to the spring ranges.” She stepped to the side putting Ruby and Qrow in the spotlight. “My son Qrow has returned to us, as well as his partner the Silver Eyed Warrior Ruby Rose. I expect they will be treated with every courtesy. Ready yourselves for tomorrow, we break camp.” She turned away and walked into the family tent.
The tribe dispersed in a hushed rumble of voices. Falcon said, “Come, you will stay in our tent tonight. You will help break down tomorrow Qrow, I am sure you remember how and Ruby will watch and learn.”

The two followed Falcon into the tent. It was split into fourths with a central eating area, Ruby could see a kitchen and study like area, while the other two had thick curtains hanging from the ceiling hiding the other to sections completely. The ground was covered in thick rugs and large cushions replaced chairs.

“Hawk love, I'm going to check in with the other family heads. Show the two where they will be staying.” Falcon said from the doorway.

“Thank you.” Hawk said to her husband and pulled open the curtains to one of the hidden areas. “You will be staying here with us, Raven and Vernal already removed their things get settled and I will show you the rest of the camp.”

“Thank you.” Ruby said though Qrow chose silence.

The area within had one bed though it was more of a platform elevated about ten centimeters above the ground and covered in a dense mattress pad and a small army of red pillows. The rest of the bedroom was sparse.

“Ugh, I never thought I'd have to sleep on one of these things again.” Qrow said sitting on the bed and dropping his backpack by the end of it.

“It sure doesn't look comfy.” Ruby sent back to him sitting beside him, she was surprised because it was soft, she looked up at the bug net above them. “Huh, it's not actually that bad.” She frowned and rubbed between her hips.

“Still sore?” Qrow asked.

“No the usual monthly withdrawal.” Ruby said and Qrow reached over and started to massage her hips and stomach. “I'd get you chocolate and a hot pack but we're kinda stuck here for creature comforts. I guess you could ask my mother but I don't think giving her that kind of knowledge about your body would be wise.”

“I'll just have to make do with your wonderful massages.” Ruby sent and laid back, letting him work his magic.

The next day was a blur to Ruby, it was more than a little amazing to her how. Quickly and effectively the camp was broken down, three large trucks were filled with tent poles and crafting supplies. Everything else found it’s way onto a cart or a horse. She was pulled left and right between the Branwen tribe family heads. Little gifts for her, hot chocolate or a milk bar, her left wrist quickly became adorned with handmade bracelets.

By noon the camp was gone, the ground raked over. Ruby clung to the saddlehorn before her as the big bay shifted under her. Qrow moved a hand to hold her by the hip, he sat regal behind her the reins in one hand. He had the air of someone who was extremely comfortable with riding about him. Given his Semblance, they were as far away from everything remotely delicate as possible. With only the rackers behind them, their job was to obscure the tribe’s trail.

“It’s all so organized.” Ruby sent to Qrow.
It has to be, you can’t move this many people and stay ahead of both Salem, Huntsmen and Mistral’s police force without being. Bandits is just what those on the outside call the tribes. To the best of my knowledge all tribes are like this. Beyond that all of the tribes of Anima are organized under the Madino, call that tribe bandit royalty if you have to. Orders come down from the King, we have to carry them out. He lets there be infighting as much as the leaders of the Branwen, Liyr and Penaruddun desire. So long as it doesn’t interfere with the Madino tribe’s goals. Tribe heads can even challenge Xaio Roi for the right to be King or Queen of the bandit tribes. Thus elevating their tribe to the ‘royal’ position.”

“That sounds both complicated and really simple.” Ruby said.

“It’s a fight to the death, the Mabino have held the position for the last century or so. Xaio Roi is one of the best fighters and leaders I’ve ever seen. He and Oz would get on really great, or try to kill each other.” Qrow clicked his tongue and their horse merged in with the rest of the caravan.

“Why does it seem like everything outside of Patch is either, ‘we’ll be best buds’ or ‘I want to rip out your intestines and skip rope with them?’”

“We live in a complicated world?” Qrow ventured, with a lift of his eyebrow. Ruby giggled and snuggled up to him, the withdrawal always made her sleepy. “I want something meaty for dinner.”

“I’ll be sure to find you something still bleeding, get your iron count back up.” Qrow said with a smile but stiffened as Falcon came to ride beside them.

The void was filled the sound of creaking wheels and the impact of horse hooves upon the dirt.

“You appear to be making friends Ruby.” Falcon said nodded at her adored left wrist.

“Uh, I guess. I just get given stuff and I don’t know what to do with it. I’ve got my own little private stash of milk bars now.” Ruby pulled one out of her hip pouch and offered it too him.

“Thank you.” Falcon peeled the inner bark wrapping off and took a bite out of the sweet treat. After a long silent minute of riding he spoke again. “Qrow… I know you and Hawk, have never been on the best of terms and that our own relationship has always been strained. I will admit to dotting on Raven more then was fair to you. But those days are behind us, you’re your own man now. Even if I had advice to give you, I doubt you would take it. Your… reputation is well known among all the tribes.”

“Then why are you speaking with your murderer of a son?” Qrow asked, looking into the pale red eyes of his father.

“Hawk sees it as proof of your strength. Part of why she wanted you back so badly, in spite of your Semblance. I just wonder why, why kill people you would have worked beside?” Falcon asked.

“I follow my orders, only I decide where my loyalty lies. My family,” He spat the word. “has never done anything to earn that relationship with me. Taiyang has been more of a comrade to me that Raven ever was. Ozpin has been more of a figure to look up too, then you ever have been. If he tells me to kill, murderers, slavers and bandits. I’ll kill as many as he wants and a few extra just to ease his mind.” Qrow almost bared his teeth at his father.

“How is that any different then what we asked of you?” Falcon said softly.

His pale eyes were a little bit to knowing for Qrow’s liking. “It’s completely different.”
Ruby thought Falcon would ride away after but he didn’t. “You’re dad is confusing.”

“I’d rather be an orphan then claim any relation to him.”

“That’s a bit harsh. He’s way better then Hawk.”

Qrow grumbled under his breath. “I’ll give you that one.”

“Maybe I should try and talk to him? It wouldn’t hurt to have at least one of your parents maybe like and respect me. I get the feeling he tempers your mom a lot.”

“If you really have too.”

“Soo, how’d you and Hawk meet?” Ruby asked.

“We tried to kill each other.” Falcon said.

Ruby sighed and leaned heavily against Qrow. “See what I mean? It’s either ‘lets kill each other’ or ‘lets fuck each other’.”

Qrow’s laugh took Falcon completely by surprise, he couldn’t recall a time he had heard Qrow laugh. Yet this tiny slip of a woman made him laugh with ease. Hawk had been listening for them all day, he knew they barely spoke and yet now Qrow was laughing. “Ah, to be young.” Qrow kissed her temple and Ruby preened under the attention. “Just give it a decade Rubes, you’ll get used to it.”

Ruby rolled her eyes. “You always left this bit out of your stories.”

“To be fair, after you hit sixteen we had other thing to talk about. Plus you believed that Grimm were the biggest threat out there, I saw no reason to correct that till you were older.”

“No, now it’s bandits and crazy magic psychopaths.”

Qrow pat her hip. “Just hold onto that sarcasm. It’s how I’ve lasted as long as I have.”

“If you won’t mind me asking. How long have you two been together?” Falcon inquired.

“I see no harm in telling him.” Ruby sent.

“About two years. Only been active partners for one.” Qrow said.

“I see.” Falcon said. “Any particular reason for that?”

“None of your business,” Qrow grumbled, any of the amusement and jest from his tone vanishing. He did not blame Ruby for any of it, but in light of their knowledge of her being a Vessel Soul. A great many things made more sense. Still, he could have said no at any time, he was very glad he didn’t.

“I should go check on your mother.” Falcon said and kicked his horse into a trout, moving up the line with ease.

“What was that all about?” Ruby asked.

“Not a clue.”
The next week passed in a blur. Ruby rode with Qrow, her withdrawal bleed had come and gone. She took her next month’s pill at the temporary camp one night. Ruby had learned on perk to the moving caravan was that they didn’t bother to set up the main tents. Thus she and Qrow had one to themselves rather than sharing with his parents. Though it also meant that they were in sleeping bags rather then on a mattress. Her eyes wandered around the camp, she could almost see the appeal in this kind of life. It was just too bad these people stole to supplement their resources. What other option did they have though? To live like this? She mused they could become goat herders but didn’t see that ever happened plus it wouldn’t support so many people. Legal traders? Again unlikely.

Qrow appeared out from between fires, like he always did. Ruby hated to admit it and would never share the thought, but he looked good. Graceful, not at ease but he had a new, laxness to him that she hadn’t seen before. When they traveled with Ren, Nora and Jaune, he was always on guard. Here, not so much. Or maybe in a different way, he wasn’t worried about Grimm or his Semblance but she had noticed his eyes fluttered around looking for his mother and take note of her location before he’d relax again.

Ruby smiled as he sat down on the ground beside her, leaning on her little log. His legs stretching out towards their fire, he reached up and offered her a metal traveling cup. “I found some hot chocolate.”

His lover took it with a smile, wrapping her hands around the warm cup. “Thank you, how’d you get it?”

“I asked, though I couldn’t tell if the Bran I got from was just too terrified of me to say no. Or that he figured it would get to you.” Qrow said.

“I seem to be popular, and I haven’t used my eyes. It’s been so quiet it’s almost strange.” Ruby said.

“Well Hawk always sends Hunters out ahead. Raven probably shared everything she learned at Beacon with these people. I don’t imagine all but the biggest Grimm are much of a threat to them.” Qrow said, drawing a leg up and resting his arm over it. He flicked his finger towards the perimeter. “And contrary to popular belief, even bandits when warm and fed. Are happy enough to not draw Grimm.”

Qrow snapped his jaw shut when his mother approached their fire. She had a mug of something hot in her hand, Qrow could see the steam coming off in waves as she picked a bit of log upright and sat to the side of them. “You seem to be settling well Ruby.”

Qrow narrowed his eyes, his mom was scariest when she was calm. Ruby shrugged. “I’ve done a fair amount of traveling over the last few months. What’s a little bit more?”

“No wonder you’re so skinny.” Hawk mused.

“Well I am a huntress, it kinda lends to being fit.” Ruby said sipping her hot chocolate.

“Healthy then.” Hawk said looking Ruby up and down again. “Have you any siblings? Beside Yang?”

“No, my mother had a hard time conceiving me and died pretty early in my life. She didn’t really have the chance for another.” Ruby said, she was trying to keep her answers vague but give just enough of the truth that Hawk wouldn’t get pushy. She didn’t want to mention Ash or what happened to him. She could feel Qrow’s unease with the conversation in her mind and decided that
his parents didn’t need to know that part.

Hawk frowned at that. “I see. How did she die?”

“Grimm.” Ruby said softly.

“But she was a Silver Eyed Warrior.” Hawk said confused.

“Our powers aren’t something we can just turn on and off. I haven’t figured it out yet. She was protecting a village and got over run.” Ruby said softly. “Could have happened to any Hunter.”

“She was alone?” Hawk asked, her gaze littered over to Qrow.

Qrow glared at her and stood. “I’m going to bed. If I remember right we’ll be hitting the spring grounds tomorrow. They’ll be plenty of Grimm to clear, come on Ruby. We can make ourselves useful and you look tired too.”

She really wasn’t but, she could tell that Qrow needed to vent. So she finished her hot chocolate and stood.

Hawk offered her hand. “I’ll take it back to the mess. Goodnight the both of you.”

“Night.” Ruby said and followed him into their tent.

Qrow started to strip as soon as he heard his mother leave. Ruby wisely followed suit, when he kissed her and pulled her down with him onto their thin bedroll. She guessed that he wanted to make use of their private tent while they still had it. Not that she minded in the slightest, with how busy their lives had become something familiar and comforting was what they both needed.

Chapter End Notes

Ardy: MUHAHA! Lets get this party started. These next couple chapters are going to be fast.  
Kry: Though 'hopefully' spread out evenly. No burning out now Ardy.  
Ardy: kicks stone It's not my fault their fun and pretty easy to put together right now.  
Kry: Well I suppose while we have the ideas fresh we should make the most of it. I imagine fanfics will be slowing down slightly with Vol 6, still thank you Mysty_Sinclair and darkvampirekisses for your comments and everyone else for all the support.  
Continue to enjoy and lets all hope for a fun volume!  
Ardy: I think they'll ramp up. I hope you are all liking V6. Kry and I been enjoying it.  
See you all next time!
Ardy: Err now you guys get to learn the real reason I skipped a Nuckelavee fight earlier....

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Ozpin slept deeply after Ruby and Qrow left. When he awoke it was to the feeling of someone rubbing something on his bare chest. He blinked a few times, slowing waking up. “Lydia?” He croaked.

“Hello sleeping beauty.” Lydia purred, counting to rub his chest an oil. He wasn’t sure what it was but it was strong smelling and tingling his skin.

“I’m not beautiful anymore.” Ozpin slid his eyes closed again, he was still so tired.

Lydia reached up and removed his oxygen mask then turned off the machine. A dandelion smell filled his nose. “What I am I inhaling?” He asked with a bit of a slur.

“Tussilago. It’s best when applied rather than consumed.” Lydia said grabbing a cloth and drying her fingers.

Oz took a few more deep slow breaths, it was in fact easier. “Seems to be doing something.” The slur was still in his voice. “Why I am so groggy?”

“The nurse did refill your morphine drip shortly after I came in and let you have a little more. You were jerking in your sleep, don’t get used to it. They only reason she did was because I was here to make sure your breathed often enough.” Lydia pulled the tea cosy off a pot and poured a steaming cup of tea into a light cup.

“What’s that?” Ozpin asked, all he could smell was tussilago.

“You’re favourite.” Lydia said with her most evil smile.

“Awww.” Ozpin groaned and dropped his head back, he knew what that meant.

“Well you so rarely got sick before I hardly got a chance to baby you.” Lydia said with a smile. “Now your poor immune system is working in overtime and needs all the help it can get.”

“It was that tea that made me learn how to shield to fight off colds with Aura.” Ozpin said turning his head away as she stood cup in hand.

“Now none of that. If you don’t drink it now, I’ll just give it to you later when it’s cold.” Lydia said putting a hand on her hip.

Ozpin knew she would do it, she was evil incarnate. He turned his head back to her and unleashed his best puppy dog eyes.

“Nice try, better luck next time.” Lydia brought the cup to his lips.
Oz co-operated and took a small sip from the hot cup. Lemon, ginger and honey. “Needs more honey.”

“If you had it your way it would be ‘would would you like some tea with your honey.’” Lydia said setting the cup aside.

Ozpin smiled groggily up at her. “I like my sweets.”

“And you’re not getting any till you’re healed.” Lydia said smiling, then reached into her pocket and pulled out a small letter of yellowed paper. She put it in his hand and tucked it under the blanket. “For your Raven.”

“She’s not my Raven.”

“That’s not what I read from her mind, she was lurking outside of the hospital but made a tactical retreat. She’s a very conflicted woman.” Lydia rubbed more oil on his chest.

“That’s putting it mildly.” Oz said his eyes sliding shut again, breathing deeply of the oil. He turned away from her looking out the window. “Am I doing the right thing Lydia? I never planned for any of this and in light of my condition I can’t help wondering if perhaps I should have chosen a different path. I don’t even feel like myself anymore.”

“Do you have regrets my little becan valen?” Lydia asked.

“Yes, many.” Ozpin looked down at his tattooed arms.

“Then you’re doing the right thing.”

“What do you mean?” Oz asked.

“No one can go through life without some sort of regret, it’s what reaffirms our motivation, our choice to strive. If we had no regrets then is that not just the same as having nothing to change. Mistakes happen, regrets live, it’s what we choose to do with them that sets us on our path.” Lydia said.

“Maybe you’re right.”

“Of course I'm right.”

Qrow and Ruby swung out, Grimm dust followed them in a black wake. It was good to fight together again, even if it was under Hawk’s supervision. They blasted forth gunning for another wave of Beowolves, the two scythe wielders all but rolled their eyes. Talk about boring Grimm. Ruby blasted forth with her Semblance, materializing for brief seconds to since the young Grimm to bits. Qrow swung Harbinger out behind him in a ready stance and laughed. “That bored already Rubes?” He walked towards the treeline.

The red petals blew towards him, enclosing him in a cyclone before Ruby materialized out of it floating. “You know, I’ve been killing packs like this since I was like thirteen.”
“I didn’t let you do any fighting till you were fourteen, don’t exaggerate.” Qrow reached up and booped her nose.

Ruby fell out of her Semblance with a giggle, but Qrow caught her wrist and pulled her to him before she could fall on her butt. “Yang and I snuck out a lot.”

“Of course you did.” Qrow said. He scanned over the ground and pursed his lips. “One sec.” He stepped away and turned into a crow flying up above the clearing for a moment. Before returning with a snap. He raced to the edge of the field and knelt by a huge hoof print. He knelt and studied it for a second before spinning around and screaming out. “HAWK PULL EVERYONE BACK NOW!”

PAD, CLOP, PAD, CLOP.

A huge Grimm emerged from the tree like, Ruby took a few steps back as Qrow raced toward her. “What is it?”

“A Nuckelavee, those arms can stretch without end and it’s got a sonic roar. If we split up it can target us individually, we should stick together. With your Semblance and my crow, we should be able to avoid its attacks.” Qrow said.

“Why not just Maelstrom it?” Ruby asked.

“Think you can hold us together?” Qrow raised a brow. “If it screams…”

“I won’t know till we try.” Ruby said.

The Nuckelavee stopped, the imp upon it’s back with it’s long distended arms twitched and pulled up as it body jerked forward. Ruby had a moment to take in the white skull face and Grimm eyes before its jaw unhinged, showing rows of sharp black teeth and screamed. The sonic blast shockwaved around the tribesmen, making everyone cringe from its blood curdling scream.

Qrow charged forward, Harbinger in it’s scythe form extended out behind him. Ruby took a few deep breaths and activated her Semblance, she blasted at him and wrapping him up in it. Their petals darkened slightly with the addition of Qrow. Ruby wrapped them around the Grimm, Qrow materializing in and out of the storm. Cutting and slicing, black Grimm dust bleeding out of it.

The Nuckelavee screamed again lifting its arms and spun in a circle. The wind blew Ruby and Qrow into a fine mist of petals, they floated listless for a moment before Ruby pulled them together and they blasted as one towards the Grimm. The Nuckelavee proved its age, learning from their attack and caught on. At the next point when Ruby and Qrow’s storm was its thickest it launched, stretching its arms into them, trying to grasp their physical forms. Ruby split them into three coming together to smash into the horse chest. Qrow materialized his sword buried in the Grimm’s chest. The horse head slammed him in the chest, sending him tumbling head over heels into the dirt.

Ruby materialized firing Crescent Rose, flanking the Grimm. It sent it’s arms after her spinning to follow her. “Qrow remember Naga?!”

Qrow hauled himself to his feet. “That is a TERRIBLE idea!” He glanced around, could see that Hawk was pulling her men back and was watching from the tree line. There would be no back up them.

“But there is already a storm brewing!” Ruby Rose petal burst to another tree. “It could work!” Ruby had to dodge from the tree as the Grimm launched into the spot she had just been taking refuge on.
“Not much point if it sets the whole forest on fire!” Qrow found that Harbinger was still stuck in the Grimm, seriously how much punishment could this one take.

The Nuckelavee batted Ruby from the sky, she landed with a ground with a hard thump. “Qrow!” She screamed.

“Fuck it.” Qrow took a deep breath. “Call my name.”

“Fight for me Muninn.”

Qrow’s eyes changed and his Semblance ripped free, his Aura flared bright upon skin. The sky overhead boomed and lightning struck the Grimm, only missing Ruby by inches. It screamed and stumbled away from her, Qrow blasted forth a blur of red. The Nuckelavee screamed, finally ripping Harbinger from it’s chest and tossing it into the tree line. It crossed it’s arms over it’s chest and screamed again violently jerking. The spines on its back and horns lengthed, it’s mouth unhinged again and roared it’s sonic wave. Qrow didn’t even flinch, the Grimm zeroed in on him and charged. It’s front legs raising up to step on him.

He caught them both, stepped inward and spun, between them. His talons sliced tendons and black flesh apart, an arm came for him but he swept out with a single Aura strike, cutting the arm off. The Grimm stumbled away from him, the horse head swung around to hit him.

It impacted with his hand, all the muscle of the Grimm against Qrow warned for a brief second before he again stepped in under the Grimm’s space and spliced the horses throat open, dung his talons in and planted his foot on the monsters chest.

Ruby felt what he wanted, she grabbed Crescent Rose and jumped up swing down on the horses neck at the same moment Qrow heaved.

The sound of bones breaking and ligaments tearing was one Ruby wouldn’t forget for a long time as Qrow tossed the horse head away behind him. The horse part of the Grimm gave out and it lashed out with it’s remaining arm. Qrow stepped neatly to the side and jumped up onto the striking out once with a glowing red fist.

The Grimm’s shouldered exploded, it’s arm falling to the ground. It screamed again a weaker sound and Qrow grabbed it by the bottom of it’s jaw. “Shut up.” He ripped it clean off and spun it around driving it’s own teeth into it’s skull. The Grimm collapsed on itself, flecks of black drifting off the body as it finally died.

Qrow stepped off of it as it dissolved, he wasn’t even breathing hard but slow deep breaths. His black eyes turned to Ruby who was taking tentative steps closer. The air around them crackled with tension but slowly it faded as it started to pour rain, quickly soaking them both. She collapsed Crescent Rose and set the weapon on her hip. “Qrow.” She reached out and took his hand. “Come back to me.”

He could feel blood dripping from his fingers, though Grimm did not bleed. The red iris of his eyes was thin and unfocused. Ruby smiled and called out. “Muninn shh, time to rest again. I’m safe.”

Qrow closed his eyes and took a deep breath, the red fire of Aura faded from sight. His talons receded and when he opened his eyes again they were normal. “I really hate that.”

“Worked though, I think you fried it’s brain.” Ruby said with a smile.

Her partner reached out and brushed a lock of hair back from her face. “And almost you.”
“Na, I had plenty of Aura left.” Ruby smiled and Qrow lifted a brow. “What?”

“Watching you fight is really sexy. That was brutal but awesome.” Ruby leaned up on her toes. “We should go find a private place.”

Hawk was walking towards them from the tree line. Qrow waved at her and yelled. “Be back later!” Ruby grabbed him and they blasted off into the forest to find a dry place to celebrate their victory.

They reappeared under a thick pine tree, giggling as Qrow shoved her up against the trunk. Ruby grinned and reached out and grabbed him by the collar of his shirt. “Come on come on.” Ruby pulled him to her kissing him thoroughly.

“Does fighting really rile you that much?” Qrow asked, breaking the kiss and going for his trousers. Then hiking her up against the tree.

“Not all the time, but we had back up. I wasn’t worried.” Ruby reached down to stroke him.

“He wouldn’t have helped unless we were about to die. She probably wanted to see you use your eyes.” Qrow dipped his head and started to kiss her neck. “But I really don’t want to be thinking about my mom when, I’ve got you to play with.” He grabbed her wrist and pinned to the truck as he bucked up into her, cherishing her moan.

Ozpin stood by his room’s window, it had been a couple of days and he could breathe and stand unaided now. Lydia, pleased with the speed of his recover had left that afternoon, reassured in the knowledge that Oz was actually looking more himself. That doctor was still not letting him out of her sight though, maybe she knew a troublesome patient when she saw one. Oz smirked, him, troublesome? Never~.

His gaze fell again as he rubbed his chest. Tuberculosis, it seemed so unreal. It was frightening, to have carried around his own potential death for so long, if the cysts had burst while he had been alone… A memory, crawling out if that pool into the cold air. He shook his head, no now was not the time to get lost in those memories.

He walked over to the bed carefully pulling his shirt off. He gently touched the bandages that covered the surgery site, they mirrored on his body. He flinched as even the tiniest gaze hurt deeply, he guess his Aura had its work cut out for it, tending to his insides. He pressed the heel of a hand to his forehead, they would just become yet another set of scars. More scars, more scars that he couldn't hide, couldn't pretend they weren't there by hiding them under ink. How could Qrow and Ruby, just accept them? When they had started courting he had been a beautifully perfect man, now he felt like he was giving them a cheap knock off. Gods how could he face them again, his mistakes were stacking up again him.

Stop this Oz, they love you. Lydia still loves you, they don't care and you know that. He other part of him said they should care. You're such a vain insecure fucker, all charms and smiles cause you can't bare to let them see how twisted ugly and broken you've become.

So lost in thought he barely registered that someone was outside the room, thinking it was probably one of the nurses or Weiss he took the last few moments to wallow. However it wasn’t Weiss or any of the other people he had come to expect. It was Raven who pushed the door open.
She didn't really want to report to him but he was the one that had given them targets to scout out and they were solid targets. She stopped mid step staring at Oz's black tattooed back, they were tasteful and ornate, down right gorgeous, but in this light she could also see what they hid. “What happened to you?” The awe palpable.

Ozpin spun to his feet, grabbing his shirt and pulling it on. Only for pain to stab at him, his world changed colours but Raven caught him before he fell. “Startle you did I?” Something close to amusement in her voice.

“Do you need something Raven?” Ozpin asked sitting back on his bed.

“Just to report we scouted out you're targets. They're good and once tribesmen arrive to hold the territory, we'll get started.” Raven said, looking his battered chest over, the long vine tattoo over his abs stood out. Before he could stop her, she reached out and drew her fingers over it. Really taking the time to feel the long raised welt. “What happened to you?” She asked again.

Ozpin grabbed her wrist and pushed her hand away. “For that one I was impaled by some shrapnel, otherwise Cinder burned me alive and was arrogant enough to assume she had killed me.”

“So you have been playing into that assumption the whole time. That is why you changed your hair and have been using a false name. Clever, Qrow always said you were intelligent but I never saw it.” Raven mused, her eyes couldn't stop going over the raised scars both hidden by ink and the ones he hadn’t been able to hide.

Oz rolled his eyes, he shoved himself to his feet. Doing the middle button of his shirt as he went. “Yeah, well you don’t need to gawk. I know I look like I’ve been through a meat grinder.”

“I disagree. Before when your body was whole I thought it was the most unpleasant thing. It was like your perfection shone back then, not a line on your face, not a mark or blemish on your skin. I use to hate it. This pristine body so free or hardship and pain. It was shameful. Now look at you!” Raven moved to him to stand before him and ran a gloved hand over Oz's chest, the sides of his shirt parting. “This new you, so riddled with suffering and branded with unjust ... its beautiful and it’s real.”

Oz grabbed her hand as she trailed through the hair above his groin. “I'm not interested Raven. You used me once, I will not let you do it again.”

“It's not ‘using’ Oz when I genuinely want you. Seeing you so real and strong, it makes me wet. See for yourself.” She grabbed one of his hands and pressed it to her sex.

Ozpin attempted to snatch it back. “I don’t believe you. You are jealous of Qrow. You want your magic to change and have gotten it into your head that I’m the means to that end. I don’t know how it works Raven, I told the truth on that. What Qrow has done has been all him.”

Seeing him look down on her as though she was his student again pissed her off. Dropping his now
damp hand she glared at him. “You keep telling yourself that Ozpin. You’ll change your mind eventually, what with my brother and your little Ruby with the tribe who’s going to take care of you? Who would even 'look' at you. My offer stands, let me know when you decide you want a real fuck. Let me see that new strength of yours.”

The only thing I want right now is to wash my hand of you, both figuratively 'and' literally. Seriously Raven, that you think you have anything to offer just because Qrow is gone?

“Do you really think, that this?” He pointed at himself. “Is a sign of strength? You do even really grasp pain?” Ozpin shook his head and sneered. “I’ll show you pain, then maybe you’ll understand your delusional thinking that it equates to strength.” He snapped his hand out and grabbed her by the forehead, covering her mouth with the other and calling on his Aura. Slamming her into the wall, the action jarred his wounds but he grit his teeth.

He pushed his Aura into her coupled with a memory.

“Tell me immortal man, God of the Wilds. How did you become so? For I do not believe you are a god… Tell me are you familiar with the works of Shan Yu?” The face of a old man, his teeth rotting and a horrible stench for breath came into Oż’s vision. “I will meet the real you Mister Immortal man.”

The vision twisted and Oż yanked against the chains over and over, his heart pounding. The hand holding the knife was old but he didn’t think it was the first man. It cut into his stomach drawing a line straight down the middle of his abs. Blood poured out over his skin and he screamed. Cut after cut. Blood dripped down staining the ground, parts were removed and shown off.

“Do you see strength in this?!” Oz snarled. “Do you see anything here worth any of it?”

“You lived.” Raven gasped out.

“No I didn’t.”

He didn’t scream anymore, just watched his blood drip away and tried not to think about what they were going to do with his hand. Darkness pushed in on him as the old man started to do the cutting himself.

“You stupid pathetic man.” Ozpin hissed. “You’ve wasted so much time hunting me and you will get nothing.” Oz could feel himself dying he looked over at his stump as his body started to dissolve into gold dust. Most of his deaths had been quicker, so he hadn’t seen himself die before, it reminded him of how a Grimm died. This time he welcomed that oblivion, he’d take anything to be away from here.

“Know what it’s like to die.” Ozpin snarled. “Or shall I set you on fire? I can show you that too.”

“But you are still here, you’re alive and you keep at it. You are strong.” Raven said as Oz removed his hand.

“Pain does not make that so. My body is ruined in more ways than I care to count. But I still have people who love me. Beyond Ruby and Qrow, that is strength.” It pained him to admit it but he knew it was true, he was ruined.

“You and I believe the same thing. Strength in family. Have you told them? How much you desire a family of your own. I remember how you looked at me, my belly already swelling with Yang. It only made you harder, made you ache to have me.” Raven smiled seeing the weakness in his eyes. “I’m not a part of this war. You wanted Yang to be ours. Would that really be so bad?” She leaned up
whispering into his ear. “Just once, and we both get what we want.”

Ozpin closed his eyes and took a deep steadying breath. Desires and feelings he hadn’t let himself feel in such a long time bubbled up to the surface. Then he inhaled Raven’s scent, a mix of smoke and woods but no matter how much she tried she would never be able to mask that tone of blood that lay beneath. “I can’t… say you are wrong there. I doubt you can even comprehend how long I’ve wanted but my lives have never allowed it. But no Raven. This is wrong. Had we all been on better terms, had the war with Salem not been a problem. Perhaps I would consent to let you be a surrogate. But I don’t want a bastard child, one that I’ll never see or one that I can’t raise myself. You just want power, for you, for your family.” Oz stepped away from her in slow laboured steps. “Maybe someday we can be friends Raven, but I can’t forgive for what you did to Qrow and what you did to me. Please leave.”

Raven stepped away, taking in the sight of him. She could see what her brother had and thought it a terrible shame they couldn’t share. “I think I see what Qrow does. But I pity you Ozpin. You’ve given Salem so much of your time and carved out so little for yourself.”

“Go.”

Raven did, but the defeated tone of his voice left her smiling. She had won this round.

Falcon damped his lantern as he pushed the way into his and Hawk’s part of the main tent. He could hear Qrow making love to his little woman, they were being quiet but it was a quiet time of night. He sat on the end of his bed, getting the camp set up again had taken longer in the mud, probably misfortune reeling it's head but no one was going to blame Qrow when he punched a Nuckelavee to bits.

He stretched and kicked his feet out, nudging Hawk’s bag by accident. It tumbled to the side and a clear bottle rolled out, small white pills jingled about in it. He reached out and picked up bottle laying on the heavy rug. He didn’t recognize the pills and he knew Hawk wasn’t taking anything.

Hawk pushed her way into the room. “They sound like their having fun.” She whispered with a smile.

“Hawk, what are you up to?” Falcon asked, holding up the bottle for her to see.

“That is for me to know and you to find out in a few months time.” She giggled taking the bottle from him and packing it out of sight.

Falcon rolled his eyes and set about stripping while wondering just what was his wife up to this time.

Chapter End Notes

Ardy: Yeah I know I'm updating way to freaken early, but it will surprise me if there is more then one or two months more of writing for this story. The end is in sight and it is glorious. Plus I already have the next chapter almost done. :P That said these next two/three chapters are gonna go FAST. Lots of hopping around between characters, lots
of time being elapsed from one PoV change to the next, they are busy busy chapters. Then we'll be warming up to some returning content from the first version....

Kry: Thank you too: Mysty_Sinclair, Bucky_Barnes, darkvampirekisses, Sportsfangirl815 and Frapadingue70.
Over in Mistrals General Hospital Weiss sat on the edge of Oz’s bed, only right now it was empty. In her lap was an empty bag, she heard the click of the bathroom door opening and Ozpin came out. His shirt was only half done up, his hair a mess of wet black nest and his jaw unshaved. She rather liked the black beard that was coming in along his jaw and over his lip. With a little styling it could be very sexy, but then she had always liked it when James’ beard got long, so perhaps she was bias. “Having trouble?” She asked standing up.

“Can’t lift my arms past the middle of my chest.” Ozpin said with a grimace. “The sites still haven’t healed.”

“Well the doctor did give you three months of medication. I think the only reason she’s letting you go at all is aside from painkillers, which you can take orally you’re well enough to leave. It’s just that by going early you’re going to be really limited on the things you can and can’t do for a while.” Weiss walked over and did up the buttons of his shirt. “Fair warning, some of Raven’s tribe arrived yesterday and have taken up in the house by ours, they wanted to head out yesterday night but we all agreed to make a plan of for today instead. They are just waiting on me then we are going to… you know.”

Oz’s head dropped slightly, Weiss’s scent of vanilla was soothing. “I wish I could help, once my Aura heals the surgery sites I should be able to fight again.” Ozpin said.

“Well I doubt it will be long now. Come on let’s go.” Weiss said grabbing the last of his things. Some of the nurses gave them a look as they left but overall it was quiet.

Oz and Weiss caught the first available taxi back, as much as the older man stated he could use the exercise Weiss knew he would have struggled. If there was one thing she had learned whilst living with James its was that it was worse and put more strain on him if he overestimated himself and then had no choice but to accept help. Somehow the ex-heiress thought that Ozpin might be in the same boat. No need for him to feel more useless then he probably already did and besides she was eager to get them both home as quick as possible.

By the time of their arrival Ozpin was silently thankful he hadn’t insisted on walking back, his chest hurt and the strength he had used up getting out was slowly returning. He still felt awful about it though, here he was not even able to walk a few miles and dependent on others. Still it was better then the alternative, he just wished Ruby and Qrow would be among those who would be awaiting his return.

Weiss carrying the little bag walked side by side with Ozpin until they reached the door. As she opened the door Nora all but came flying through the opening and Weiss had to drop the bag in order to catch the over eager girl. “Slow up, he’s still got holes in his chest.”
“Sorry!” Nora said with a blush and carefully hugged Oz. “Nice to have you back.”

Ozpin smiled and hugged her back. “Nice to be back.”

Nora pulled away and looked up at him her eyes going wide. “Wooo~” She leaned up on her toes reaching up with both hands. “So fuzzy!” She played her fingers through his thick beard.

“Ren, help please.” Ozpin called out.

Ren appeared and held up a journal. “I’ve your vaccines planned out for the next year, Qrow gave me copies of all your medical files before he left.”

Ozpin groaned, damn Qrow. “That is not what I meant.”

“Fluffy, fluffy.” Nora appeared hypnotized, as she petted away.

“Nora, you can play with it later. Let him sit down first.” Ren said drawing Nora away from Oz.

“You need to grow a beard Ren.” Nora said, a huge grin on her face as she imagined it.

Ozpin and Weiss were finally allowed into the house, only for Yang to be the next one to fly down the stairs and interrupted the same way Nora had. “Hi! You’re free!” Yang gave Oz a hug.

“With a lot of drugs to continue taking.” Ozpin said and Yang helped him over to the sofa. “Speaking of which may I have some water? I get the feeling I’m due for another round.”

Weiss put the medical bag on the recently fixed coffee table. “Pain?” She asked rifling through.

“Yup.” Ozpin said leaning back into the couch.

Nora appeared by his side again and returned to her playing. Yang stepped up behind him and started massaging his shoulders. Ren reappeared with a cup of water that Weiss took and offered to Oz with his pain medication. He looked them all over, was it him or were they ‘hovering’? “Alright what is going on?”

“Weiss may have mentioned you’ll need help for a while.” Yang said scratching her head sheepishly. “Plus Ruby and Qrow aren’t here to dote on you, so we decide to do in their place. We don’t want you straining yourself and Lydia mentioned you’ve a habit of… running before you’re able to walk.”

“I am going to murder that evil witch.” Ozpin grumbled then took his medication. He longed for a shower, or maybe a nice soak in the tub was in order.

“No you’re not. That evil witch has been really helpful, she even gave us a jar of your favourite tea.” Yang said producing a very familiar looking glass jar, filled to the brim with liquid torment.

“Ohhh defiantly evil witch.” Ozpin said as Weiss settled on his free side.

“Building up your harem Oz?” Raven asked coming down the stairs with Vernal in tow.

“I will kill you if you say another word on it.” Ozpin glared but couldn’t manage his usually intimidating self, not with Yang playing with his hair and Nora his beard.

“Hmm, that sounds like fun. To die a little death in your arms.” Raven purred hugging herself a flirty cock of her hips. Yang made a face and cringing but remained silent.
“Ugh, oh fuck you Raven. I don’t have the energy for this.” Ozpin closed his eyes and let himself enjoy the pets.

“Now that’s a real shame, otherwise I would love to fuck you.” Raven said striding into the room.

“Get in line.” Weiss said, sitting up to glare at Raven.

Raven laughed. “Ohh you have no idea what a line it has been.”

“Raven.” Ozpin growled, he did not like where this was going.

Ignoring him Raven started counting off her fingers as she grew closer to the group. “Lets see. First it was Qrow, then Tai, man that was a night. Then me and Ruby, and whoever else you Dom’d for on the side.” Raven grinned as Oz’s cheeks darkened and looked at her daughter. “That man has fucked your whole family at one point or another Yang. Well aside from Summer, I never really understood that. Maybe you should get in line as see what the fuss has been about.”

Ozpin lurched to his feet. “Are you incapable of keeping your trap shut?”

“What? She has right to know who nearly ended up being her father. I know Tai or Qrow would never have told her.” Raven said, ohh she loved riling up Oz. Normally it was so hard to do, Oz had always been so fucking perfect, too above the rest of the world to feel scandalized. This new Ozpin though was easy pickings, especially without Qrow around and after all these years she had so much ammo on the man that she hadn’t had a chance to use yet she could write a book about it.

“That would be because we were all bloody drunk! It hardly counts!” Oz snapped.

“Oz sit before you aggravate something.” Weiss pulled him back onto the couch with Nora's help.


Ozpin sighed. “End of the year party. I was with Qrow, Summer, Raven and Tai and we all got really drunk. I was celebrating not being their teacher for a bit and showering Qrow with PDA and Tai wanted in on it. Somehow we ended up in a bedroom. Beyond that I don’t really remember, I’ll be surprised if the other two do but we all woke up in the morning nude, with condoms and lube everywhere. Qrow complained his ass was quite sore as did Tai, so we assumed I did most of the doming. It’s not like it was really on purpose.”

Weiss giggled. “Wow, Lydia wasn’t kidding when she said you used to fuck like a bunny in heat.”

That made Raven burst into laughter. “Oh a truer statement has never been spoken.”

“What about Summer?” Yang asked.

Ozpin looked her dead in the eye. “Never touched with a ten foot pole. When Ruby, Qrow and I changed my curse. I remembered you sister for several hundred years before she was even born. I avoided Summer like the plague, because I wanted and will always want Ruby. Aside from being a good friend, I wanted nothing to do with her. Even drunk out of my mind, I never went near her. You’re father was a very drunken one off, only happened once. It’s wasn’t at all like what Raven would have you believe. We were all just good friends, that occasionally got drunk together and besides, it Raven was who fucked Summer.”

It was Raven’s turn to blush but she recovered quickly. “Well Tai was busy getting buggered by you. Qrow never looked at her twice, I didn’t want her to be lonely.”
Yang was massaging her temples. “Why is it by the time my parents were my age they were already having orgies?”

“Cause their school didn’t get over-run with Grimm.” Ozpin said. “I have an outstanding bet with Bart that you, Weiss and Blake would have gotten together within two years. I mean co-ed dorms with all legal adult students? There’s a reason why Huntress’s get government covered birth control when they hit sixteen. You know, before they get to an Academy.”

“What was Bart’s bet?” Nora asked.

“Yang, Blake and Sun. Though given how things have gone, I think he’s gonna win.” Ozpin said.

Yang’s brain looked like it had fried a little. It was filled with Blake and Sun, she couldn’t deny that she took after her father in preferences but Blake wasn’t here and there was no certainty that she would ever see her again. Still seeing Blake between her and the sunny monkey with the fab abs, she turned and flopped into the couch, heat colouring her cheeks. Nora leaned over and poked Yang in the arm. “I think you broke her Oz.”

Ozpin chuckled. “Come here Yang.”

Yang peeled herself off the couch and slid over, Oz leaned over and whispered into her ear. Raven glared, she didn’t like how Oz had turned this conversation on her. She watched her daughter’s cheeks flush even more and her eyes dilate. What was Oz saying?

“Oh. My Gods.” Yang said and looked over to Weiss. “I must see these pictures, please tell me you’ve got copies.”

“Ohh, he told you about James?” Weiss said grinning.

“Uh huh.” Yang’s brain was fried.

“Yeah I got copies.” Weiss said and Yang pounced. “Share!”

Raven scowled at the antics. “Enough. We’re all here and I for one would like to get going before nightfall.”

The mood in the room deflated. “Right okay.” Yang got up and called out. “Jaune come on we’re going.”

Jaune came down the stairs and the everyone grabbed their weapons and moved towards the door. Weiss kissed Oz’s cheek. “Don’t get into any trouble while we are gone.”

“You know me and trouble.” Oz said smirking.

“Which is why I’m already worried.” Weiss said, everyone else on good terms with Oz waved their goodbyes and he was left alone. Though not for very long.

Garrett appeared on the sofa opposite to him, only the thief’s clothing had changed. He wore high black boots and red jeans, with a single belt wrapped around each thigh. The belt featured a skull theme and he had buckle wraps around his waist, and he wore a black, gauntlet shaped gloves with three buckled straps on each one. His coat a deeper red with two coattails, a pronounced buckled collar. A black strap going over his right shoulder wrapped around his chest, with two golden studs on the front. The front of the coat was also patterned individually from the rest of it, resembling a sort of body armor, with a zipper closed all the way up from the waist to the bottom to his neck. His posture was completely relaxed one ankle over the other and his arms stretched out over the back of
“What are you wearing?” Ozpin asked, he also noticed that Garrett was taller then before, closer to his own height. “Why have you changed?”

Garrett stepped onto the table and leaned over with a purr, flicking his tongue out with a click. “Cause we’re closer. Come on we’ve got work to do and the privacy to do it.”

Ozpin hauled his sorry bone bag off the sofa. “You know, you’re still a pain my ass. Where is my cloak?”

“You know coats are better right?” Garrett said leaning against the door as Ozpin yanked open the closet and grabbed his cloak.

“It was a gift. Shit.” He glared at it, just realizing he wouldn’t be able to get it over his shoulders. “Hence coats.” Garrett said.

“Don’t think that you’ll ever get me to wear anything like you are wearing. Way too flamboyant.” Ozpin hummed and spun the cloak catching the edge over his neck then quickly pulled it down clipping into into his shirt. “Ha!”

“Congrats! You put a cloak on now let’s go, we need to hit up a library. I have an idea or two about where the Crown probably is, but we need to find a map.” Garrett said getting up off the wall as they headed outside.

“Haven would be best then. It has all those types of records.” Ozpin closed the door behind them.

“Sounds like a plan.” Garrett mused pretending to admire the city as they walked up the road. He licked his lips watching Oz from his edge of his view, not too much longer how. Bit by bit he’d win this war, fuck Berath.

By the time they got to Haven’s library Ozpin was exhausted. He wasted no time flopping into a chair his chest aching deeply. “Oww.” He groaned. “I should have brought the pain meds.”

“No, you would have overdosed.” Garrett said walking through the stacks.

“How can you even see anything if I’m not looking at it?” Ozpin asked.

“Just goes to show how little you understand.” Garrett said, touching a book for a long minute before moving to the next one.

“Care to explain?” Ozpin said.

“No, that would spoil my fun.” Garrett said and tapped a book. “Get over here, I need to look into this one.”

Ozpin hauled himself out of the chair and walked over and pulled the aged book from the shelf. He flipped it open, Garrett moved behind him and slid his arms over Ozpin’s shoulders, pressing his body to Oz’s. “Hmm oh we are going to have so much fun.” He purred, nipping Oz’s ear then tracing his tongue over the shell.
“Do you mind? What are we even looking at.” Ozpin asked looking at the mess of lines.

“The city plans for Mistral, the original ones.” Garrett purred.

“And how did you find this so fast?” Oz asked, flipping a page.

“Trade secret.” Garrett’s hands tightened in Oz’s shirt. “Look at the rest, then we’ll move on.”

Ozpin flipped through the rest, none of it meant anything to him. A school he could design, a whole city was beyond him.

“Oh my!”

Oz’s snapped the book shut and his gaze snapped over to none other the Leonardo Lionheart. He put the book back on the self as Leo stuttered. “W-who are you?”

*Your worst nightmare you traitor.* Ozpin thought and pursed his lips, quelling the urge to turn Leo into a pretzel.

“Ohh let me fuck with him.” Garrett purred, still leaning in a very flirty manner on Oz. “I can use the Glyphs, outside of when they typically let us. Here I think they’d appreciate the fun.”

*Sure, scare the crap out of him.* Ozpin didn’t see the harm and let Garrett drive. His eyes turned a stone grey. “Who me? I’m not even here.” He leaned out and touched the book case, black shadows oozed out of his hand, from his shadow upon the floor. They raced out consuming everything around him into a dark blacked space, eating up the room and its very light.

The look of terror on Leo’s face was priceless. Garrett advanced, the key Glyph upon the back of his hand glowed. “I’m just your sins come to haunt you.” The black consumed Oz, his clothes and features changing as The Keeper stepped forward. “And you have been found wanting.”

He stretched hand out and black tendrils fired at Leo.

The Faunus screamed and ran, the Keeper followed, black ooze changing his cloak to a trench coat, a claymore forming on his back. The black shadows swallowed the library and when Leo pulled on the black doors they didn’t even budge.

“You’re terrified of Salem? Well she’s not the one you should be fearing.” He reached out with a black hand and seized Leo by the forehead.

He pushed through Leo’s memories till he found him sharing a cup of tea with Watts. He dropped the whimpering Faunus and the headmaster fell to the ground. Ozpin warred with the feelings of betrayal and disgust. His hands twitched as hate poured through him, how many dead Huntsmen were on Leo’s hands? He lifted a hand, white glowing needles growing out of his finger tips.

“Don’t.” Garrett said. “Scaring him is one thing, killing is another. As much as he deserves it, the Glyphs have a pretty personal beef when their power is abused. Who’s got all the power here? Not him, he can’t do anything to us. More importantly he can’t do anything to the Glyphs, the Sentients. If you want to kill him later, by all means have fun. But we can’t do it with their power. Come on, he’s already pissed his pants lets go.”

Ozpin took a step away the Keeper’s features still hiding him. “You’re not worth it.” He turned away and walked towards a wall.

“I call this one Shadow Step. If you’ll allow me.” Garrett took control and they walked straight into the shadow and emerged onto a dirty street.
“Where are we?” Ozpin asked.

“Not far from Delver’s Row.” Garrett said, sliding up to Oz’s body easing his hands over the surgery sites.

Pain lashed through Oz and he grit his teeth. “And we are here why?”

“You’re getting tired of your Aura being weak? Of being in pain? I happen to know a… substance that can help.” Garrett purred leaning up to nip Oz’s ear.

“There isn’t anything that can help.” He could feel Garrett’s soul twisting in him, saturating him.

“See that’s where you are wrong. It’s called Refuge.” Garrett purred. “It’s made out of spirit residue, rare but far from impossible to get your hands on. It gives your Aura quite the kick, not so good going into a battle but coming out of it. It can make all the difference.” His tongue flicked over Oz’s ear. “I know it’s sold here, I even know a nice private place where you can try it.”

“I’m not trying a…” Oz felt strange, he couldn’t feel his fingertips.

“That’s it, just let me drive. Spare yourself the pain, just for a little while.” Garrett loved this, patience always paid off and right now there was no Qrow or Ruby to steal this from him. This was his moment.

“Okay.” Ozpin’s eyes slid shut and they opened again a grey.

Garrett pulled his cloak tight around him and set off into Delvers’ Row. It had taken him a while to find the place, extending his awareness out while Ozpin slept. The channels of open water on either side of the walkway reflected the light, he came to a fork in the tunnels but he already had his target in sights. A wrinkly old man had a small shop set up against the wall. He wore dark brown clothing and people frequently stopped making quick purchases and moving on.

He walked up and quickly scanned over the products.

The man smiled. “Ah a Huntsmen, don’t see many of you around anymore. I have Whiteleaf, Svef, I even have some Carow Golan if you’re looking for something that will give you more a kick in a fight.”

“Do you have Refuge?” Garrett asked.

“Expensive request, might I ask why? Your Aura not performing like it once was?” He said with a smile.

“Something like that. I’d like two vials, if your product is good.” Garrett said.

The man chuckled and turned to his stall and fetched a key out of a pocket. He opened a lock box and pulled out a thin vial of purple liquid, he offered it to Garrett. The former thief held it up to a light and turned it back and forth studying the liquid. Satisfied he pulled the stopper out and dabbed a small amount on his finger then put the liquid on tongue. He could feel the magic in it. “It’s good.” He put the cork back in and pulled out Oz’s wallet, and offered the correct amount of Lien. “Two please and a needle.”

The man grinned and took the Lien and handed the two items over. Garrett slipped them into a pocket and merged back into the crowds, waving through the throng of people. He just barely resisted the urge to slip his quick hands through their pockets but could not afford for Ozpin to take notice and kept his head low. Lights coming from one of the buildings on the left would serve his
purpose as Garrett changed direction and entered the inn.

Smoke curled in the air and he could smell the scent of Whiteleaf and whiskey. Booths were filled with people taking any number of things and drinking, or fucking. Garrett walked over to the bar and held out yet more Lien. “A room for a few hours. With key.”

“You’re new, trying something?” The woman behind the counter said.

“None of your business.” Garrett said and she ran up his request and gave him the key.

He got to the room and the door locked behind him before Ozpin gathered his strength and pushed back into control. “I am not taking that crap!” The room small and dirty, with little more that a beat up bed.

Garrett sighed, man this would have been easier if he managed to take a shot before Oz assumed control again. “Look, it’s not crap. It’s magic, I’ll let you in a little secret. Your soul or Aura is powered by soul essence. You noticed you had more magic then before we changed the curse, that is because now when you die you travel the In-Between for a bit. This gives your soul an opportunity to absorb soul essence without the mortal coil getting in the way.” They say and Garrett slid over to lean on Oz and taking the man's hands within his own. “Refuge is just like that, only it can be taken while you’re alive.” He pulled on the vials out of Oz’s pockets and the needle.

Ozpin looked down at his hands, the needle and vial.

“You hate this weakness. You can’t fight, you couldn’t protect yourself. Now you’re worse then useless… just try it. Let it take the pain away, let it fix you so you can fight again.” Garrett purred into Oz’s ear, he had just enough control to get Oz to remove his cloak and shirt. Pull his belt off and pull it tight around his left bicep.

“No.” Though the fight was gone from his voice. He could feel Garrett using his body, the cap off the needle, cork off the vial. His hands moved of their own accord as Garrett pulled ten milliliters of the purple liquid into the needle. He capped the vial and set it aside.

Ozpin’s hand hovered over the needle. “This is wrong.”

“Says who? We’re all alone, just you and me. And the path to being useful again is going to be too slow. Come on Oz, just once aren’t you curious? You’ve tried so many different ways to fuck. Why not try something new? Something that will fix you.” Garrett guided Oz’s hand to pick up the needle again, bring it to the vein standing out in his left arm.

Oz’s hand shook, he so wanted to be healed to be pretty again. No this useless, battered, scared disgusting… His took a shaky breath and Garrett’s hand closed over his, guiding the needle into his skin, pushing the plunger down. Oz couldn’t help but watch the purple liquid vanish into him. Garrett withdrew the needle and capped it again, then yanked the belt off Oz’s arm and pressed down on the site.

Garrett backed away as Oz fell happy back into the bed. “Oh Gods.” Oz’s breathing was slow and deep, he left like he was floating no pain, when was the last time he hadn’t been in pain? Garrett watched smugly as his eyes dilated. “F..u..ck.” Ozpin slurred he could feel his Aura rising, healing him. There was more to it then that though, it felt so good…

Garrett moved over him, petting through his hair. “Told you it would help. The high is really just a side effect. Something to get you really into it.” He licked his lips. “You know I can say whatever I want right now. You won’t remember any of it when you wake up.” Garrett chuckled. “Fucking
with your memories, has made this easier than normal. Heck if you hadn’t had Ruby to help you before, I bet I could have driven you mad well before this point. So much pain. Not even you, can live through it all. You hid it well from Lydia, but part of you just wants to die, to trade in for the next model, a fresh, clean, your usual drop dead handsome self. Thing is. I can’t have you doing that, my mistake when I changed your curse. You always revert to being you again. Which makes my job, much harder. Having to snap your sanity every time, work in under your shielding and into your mind. It’s just such a pain. This time though… hehe you’ve made it easy. You put yourself through so much and you forget you’re still only human. That even you have your breaking point. I can’t wait till we get there, I sooo look forward to being Dante again. You and me, and the devil makes three love.” Garrett bent down and kissed Oz’s cheek. “Enjoy your high, I intend to make use of the absence of your lovers to its fullest.”

Weiss ducked behind a pillar as bullets flew in every direction. “This is insane!”

Ren ducked out of cover and shot a few bandits. “Agreed.”

They were in a crack in the mountain of Mistral, it was near two hundred meters deep and that again high, the walls were lined with shops and balconies. This was supposed to be a first step, mapping out all the potential defensible areas ‘before’ starting a fight. Only problem was they must have known they were about to have company as bandits from the Penndurn tribe flooded from the buildings to shoot at them before they had a chance to gain any ground.

Raven raced past them, jumping up onto one balcony slaughtering three bandits before running up the side of the wall and leaping to another balcony to repeat the process. Vernal was heading the charge on the ground floor. Shooting and hacking people to pieces with her chakram. The close quarters were giving Weiss trouble as she didn’t want to kill anyone.

Nora, Yang and Jaune were following Vernal, measuring themselves to make sure they didn’t kill anyone.

“Forward!” Raven yelled.

Over a dozen Branwen tribe members pushed into the camp, killing those the Huntsmen incapacitated.

“Teams RWBY and JRN to me!” Raven shouted as she dashed into a side passage.

The teams followed, only to have to duck and press themselves to the walls as gatling gun fire raided down the space.

Weiss looked over at Yang who nodded. With a flick of her fingers she covered the wall in white glyphs leading to the gunner. Yang jumped on them and raced across the rough surface punching out the bandit.

“Good Yang! Push!” Raven yelled and they charged down through a doorway. Gun fire rained down as they pushed into a large well lit room. Raven killed all four guards in under thirty seconds.

A old man with dark skin sat in a chair his legs clearly useless. “So the Branwen’s are finally making a move.” He lifted his chin defiant. “Get this over with Raven. I will not beg for my life.”
Yang stepped forward but her mother already cut the man’s head cleanly off. “Why are you killing them?!”

“What did you expect Yang? That we would stop them, take over this turf and they would run back with tails between their legs. That's both naive and stupid of you.” Raven said flicking the blood off of her odachi and scabbarding it.

“But you’re taking lives.” Yang gestured at the bloody ground. “How is this necessary?”

“If you keep thinking like that you’ll not last long in this world. If you don’t grow up- . . . People aren’t going to stop because you ask them to, you have to make them.” A dying man in the corner let out a gurgling sound as he slowly choked to death on his own blood. “If you really want to show someone mercy . . .” Quickly and before her daughter could stop her Raven walked over and stabbed him through the heart. “Give them a quick and clean death. It won’t be a luxury they will bestow upon you if you don’t.”

“How could you do that?!” Yang shouted, the rest of the teams were equally horrified.

“If I hadn’t they would have only come back.” Raven stepped away from the corpses and out of the room meeting Vernal in the corridor. The two women started out but once there was a lag in ears the younger of the two took Raven’s hand in hers.

Vernal said. “Why do you do that? If she cannot accept our way of life then she is not worthy of her heritage.”

“Vernal, shut up.”

The curt tone was not tone she used on the younger woman often but it was just as sharp as always. “Yes Mam!.”

Softening her voice Raven curled a hand over Vernal’s face, wiping at the smudge of blood that tarnished her skin. “If Yang doesn’t see the world as it is soon, if she chooses to stand in our way . . . then I'll have to cut her down like all the rest.”

Ruby lurched awake and dashed out of the tent, a quick rose petal burst brought her to the edge of the camp. Her stomach rebelled and she vomited, fortunately there wasn’t much left in her stomach. She leaned against a tree, that was the second time that week. She had tried some of the tribes own ale last night and the time before it had been a berry dish with some fruits she had never even heard of before. Ruby spat trying to clear her mouth of the taste. She really had to stop trying all the things the kinder people of the tribe were giving her.

Hands brush over her hair, she knew them instantly and relaxed her head back with a sigh. “Sorry did I wake you?”

“Never apologize for that.” Qrow said and pulled out his flask. “Just water, I swapped it out last time this happened.”

“Thank you.” Ruby took it and had a large swallow of water, it was not even dawn yet and the cold was growing crisp.

“Are you sure you’re okay?” Qrow asked as she gave him back his flask.

“Yeah, it always passes.” She shivered. “Let’s get back, I want some more sleep before everyone starts making noise.”

Sadly for Ruby, after they returned to their tent and snuggled down for a hour Hawk decided to barge in on them, at the crack of dawn barely lit the sky overhead. “Up!”
Qrow lurched away grabbing at the blankets to cover Ruby and himself. “What the fuck! Get out!”

“It’s nothing I haven’t seen before Qrow.” Hawk said annoyed.

Ruby tried to cover her breasts, while Qrow yelled again. “Out!”

“Hurry up, pack your things.” Hawk left the curtain falling behind her.

“Control freak bitch.” Qrow set and set about getting up, grabbing a pair of pants and pulling them on.

“That’s one way to put it. Can’t she knock or something?” Ruby pulled herself out of bed and yawned.

“Ha, fat chance of that ever happening.” Qrow said pull a shirt on, he sighed he missed his cape.

“Can you help me with this? I’m so tired still.” Ruby had put her skirt and shirt on but was struggling to lace her corset.

Qrow shoved the last of his things into his bag and walked over, then knelt beside her and helped her lace up. “You know Oz got you those bras, why do you always insist on wearing this thing?”

“I don’t really like bras, this does the job better and in comfier and warmer.” Ruby said pulling her leggings on as he worked.

“Given that the bra got invented…”

“Alright! Stop being a smartass, it’s way too early for it.”

“Sorry. Mom just puts me in a mood. Let’s get your stuff packed, I’ve got a feeling we are about to be sent somewhere. There is no way mother wouldn’t find a way to show you off.”

They packed their things up and shouldered their packs. Hawk was pacing back and forth in the living area while Falcon was sitting sipping tea watching his son and his lover walk towards them. “We have a job for you two. Hawk will however be accompanying you.” He nodded to two heavy saddlebags sitting upon the table. “With winter closing in the passes up north will start to close. Before that happens, we need to have this years tribute to the Mabino delivered. You three will do so. We are paying in Lien this year and three riders will draw less attention and Grimm then a party. It’s a three week journey, I’ve already had horses tacked and supplied for you.”

“Why send us?” Qrow asked.

“Given your Semblance… well I recall having you in the camp for long periods of time was not . . . Beneficial. This gives you and Ruby something to do, away from camp and lets you use your skills as Huntsman and Huntress. Hawk will be going with because a head of our tribe has to go.” Falcon said.

“Private time? Well minus your mom, maybe if we have lots of sex she’ll stop listening. Anyway count me in. I don’t think I’ve ever eaten so many nuts, I’m getting tired of the gifts.” Ruby sent to Qrow.

“Fine. If only to get away from for a while.” Qrow grabbed one of the saddle bags from the table and headed out of the tent Ruby on his heels.
Hawk grabbed the other, then leaned down and kissed Falcon’s cheek. “Don’t have too much fun without me.”

“Never love.” Falcon lifted his head and they shared a kiss.

Hawk departed the tent to find Qrow putting one of the saddlebags on a big black stallion. “Kebeth is mine. You two are on Talet.”

Qrow frowned in confusion then spun on the spot, spying the middle aged chestnut stallion he had dismissed before because he hadn’t recognized it. “That’s Talet?” Awe crept into his voice, he took a few hesitant steps towards the brown horse.

Talet looked at him with a blue eye, he hadn’t forgotten. Qrow reached out to stand before the horse and Talet tossed his head back hitting Qrow in the chest, knocking him flat onto his back. “Ooh oww. Yup that’s definitely Talet.”

“I’m sensing a story here?” Ruby asked as the old horse huffed clearly annoyed with Qrow.

“He was my horse.” Qrow said picking himself up of the ground. “I thought he died years ago. He never let anyone else ride him.”

“He’s been a lead for the carriages, he’s still strong and stubborn and down right foul tempered. No one has ridden him since you left.” Hawk put the second saddle bag behind Talet’s saddle, then mounted her own horse.

Qrow couldn’t help but be touched. Talet was a picky horse, yet his mom had kept him, he didn’t believe her when she said only kept him because he was still strong. “Thank you mother.”

“Just hurry up and get reacquainted and introduce Ruby to him.” Hawk said, clicking her tongue and setting off.

Qrow and Talet stared each other down. “I’m sorry.” Qrow said and Talet huffed shaking his mane. “I know, but to be fair I was on a completely different continent.”

Talet stomped a hoof.

“Alright, fine I still could have come and got you. Though I am not sure what Tai would have done with a horse but I am sure he would have found something. Probably would have been good for Ruby and Yang to learn how to ride.” Qrow mused, then his face lit up and patted his pockets down and pulled out a milk bar. He carefully offered it to Talet. “A peace offering?”

Talet thought it over and then took the bar from Qrow’s hand munching on it. Qrow gestured for Ruby to come over. “Talet this is Ruby, she’s… very special to me. As you can probably smell.”

Ruby pulled a milk bar out of her pocket and stood beside Qrow offering it to the huge horse. “Hello, I hope we shall be good friends.” Talet sniffed her fingers then ate that bar too. Letting Ruby pet his velvety nose. “I like him.”

“Good.” Qrow took Ruby’s bag from her and walked around to the horses side, putting both bags behind the saddle then vaulted into it. There was no saddle horn or reins. “Come on then.” Qrow leaned down and offered Ruby his hand. “Let’s get you up here tiny.”

Ruby couldn’t help but shrink away a little. “He’s huge.”

“Well yea, he’s a Destrier, like the horses the knights in your stories would ride. He was mixed with
a Shire horse, hence the hugeness. I got him as a foal when I was thirteen and mother said if I could train him. I could have him. It was excellent motivation.” Qrow said as Ruby took his hand.

“Aren’t Destriers a type of horse not a breed?” Ruby said as Qrow pulled her into the saddle in front of him.

“Yeah, I trained him as a war horse. You wouldn’t believe how many Grimm I’ve killed riding this guy.” Qrow squeezed gently with his legs and tapped with is right ankle. Talet turned to the left and set off through the camp.

“Is that why he has no reins or bridle?” Ruby asked grabbing Talet’s mane. He felt massive under her and the saddle was much thinner then she was used too. She could feel his muscles moving and his body heat.

“Yup, I give all the commands with my legs. It’s partly why no one else rides him, it’s not a popular style anymore. The other reason is he’s always tried taking the fingers of anyone but mine off.” Qrow set a hand around Ruby’s waist. “We’ll have to teach you to ride, you’re like a sack of potatoes in the saddle.”

“I’d like to learn.” Ruby said, she watched the tribe folk stare up at them with awe. She guessed Hawk wasn’t kidding when she said no one but Qrow rode Talet.

They came upon the woman in question as she waited by the camp edge. She had a smile on her face as she shamelessly eavesdropped on their conversation. “Good, traveling alone will be the perfect time. Come let’s get going.”

Ozpin woke slowly and groaned, putting a hand to his head. He felt better, though the pain was creeping in on him again. He pushed himself upright and looked down at the bed, the needle and vial stared back at him. “Oh Gods, what have I done.” Oz grabbed at his hair and stood.

“Made yourself heal.” Garrett said appearing. “Don’t you feel better? Can’t you breathe easier?”

Ozpin took a deep breath and while it hurt, he couldn’t deny what the thief said. “Not fixed though.”

“Of course your not, it was a small dose. You’ll get probably five more out of those vials, less if you up to a more average dose.” Garrett said.

Ozpin pulled out his Scroll, his brow shot up. He’d been asleep for hours, he grabbed the needle and vial and stuffed them into a pocket. A quick search found all his Lien where it was supposed to be. “Get me home now. Do that Shadow Step thing!”

“As you wish.” Garrett assumed control, unlocked the door to the room and tossed the key on the bed. Then stepped into a shadow then out into Oz’s bedroom, Oz shoved the thief away, he could hear the teams coming into the house. He raced over to the bedside table and pulled out the vials and needle. He opened the top draw and stashed them at the back, before softly closing it again and pulling off his boots, putting them by the door and his cloak overtop. He pulled off his clothes and quickly as he could, discarding them then getting into bed and pulling the duvet over him. The last thing he needed was for Weiss or someone to guess he had been out. He closed his eyes and found that he almost instantly fell asleep again.
Which was exactly how Weiss found Oz shortly after, out cold, his head pressed into Qrow’s pillow and breathing deeply. She set Myrtenaster aside and walked quietly over. “Hey Oz~. Wake up, I’m sure you are in want of an shower and Ren as started on dinner downstairs.” She walked over and petted through his hair, he looked so worn out and tired.

Ozpin woke slowly, his chest ached and his neck body was all locked up, it was hard to breath. “Can’t move…”

“Oh! Be right back.” Weiss ran down the stairs and returned a moment later with water and a painkiller. She helped him sit up and take it. “Sorry we didn’t get back earlier.”

“It’s fine, fell asleep not long after you left.” Ozpin sat up slowly with Weiss’s help.

“That’s good.” Weiss said moving away from him as he took the medication.

Ozpin said leaning heavily on his arms. “Weiss… why is it you’re the one helping me? I figured Yang or Ren would volunteer.”

“We kinda all did. So we’ve decided to split up. Ren and Nora are in charge of feeding you, once you’re healed from this Ren’s got a list of vaccines to give you. Yang is gonna help you around the house and I volunteered to help with dressing and bathing. James had his prosthetics upgraded so I have the most experience.” Weiss undid his belt and they worked together to get the clothes off. “Just how much mobility do you still lack?”

“That’s good for him. Right now I get tired just walking at the drop of a hat.” Ozpin lifted his hands and got to the middle of his abs before stopping. “Any higher hurts. I imagine I’ll be able to get at least sweat pants on without aid.”

“Okay, that will make some of this easier. How about you hit the shower and call me when you need your hair done?” Weiss asked.

“Sounds like a plan.” Ozpin said and carefully stood making is way over to the bathroom.

Weiss couldn’t help but admire his butt, but he did look skinny, more so then the last time she had seen him. She gathered up the clothes as she heard the shower start to run and tossed them into the hamper. She’s add his laundry to her loads, that would be easiest till he could do it himself.

Ozpin turned the water on and stepped under it, thinking over what they had said. They had split up looking after him, because he couldn’t do it himself. He clenched his firt in desperate of the agony the action caused, what a sorry state he was in, his old students having to care of him. He was supposed to be the one protecting them, he was Fucking Ozpin one of the most powerful people on the planet! Yet he couldn’t even wash his own hair!

Oz grabbed at his left arm, looking down at it. There was no evidence of the needle, it had completely healed. He rubbed the spot with his thumb, the… Refuge had helped and he felt better then he had in a long time. If he took it before bed, no one would know. He’s sleep off the high and no one would be any wiser. Not like Qrow and Ruby were here to catch him.

God’s no! What was he thinking!? Qrow and Ruby would be so disappointed in him. Going to something like Refuge for help. Anger flashed through him. What right would Qrow have to judge him? The bird had been a alcoholic for most of his life! Ruby… Ruby would be sad for him, she’d try to take it away. Make him heal slowly and normally, make him useless and weak again. What good was he to them anyway?! They had no issues fucking Hazel and Watts, letting them be used for the pleasure of another. No he need to heal, to show them that he was the strong one. That he
could fix everything, fix his mistakes, be the better man. Not this ugly monstrosity he had become in the last year. To do that he needed the Refuge. Garrett’s ghostly form wrapped his arms around Oz and rested his head on his shoulder, not saying a word but smiling.

“You okay Oz?!” Weiss asked from the otherside of the door.

“Yes, one moment!” He washed himself quickly not even noticing Garrett come or go. “Alright Weiss.” Ozpin called out and Weiss pulled off her top as she headed into the bathroom.

Ozpin was standing with his back to the door. Weiss pushed the curtain aside and reached up grabbing the shower head. “Think you can sit?”

“Yeah.” He carefully using a hand bar he lowered himself into the bathtub. Weiss sat on the lip and handed him the shower head as she scanned over the products. “The pine shampoo yours?”

“Yes.” Ozpin said, not looking at her.

Weiss set about washing Oz’s hair, it had grown almost as long as it had been at Beacon. He was oddly quiet. “Have your pain meds kicked in yet?”

“Mostly, it’s manageable now.”

Weiss finished quickly and let him to do another rinse, stepping out of the bathroom. Only when he called out to her again, did she return. She found him sitting on the closed toilet, with a towel wrapped around his hips, holding a straight razor out to her. “Think you can do it?”

“Yes, James let me do his.” She glanced around and found his cream had also been put out. She made a sink of warm water then sprayed a handful of the foam into her palm.

Oz saw her eyes flit to his scars but schooled his features and lifted his chin as she rubbed it over his jaw and cheeks, carefully putting it over his lips and chin. She damped the razer in the water. “I’m surprised Lydia didn’t do this for you.”

“She did once, but it grows fast. I like to shave it every morning.” Ozpin said as Weiss started to carefully do his cheeks.

“That’s a shame, it looks quite handsome on you.” Weiss said, cleaning the razer and returning to his skin. “You’d look good with a goatee, maybe one like from those comics Yang likes to read.”

“You are not giving me a Tony Stark beard.” Ozpin said moving his jaw as little as possible. “It would be a pain in the ass to maintain. Just take it all off.”

“Well be fair Ozpin, you are not going to be the one maintaining it. So you have to put up with me having my fun. Or… I could let Nora do it.” Weiss said turning his head to the other side to do it as well.

“That won’t be necessary! Fine have your fun.”

When they got to dinner, Yang took a picture of his beard before he could say a word on the matter. Weiss had done an excellent job and Ozpin would later learn she had played this styling game with James as well.

Dinner was… excruciating. Ren, Nora, Yang and Weiss all looking after him in tune. Getting him a drink when he moved to get it, the food appeared on his plate already cut. Everyone was painfully cheerful. Raven watched him, as if she could see the thoughts turning in his head.
He was grateful when he was allowed to go to bed alone. He pointedly didn’t invite Weiss, Ozpin sat on the edge of his bed, belt already around his arm again. The tall man stared down that the needle and vial in the drawer. *No, I shouldn’t be doing this!* He closed the drawer with a snap and reached for the belt.

Garrett materialized behind him and touched the surgery sites. Oz’s sucked in a sharp pained breath, how the figment in his mind could cause him pain he didn’t know. Garrett’s hands slid over his arms, making him feel every welt and scar. They opened the drawer again and pulled out the needle and Refuge. Ozpin was barely aware of it as his hands readied the needle and filled it with another ten milliliters of the drug.

Again Garrett guided the needle to the vein, again the purple vanished into him. He pulled the belt off and groaned as his heart pushed the substance through his body. He quickly capped the needle and hid it and the drug. Before flopping back into bed, his Aura boosted as his mind took a trip through la la land.

Garrett all the while laying beside him, petting through that void black hair with a smile on his lips.

“I take it back, I don’t want to learn!” Ruby’s voice was terrified.

“Calm down. Would you like me to come up there with you?” Qrow asked, he pet Talet’s neck his childhood friend was putting up some amazing patience with the situation.

“Can’t I have a saddle and reins or something?” Ruby asked grabbing Talet’s mane.

“Bareback is the best way to learn. Especially with how Talet was trained. Because think about it, how are you supposed to shout blood curdling war cries with your mouth full of reins?” Qrow asked trying to distract her.

“But he’s too big for me. I can barely grip with my legs.” Ruby shifted around a tiny put on Talent’s board back.

“Well I can’t fault you there. We’ll just start with a walk.” Qrow said. “I’ll be right here the whole time I won’t let you fall.”

“Okay, I just feel like I’m going to fall and smash my head open.” Ruby said.

“Then keep your Aura up.”

“That’s not the point!”

Qrow sighed and click his tongue. “Nice and slow Talet.”

They made a slow circuit of the snow dusted clearing, the forest pressed in all around them as the dusk light slowly faded. They rode hard for the first three days, eating up ground so they could slow and give Ruby a chance to learn. Hawk was sitting by their fire sipping a cup of malik, watching them take a slow walk. Their makeshift camp for the night was already set up.

“See, not so bad.” Qrow pat her leg. “Now try sitting up straight.”

Ruby had been holding Talet’s mane tight and almost hugging him. She pushed herself slowly
upright and adjusted her hands. “Now squeeze just a little with your legs.” Ruby did and Qrow clicked his tongue again.

Again Talet started the circuit, when he was sure Ruby wasn’t look Qrow lowered his hand and just walked beside them. “Tap with your right heel when you want him to go left and your left when you want him to go right. Hold tighter for faster and sit down heavily for him to stop. At faster speeds raise yourself just a couple centimeters off his back. Otherwise your butt with be sore something fierce. Keep your back straight, give it a try.” Qrow took several steps back.

“Where are you going?!” Ruby shrieked sitting up straighter, partly out of fear.

“I trust Talet, you’ll be fine. Tight with your legs, don’t forget.” Qrow said and whistled.

Talet moved into a canter. Ruby tightened her knees and lifted herself up but Talet kept his pace smooth and steady. He knew what Qrow wanted, he was old not stupid!

Around and around, they went Talet occasionally side stepping if Ruby slid one way or the other too much. He kept her firmly on his back, she started to laugh and giggle in return.

Qrow watched as Talet’s ears kept flicking back to his lover. They are going to be best friends. Hawk walked over to stand beside her son. “She’s a quick learner.”

“She is with just about everything. A goofball, but a brilliant one.” Qrow whistled again.

Talet moved into a canter and Ruby giggled with glee, raising herself a bit higher. Qrow found that Ruby’s smile was radiant, her shining hair catching the dying light.

“She’s been adapting well to the tribe.” Hawk said. “Even seems happy.”

“What are you getting at?” Qrow didn’t look to her.

“Have you thought at all about your future? We’ve hidden from Salem for over a decade and this is the first time she come remotely close. I know you don’t like how we live, but there are other jobs. Especially if Raven gets us some territory in Mistral. You could have a life here again, safe with her. Without Salem to worry about.” Hawk said.

“I know you. You’re not even lying but I will never be one of you. Never again, I’ll stand by Oz and so will Ruby.” Qrow walked away and called out. “That’s enough it’s getting dark and we have to be up with the sun.”

Talet slowed to a walk, coming around to him and shoved his nose in Qrow’s belly. Qrow chuckled and pet Talet’s cheek. “Thank you for looking after her.” He walked over and stretched up to Ruby, she slid down into his arms and he lowered her to the ground.

“That was fun.” Ruby said and then yawned. “But you are so right, sleep time.”

The three of them retired without another word and the night passed without incident. Only for Ruby to be racing out of the tent at dawn to vomit into the bushes again. Only this time when Qrow went to her, he saw Hawk had also gotten up and was watching with a smug smile.

Raven and Vernal headed down into one of the underground cities of Mistral. Now this was where
the fun was, black markets stores and hired killers were plentiful. Thugs and small fish gangs filled the shady bars full. These were the people who either don’t want to live on the right side of the law or are too poor to live anywhere else and had little choice but to gather in these sectors. There were countless beggars and prostitutes at every corner, some of the women had barely anything on and some stood around in the cold night in not much more then underwear covering their drugged up bodies as they stood against the poorly made walls. All of them itching to entice potential buyers with a fondle of their breasts. Some would be lucky enough to see pay in the morning, others . . . well most of them starved for another day.

The two bandits were on the trail of a pair of Liyr tribesmen as they moved ahead of them in the crowd. After the ambush the week before Raven had decided that a smaller team should do the recon while the others and Ozpin’s brats had other duties to see to.

They passed a gambling table that sat outside one of the bars, it was filled with cards and jewels but neither pay any attention to the sparkling stones, eyes sharp and intent on following their targets. Their plan was to follow to the tribes mens to their destination and map out all the potential entry points so later they can destroy the small group. Taking the base apart one man at a time.

Both Raven and Vernal wore long cloaks hiding their tribe clothes as the people they followed finally stopped at one of the many whore houses. This house of pleasure was taller then most of the others in this lower section of Mistral, with dirty off white whites, plastered with not so unfamiliar stains climbing the outside. Small windows sat in near perfect lineup, some of the rooms had a glowing amber light glowing its residency while others remained darkened and shut tight.

Raven and her companion wanted a few minutes, then slipped in a low window. The corridor is narrow, sickly red wallpaper peeling away, carpet that was probably clean at one point now frayed away in brown patches and Raven eyed up the stains. One section of the wall suddenly moved, like someone had been slammed against it. The sounds of moans and slapping wet skin were loud and the two carry on.

Finally coming around to the room they saw the two men enter Raven knelt on the dirty floor and peeked through the keyhole. Unfortunately what they had expected was not what they got. Dozens of men and women piled in the room, all arguing and angry looking. As they started towards the door Raven eyed the room opposite and silently pulled Vernal inside just in time for the other door to slam open and the horde stumbled out in a angry pack.

It seemed like the greatest misfortune was following them tonight as the room they slipped into already had occupants in it and as the two turned they come face to face with Cinder, Emerald, Mercury and Watts.

Oh shit!

Everyone had their weapons out and was pointing at each other a instant later. Watts looked between Raven and Vernal. “My my what a surprise we were just looking for you. Well more the heads of your tribe but we’ll take what we can get.”

“What are you doing here?” Cinder asked with pursed lips. This certainly wasn’t what they had been expecting of tonight but she was damned if Raven Branwen was escaping unscathed.

“Could ask you the same thing.” Raven countered keeping her voice even and her face calm.

“Please, lets be civil about this.” Watts said. “What do you want Raven?”

“To make over my tribe.” Raven said, already weighing the situation in her mind. “Why were you
looking for us?"

“We need the Spring Maiden to get into the vault below Haven. You tribe has her.” Cinder said sneering as if it was the obvious reason.

Raven and Vernal shared a long look. “Let’s make a deal then. You help me take over the tribe. I’ll help you with the Vault of the Spring Maiden.”

“Deal.”

Shots echoed through the temple, the statues to Afrein goddess of; inspiration, community, family, sex and architecture were everywhere and getting shot full of holes. Ozpin rolled his eyes, seriously couldn’t these guys aim? He peaked around the corner, they had Raven pinned and Yang wasn’t doing much better. He took a deep breath then stepped out form cover just enough to aim and shoot.

BANG BANG BANG.

Bodies toppled over and Raven leapt up and pushed the advantage. They had gone over the plan back at home, but this was just madness. “Did you actually scout this place at all?” Oz shouted at Raven.

“It was your intel!” Raven dived to take cover under a column as more tribesmen flooded the area.

“Clearly it was off!” Ozpin looked over his teams. “Jaune, cover Yang and Nora. The two of you fire for the arches, bring the north east and west walkways down!” As the three moved he stepped out of cover and continued shooting, the kick of his rifle made his still tender chest hurt. That said his rifle was horrendously overkill, not a single Aura so far had stood a chance.

Jaune took the brunt of the bullets as Yang and Nora shot either arch to bits, the raining debris falling on some very unlucky souls. Still it was several dozen Aura equipped bandits against a handful of them. Raven retreated slicing bullets apart, she hid behind a downed statue. “This is getting us nowhere! Just use your Semblance and clean this mess up!”

“NO! He’s still not fully healed!” Weiss snapped and summoned up four white glyphs behind her and spun to the Fire Dust on her sword, she snapped her first forward and fire rained down on the bandits.

“Don’t use your Semblance, if any of them escape it will be over all the city that you’re here!”Ozpin snapped out, firing another collection of shots, he hated watching heads explode.

He scanned the room bandits were climbing over the rubble Yang and Nora had reacted. He sighed and collapsed his gun and pulled out his sword.

“OZ!” Weiss yelled.

He closed his eyes and activated his Semblance. He opened them slowly and everyone appeared frozen in time, Weiss was moving to stand worry and anger on her face. He stepped out from cover and ran down the hall past Raven. He cut and clashed his way through half of the bandits, their dead bodies hanging in the air. He drove behind the throne at the end of the hall.
Time snapped back into motion, blood soared through the air. Bodies fell with thuds, Raven didn’t even pause racing into the fray while the bandits were too stunned to react watching their friends fall to what seemed to be nothing at all.

Ozpin sagged against the throne his chest ached, he pulled his shirt open and looked down at one of the sites, the bandages had been removed but the scabs cracked and was oozing blood again. “Fuck.” He hissed under his breath, Gods it hurt. He pressed down on one and bit his lip to keep from screaming.

The teams and Vernal pushed forward, the former motivated by Oz now being behind the enemy.

It was quick after that, Raven called the Branwen’s in and they started cleaning up the mess. Ozpin sat on the steps before the throne, his shirt off as Ren patched him up again with Weiss’s help.

“What happened to not pushing yourself?” Weiss said holding bandages for Ren. “You promised to behave when we let you come with.”

“Things weren’t exactly going our way Weiss. Ow.” Oz hissed as Ren fixed a new bandage over the bleeding wound.

“And now you’re bleeding again. What is your Aura level even at?” Weiss said moving out of Ren’s way as he moved to the other bleeding sight.

Ozpin looked away from her, at the ground.

“You’re out?! You’re joking!” Weiss threw her hands up. “Gods Oz!”

“It’s not like having a veritable cocktail of drugs in my system is good for the Aura!” Ozpin said and pressed the new bandage Ren was applying down as he tapped it in place.

“Well if you weren’t so reliant on your Aura you wouldn’t be in this situation in the first place. If someone had shot your head you’d be dead right now!” Weiss said her voice raising. “I can’t believe you.”

Ozpin stood grabbing his shirt and walking down the steps. “Given that I’m immortal, that I can die over and over and still come back I fail to see what the big deal is.”

“That doesn’t give you the freedom to be stupid! And stubborn!” Weiss chased after him as he moved down the steps.

Ozpin rounded on her. “What do you CARE!?” He snarled stunning everyone there.

Weiss’s eyes went wide in shock and she took a step back.

Oz pressed a hand to his head, he had a throbbing headache. He took a deep breath. “Look. I’m sorry Weiss, I know you only want to help I’m just…” He rubbed a hand over his face. “I need to go for a walk.” He stormed away climbing up over the rumble, his sides bleeding but he ignored the pain.

The white walls of the temple, and beautiful paintings went on ignored. Oz shoved his hands into his pockets and hunched over like a particular bird he missed. Sadly his privacy was not to be.
“Well you handled that well.” Garrett appeared a few steps down the hall, petting over the marble boob of a statue.

“Shove off.” Ozpin grumbled, rolling up his sleeve and pulling his belt off then pulling it tight around his bicep. He sat down on the cold ground.

“Ohh I’m so hurt!” Garrett dramatically put a hand on his chest. “You must be out of sorts if you can’t even muster a ‘Fuck off.’”

“If there is a point to this visit could you get around to it?” Ozpin said reaching into his pocket and pulled out his needle and a vial of Refuge. He didn’t want to know how much Lien he had been burning on the stuff in the last few weeks.

Garrett stepped into his way with a flamboyant billow of trench coat. “Wow something really is eating you. Missing your little fuck buddies? I know I am.”

Ozpin filled the needle with twenty milliliters. “Now is really not the time to be pushing me.” He capped the vial and spun the needle in his hand aiming. He tried not to think about how good he had gotten at his, Garrett didn’t have to help him anymore.

“You better stop reacting so much, next thing you know Raven will see and think you’ve gone mad.” Garrett reappear in a doorway.

The tall man had to agree with the other soul, he pushed the needle into his vein and quickly pushed the plunger down. He ripped his belt off his arm and let out a long sigh, rubbing the needle site. “Ohhh.” He let his head rest against the wall, the pain dwindled as his Aura returned at the shot of spirit residue pumping through his body. “Hmm.” He purred and closed his eyes. He had been getting less and less of an high, it was still taking so long to heal him. So he upped the dose, it wasn’t knocking him flat anymore but still felt good.

Eventually Ozpin capped the needle again, put it away and looked up at Garrett. “Again, why are you here?” He asked putting his belt back on.

“Cause you’re the lucky sod that doesn’t hear the Eye whispering in your ear all the time. I don’t have that luxury,” He stepped out of the doorway, and gestured to it. “So let’s go find the Crown and link it up with the other two so the Eye will shut up.”

“Fine.” Ozpin heaved himself off the ground and followed the thief’s directions.

Garrett hid his smirk, since he got Oz hooked on Refuge the man had been easier and easier to control. He rarely fought his suggestions anymore, he could even take over sometimes when Oz was asleep. Though he didn’t dare do anything other then extend his senses and figure out what Glyphs were still active in the city. If he got up and did anything, he knew Oz would notice.

Still amazingly as they traveled they didn’t come upon anymore bandits, the halls turned into tunnels, smaller and smaller till Oz was forced to shimmy through a crevice. “How do you know where we are going?”

“The plans we read at Haven, just because you didn’t understand them doesn’t mean I couldn’t.” Garrett said awaiting him at the opening. “More importantly, I could see where they had been altered with magic. For how thorough the person who broke them apart hid the clues to where he cut it. He could have been a bit more creative at hiding them. I mean the Crown by the Relic of Knowledge? Now that’s just uninspired.”

Ozpin focused himself out of the crevasse. “Well at least someone here finds squeezing through a
maze of fissures amusing.”

“Just think, at least they aren’t full of zombies. I’ve done that.” Garrett walked to the far wall and started touching along it. “Here, put your left hand on it.”

Oz just rolled his eyes and did as he was told, he was amazed he could see anything at all. As soon as his armoured hand touched the wall it swung inward. He was instantly assaulted with one of the most patronizing voices he had never heard. Given that he had the Eye in his head before that was really saying something.

“About time Keeper! Where have you been!? Slacking in your duties, typical human!”

Ozpin rubbed his temples. “I’m gonna pretend I heard none of that.”

“Agreed. I never liked this one. Let’s just get this over with and seal it back up.” Garrett said. “If you’ll allow me.”

Ozpin let Garrett drive, he picked up the golden crown, jewels that appeared to be made out of light shown in it. He cradled it to his chest, he could feel his key Glyph blazing in his left hand. His eyes closed as the Eye’s voice sounded in his head. “Crown you are found! We must speak of what you have learned! What do you remember?”

“Cold, always cold. A great beast bellowing.” The Crown said. “Nothing more, I have searched but I can not see!”

“We have sight and touch, now we have you. The Heart and Chalice are still lost, we can not feel nor build.” The Eye said.

“Baaa this is your fault, without a host you go blind too often! We haven’t had a proper Keeper in centuries! He keeps dying and forgetting his duty.”

Garrett quickly put the Crown on the alter, it’s voice thankfully departed from his head. Ozpin assumed control. “Garrett, what was that about?”

“The Five Sentients need each other to function. The Crown is going to blame the Eye as usual. They have a bit of an ongoing feud.” Garrett heading out of the room.

Ozpin followed on his heels and grabbed Garrett’s shoulder stopping him. “No that bit, the part about the Keeper keeping on dying and forgetting. I remember that memory fighting the dragon but I wasn’t myself.”

Garrett stepped away, “Have fun finding your way out.” he vanished.

“Garrett! Damn it!” Ozpin looked around and sighed. “Stupid self centered thief!”

Ruby stared wide eyed as they came upon the Mabino fortress. The guns along the walls were on the city caliber of just plain huge, snow clung to the walls and mountain. It was built into the side of the mountain, she could see Atlas warships and Atlassian Knights paroling the air and walls. “You weren’t kidding when you said the Mabino was the biggest and the baddest.”

“Nope.” Qrow pulled up her hood. “They have the skills, tech and manpower to regularly raid
Atlas transports.” He twisted in the saddle and grabbed a black leather hat that his father had packed on Talet for him. “Best we don’t do or say much while here. I have killed a rather lot of Mabino men working for James, protecting the shipments. Don’t expect a warm welcome and stick close to me, I’d be surprised if some stupid idiots don’t try and get revenge.”

“You worry too much. You are a legend in your own right. They would not dare challenge you.” Hawk said.

Qrow snorted, pulling his hat down lower as they came to the gates. Massive turrets looming, they weren’t alone. Groups of all sizes were making their way inward. “Yeah I’m not going to count on that.”

Sure enough as they came to the gates they were stopped by a guard. “State your names and purpose.”

“Hawk Branwen of the Branwen Tribe, here to deliver tribute to Xaio Roi. This is Ruby Rose and her partner my son Qrow Branwen.” Hawk gestured to them.

Guns appeared in the hands of everyone who heard her with a cacophony of clicking, all pointed at Qrow. He raised his hands in surrender and muttered. “Told you this was a bad idea mother.” To everyone else he raised his voice and said. “Relax, I'm here on tribe business. You leave me alone and I'll leave you alone and we'll all get through this with all of our limbs attached.”

The guard took a few cautious steps towards Qrow, still pointing his rifle at him. “You will both be escorted straight to Xaio Roi. Make any move to your weapons and you will be shot.”

“They really don't like you.”

“As I said, I've killed a lot of them.”

“Let us go then, I have better things to do then waste my time on you.” Hawk said.

The guard lowered his weapon and nodded to a few others, they formed up around the Branwens. Ruby watched as people stared at Qrow, mother's shielding their children or pointing at him and whispering. Qrow's hand slid around to hold her by the middle of her hips, he was also scanning the growing crowds lining the paved streets. Hawk was thriving, this was what she wanted, let everyone see she had her son back and know how dangerous that could be.

They came to the great hall and dismounted, Qrow and Hawk grabbing the saddle bags filled with Lien while Ruby did her best to hide in Qrow's shadow.

“Please don't bite anyone's fingers.” Qrow said to Talet, patting the horse's neck.

“This way please, your saddle bags will be brought to you.” The same guard as before said.

Two other opened massive steel and wood doors, they could hear a chain pulley system working on the other side. Within was a hall even bigger then Beacon’s cafeteria. Pillars lined it with a heavy carpet leading down to a through, great tables on either side stuffed with food at this late hour. Ruby looked up to the throne a man in his forties sat looking down at them. His features were hawkish and his hair a curly black. Upon his lap was a woman no older then Ruby and heavily pregnant. Four other woman, not one older than thirty and near all pregnant clustered around him. The oldest sitting in a throne beside him, all were dressed in finery of an Atlassian style.

Xaio Roi clapped his hands slowly as Hawk, Qrow and Ruby walked down the middle of the hall. “What a way to make an entrance Hawk. No guards, just your son. Quite the statement.”
Hawk pulled her saddle bags of Lien off her shoulders, Qrow followed suit handing her his. “We have only come to pay tribute.”

Ruby jumped as the great doors closed with a bang.

Xaio Roi waved a hand lazily and a steward took the bags from Hawk. He tapped the pregnant girl in his lap on her behind, she obediently hopped off his lap and sat leaning on his throne. He leaned forward and pointed at Ruby. “Who’s that? She lovely.”

Qrow bared his teeth and moved to further shield Ruby, “Not available.”

Xaio Roi laughed, a deep bellowing thing. “Every woman is available. You’ve killed enough of my slave traders to understand that I think?”

Qrow’s hand went to Harbinger, guns followed a instant later.

Ruby grabbed his arm. “Leave it!”

Her partner reluctantly let his sword go. The guns returned to holsters, but no one breathed any easier.

Hawk spoke. “That’s Ruby Rose, partner to my son. I’d recommend leaving her be, I will not be held responsible for whatever happens to whoever is dumb enough to threaten her.”

“Hmm agreed. I rather not have Qrow ripping my stronghold apart. Still eat with us and stay the night, you’re horses must rest and you as well. I trust you both can inhere to Guest Rights.”

“Of course.” Hawk said, already eyeing the tables for a clear spot for them.

“Enjoy, your Lien will be counted and I will have rooms set aside for you. I can’t have the leader of a major tribe sleeping with the common ramble.” Xaio Roi said as one of his wives brought him a glass of wine.

Hawk picked out a place for them and Ruby stuck to Qrow’s side like glue. She did not like the leers many of the men were giving her. As they sat Qrow wrapped an arm around her waist and pulled her tight to him. Ruby could feel his Semblance, twisting and turning. A bench on the table were one particularly fat leering man sat abruptly broke. A serving girl tripped on the run sending wine flying and they could all hear the shouts from the kitchen indicating something had caught on fire.

Ruby giggled as Qrow smiled, taking a drink of wine to hide it. Even Hawk looked amused by what Qrow was doing, one could never say he didn’t get the last word in. Ruby looked at the tables of food and felt queasy.

“Not going to eat?” Qrow asked gathering a few bread rolls and pieces of chicken for himself.

“No, I’m not really feeling well.”

“Nervous?”

“Yeah and this stuff is making my stomach turn.”

Qrow frowned at that, Ruby liked everything on the tables. His mind was already turning back to the past few weeks traveling, her sickness in the morning was increasing in frequency, now she wasn’t eating and her withdrawal bleed... he did keep extremely close track of it and knew it was
near a week late. “When we are alone we should talk.”

Ruby didn’t respond, she could guess what he was thinking but she knew it wasn’t possible. Her birth control hadn’t failed them the whole time they had been together. There was no reason that it suddenly would. They had just been traveling a lot, she was stressed out. There was no way she was pregnant.

Hawk watched them but didn’t speak, she did see that Ruby looked a bit sickly. After the meal a steward showed them to their rooms, next to each other. They were fine but on the smaller side, at least Qrow and Ruby’s, they didn’t see Hawks. A quick check through their saddlebags found that nothing was missing.

Qrow watched Ruby as she undressed, she didn’t look any different maybe a bit thinner. Given how sick she had become that was logical, he approached her as she looked into a full mirror. He traced a hand over her stomach, he had no idea how to start this conversation. “Ruby, I know you really don’t want to think about it. But first morning sickness, now nausea and you are a week late for your withdrawal. Maybe you should take a test? We have the rose, we can talk to Oz, get him to get Raven to send us a portal. If you just ignore it, it will only get harder to deal with.”

Ruby stepped away from him crossing her arms over her chest. “I’m not pregnant. We’ve just been traveling, and I’ve stressing out and all new foods. I took my birth control, I’m not pregnant. It doesn’t make any sense that it would suddenly fail.”

“Rubes, nothing is a hundred percent and with my Semblance we have to consider the possibility. Neither of us want a child right now, we have to get on top of this.” Qrow stepped towards her.

“I’m not pregnant.” She turned away from him and crawled into bed.

Qrow sighed and knew he wouldn’t get another word out of her tonight. He walked over to her bag and pulled out the rose, they had been keeping it hidden at the tribe and out of sight from Hawk on the way here. He sat on the edge of the bed facing away from Ruby. “Oz, I need your help.”

The response was slow to come and it seemed almost diluted. “Yes Qrow?”

“You can keep this from Ruby right.”

“Of course, I’m not inept.”

Qrow blinked in surprise, that didn’t sound like regular Oz and emotions kept flitting over the connection. “Are you high?” Qrow asked his mental voice coloured with disbelief.

“No, what gives you that idea?”

“You feel off.”

“You are mistaken.” With those words the extra feeling from Oz vanished, only Qrow now knew it was being shielded on purpose. “What is the problem?”

“I think Ruby may be pregnant. She’s been vomiting in the morning for a couple weeks now, today she skipped dinner and her withdrawal bleed is late.”

“Well she has been under stress, not to mention a great deal changing all at once. Her bleed could just be late and it’s not uncommon for a woman to fast on it.”

“She’s never done that before.”
“Hmm, I still find it unlikely that she is pregnant. I know she is very careful to make sure her birth control doesn’t expire and it does work very well.”

“My problem is she’s in denial, she doesn’t even want to take a test. I know that’s always been a problem with her. You fuck, I drink, she compartmentalises and goes into denial.”

“I don’t know how I can help Qrow. We’re on different halves of the continent.”

Qrow thought Oz sounded a bit bitter about that. “How are things going with Raven?”

“Slowly, we have one more target out of the city that she wants to use as a staging ground for the tribe. Only with Grimm levels so high we are going to have to spend a few weeks thinning them before we can go after the town.”

“So Ruby and I will be stuck here for a while longer.”

“I’m afraid so. I need to sleep. Give Ruby a kiss for me.” Ozpin sent his love and then faded from the connection.

Something is definitely wrong with him. Qrow mused and set the rose on the bedside table, he slipped into bed and spooned himself around Ruby, giving her cheek a kiss. “Oz says we’ll be here for a while longer. Goodnight love.”

Chapter End Notes

Ardy: *Takes big deep breaths* I will not rant, I will not rant, I will not rant… CRWBY YOU LAZY!!!... I have never had 20 seconds of show, make me so mad before, did I see it coming from a while away. Yes. I did. Does that make this any better. NO it pisses me off even more. I will not say why I pissed here for those who do not have first accounts. No judgments till the end of the volume, reacting when we don’t have all the pieces is just dumb.

Kry: Ardy love, calm down.

Ardy: Hey I have cooled alot now. Still a more Money Paw idea then what they did would have been more interesting. Anyway Thank you to: Mysty_Sinclair, darkvampirekisses, Frapadingue70 and Luna drakken for your comments.

Kry: You’ve all been awesome with the support, so thanks very much and have a wonderful weekend! For those who don't catch it Talet and several lines and references have to made to Robin McKinley's Damar books. But you guys all know Ardy by now, she loves those books and often includes the Hero and the Crown as Ruby's favorite book. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Hero_and_the_Crown for further reading on the aforementioned references.
Slow Burning Truths

Chapter Summary

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7QDgnxLfKWAt  Ottmar Liebert Sand. What Oz plays though the version I have is the Acoustic version and I wasn’t able to find it on youtube it’s on Spotify for those who care and Scarborough Fair there are so many versions it’s not even funny I had no particular one in mind.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Ruby’s eyes popped open as she woke and made a dive for the bathroom, heaving what little her stomach had in it. For a few minutes the only sounds were her retching before she sat on the cold floor and sniffed, pressing a hand to her belly. Qrow’s words were stuck in her head, he thought she was pregnant, but there was just no way! She was extremely paranoid about her birth control in an effort to counter Qrow’s Semblance. That it would suddenly fail made no sense at all. She didn’t want to be pregnant, they couldn’t have her be pregnant in the middle of a war! Her fingers traced little circles over her flesh, if she was though… she wasn’t sure if she had it in her to abort it. She knew the Silver Eyed Warriors were going extinct and if she was pregnant what right did she have to kill it when her kind were dying out? What right did she have to destroy the possible innocent life that could be building inside her? Ruby pulled at her hair and cried softly, she didn’t want this decision. She was sure she wasn’t pregnant! That would be the end of it!

She got up and washed her mouth out, they had been at the Mabino fortress for almost a week after a storm had closed in forcing them to wait it out. They hoped the storm would end soon or the pass could close and they’d be stuck here a lot longer then they wanted. Qrow had all but hidden out in their room, making himself less of a target was what he believed. The petite woman walked back out into their bedroom. Qrow was dosing on his back, quiet snores filling the room even as it was just breaking dawn. Ruby walked over and crawled on the bed giving his cheek a kiss. “I’m gonna go for a walk.”

Qrow mumbled sleepy but let her go. Ruby got dressed and crept out of the room and through the stone halls. The silver eyed woman had developed a habit of seeking out the kitchen in the morning. The smells of fresh baked bread drew her like a magnet. The bakers had even gotten used to her appearing, most days when she had a bout of morning sickness. She had even told them what ailed her and the old woman, head of the kitchen had started to give Ruby a cup of warm milk with honey and a sweet roll in the mornings.

Sure enough as Ruby appeared in the kitchen door away. Amaranth, the elderly head of the bakers saw her and smiled. She came over with a cup of milk and a sweet roll still warm already waiting for Ruby. “Right on time. I say that babe of your is going to lead to a very consistent pregnancy.”

Ruby blushed and took the two things, sitting on her stool by one of the three open fire pits. “I’m still not convinced I’m pregnant. Qrow’s Semblance is… Bad luck. But I have been extremely careful.”

“Sometimes babes just want to come and there is little we can do to stop them.” Amaranth said as one of the kitchen helpers handed her a coffee. “I for one will be glad to see a new Silver Eyed child in the world, the stories of your kind were always my favourite growing up.”
“Well I’ve only used my eyes once and well. You can just look at Beacon for what happened.” Ruby sipped her milk and found her stomach quieting.

“We all know.” Amaranth said taking a long drink of her coffee. “Well I must get back to work. You know the drill.”

Ruby did, she ate her roll and drank the milk while the bustling kitchen went to work and left the cup on the stool before retreating from the kitchen. She pulled her hood up and went for a walk, the battlements were sparsely manned at this hour. Snow danced in the near frigid air and the young huntress pulled her hood closer around her. Ruby headed up to the tallest spine and sat in a merlon watching the town wake up. She knew a place like this could only exist because Mistral didn’t have the manpower or bravery to attack it. The people she had learned of were often tight knit communities, not everyone here was a bandit, some just held jobs that were needed everywhere. Bakers, potters, hunters, smiths, tanners and tailors. Just people that happened to live under a bandit king, rather than a council and right now she wasn’t sure which was better.

Hawk found Ruby in her usual spot. She was sure that Qrow had put a child in his little lovers womb, it was only a matter now of keeping her away from the city. Away from a birth control test and more importantly away from any doctors. Hawk was determined to make sure the babe was too developed to easily be rid of, before letting Qrow and Ruby anywhere near Mistral. “Enjoying the sunrise?”

Ruby looked over to the Branwen matriarch. “Something like that.”

Hawk walked over and looked down at the stores starting to come alive with the rising sun. “Ruby I know Qrow probably won’t ask this of you, or even entertain the notion but have you thought at all about staying with us, after our deal with Ozpin is concluded?”

Ruby watched the people mill around, she could hear soft laughter and see a few children peeking out the windows, probably looking for the snow that was expected. The silver eye sighed. “No. As much as I can see the good in what’s being built here I don’t believe that this is where I belong. I should be with Oz and so should Qrow, it’s where we are happiest and that won’t ever change. He’s our home and I feel a little lost without him.”

Hawk watched the way the younger woman’s eyes turned soft and the smile that curled over her lips. This wasn’t the way she planned this conversation going and she wanted the notion that anywhere but here was home out of her mind. “We are not so different you know. We protect our own. The tribes are families, everyone has their own ideas, thoughts and opinions and most are respected. If all the kingdoms fell then every man woman and Faunus would join together in another tribe, the only difference between us and them is that they live in the boundaries of the walls. Wordless protection and governed by not only the laws of the world but the laws upheld by those who wish power only for themselves. Our laws don’t uphold power but follow a line of growth and survival.”

“You still lie steal and kill others to meet your means.” Ruby said.

“Is that any different then everyone else on Remnant? Selfishness exists in all of us. I’m just not afraid to own up to it.” Hawk said angrily and walked away.

Ruby rubbed her belly turning to look back over the happy people. She wasn’t sure she could ever see herself as one of them. She wanted to be a Huntress, but was it right to destroy the lives of people that were just part of the community? Was it right to destroy a community just because someone had told her, wasn’t their way of living wrong?’

A crow flew over and landed on the merlon, Ruby smiled up at it and reached up. He let her pet over
his head for a minute before jumping off the merlon and becoming her lover. “Good morning.”
Qrow looked up to the sky, it was dark and threatening to snow again. “Dreary more like.”
Ruby sighed. “You’re right there. I guess we’ll be stuck here for a little while longer.”
“As annoying as that is.” Qrow said crossing his arms over his chest.
Ruby didn’t look to him instead looking at the happy people starting their day. “Qrow, why did you
leave the tribe?”
“They’re murderers and thieves.” Qrow said.
“No one down there is.” She pointed at a baker taking his wears out into the street, or the milkman
dropping the days milk on the doorsteps of people not yet awake.
“You’ve been talking to my mother again haven’t you?” Qrow narrowed his eyes at his love.
“Just a little.” Ruby confessed.
“She is just manipulating you Ruby. You haven’t seen what these people are capable of.” Qrow said.
“And you won’t tell or show me!” Ruby suddenly annoyed jumped down from her seat. “From
where I am standing they look just like normal people! Not murders or thieves.”
“Since when did my word suddenly not become enough for you? Have I always not protected you?”
Qrow didn’t like how she was yelling at him, it hurt that she seemed to distrust his reasons. This was
his mothers doing he was sure of it.
“Maybe I don’t want to be protected anymore! Maybe I want to see things for myself!” Ruby said
her voice raising.
“Remember Shion? That was the Branwens.” Qrow said, Ruby was too kind to see the darker side
of what these people would do. They were here as guests but that didn’t mean that once they left
their status would remain in good graces.
Ruby snapped her jaw shut, she did remember Shion and the dying Huntsman. She hugged herself
and looked away, shame rose up in her. For not believing him, she couldn’t imagine Falcon and
Hawk attacking a village and yet… “I’m sorry.”
Qrow walked over and hugged her. “For all the people who live in these communities. Some of them
may be good people, but don’t forget about those who run them. They are not good people no matter
what my mother would have you believe. Be more careful when you talk to her.”
The Silver Eyed Warrior didn’t say anything, just snuggled into his arms till it got too cold to remain
outside. They headed back into the fort to find a proper breakfast.

Ozpin crept out of bed, pulling on a pair of slacks and grabbing his sword. He peeked out into the
hallway and was happy to find all the doors closed. Sneaking down the hall and through the house
and coming down to the training room. He opened a sliding door and stepped out into the rain. It
pounded the dirt and he stepped out closing the door behind him, a tap of the guard extended his
sword to its full length.

The rain struck his skin as he walked to the centre of the yard. He swung his sword out before him tracing a pair of fingers over the blade. *I can do this.* He swung his sword out, slicing the very raindrops apart. The steel burrered through the air, but rain still struck him. He grit his teeth as the pain grew and stopped with a lurch, the water splashing around him. “Ahh!” Oz fell to the ground holding his sides, again the bandages had been removed. Blood mixed with the rain, dripping down. He punched the ground mud splattering his arm. Gods it hurt, ice pain stabbing through his chest.

“Hmm, you on your knees. I’m starting to see the appeal.” Garrett materialized before him.

Ozpin looked up, rain plastering his hair to his skull. “Fuck off.”

Garrett reached up and pulled his claymore off his shoulder. He brought the weapon against Oz’s neck. “A little pain has you on your knees. I would think by now you’d be used to it.”

Ozpin glared, and rose very literally to the bait. He stooped blood mixing with water on his chest. “Go away.” He hissed, holding his chest.

“Why? Not like you can force me away anymore. You’ve even taken to avoiding Lydia. I’m the only one you’ve got left. Hehe, it sure sounds like Qrow and Ruby have been having fun without you. Bun in her oven and all that.” Garrett purred. “They don’t need you clearly.”

“The chances of her being pregnant are astoundingly low. Qrow is just paranoid of it by his very nature, till I see her for myself…” Oz winced his body was starting to ache with the cold.

Garrett didn’t like where Oz’s thoughts were turning. Raven had been very right when she said Oz longed for a family, a child would motivated him to new extremes. “Go back to bed. Take another shot, you’re bleeding everywhere again.” As much as he loved using the drug to weaken Oz’s mental landscape, he still wanted a body that was usable.

“Aww, how nice of you to care.” Ozpin said sarcasm dripping from his voice. He however obeyed, returning to his room, water and blood staining the hardwood.

Weiss got up with a yawn and a stretch. She rolled out of bed, Yang was still out cold in the small twin bed across from her. As had become her usual routine she headed out of the room to check on Oz, he’d grown more and more withdrawn over the last few weeks. It was worrying everyone, but they didn’t have any ideas to get him back to his usual self. She stepped out and… the ground was sticky. She looked down and saw the water stain, kneeling she touched it and her fingers came back tinted in red. Blood.

The Atlassian looked up and flowed the stains, she wasn’t at all surprised when they lead to the master bedroom. “Oh Oz, what have you done now?” She walked down and quietly opened the door sliding through and shutting it behind her. Ozpin appeared to be sleeping peacefully, the duvet drawn up to his neck. However mud caked slanks were on the floor and muddy footprints lead to the bathroom. She walked over to the bed and carefully drew the duvet down, she saw almost instantly the fresh blood on the sheets and how his sides oozed with it.

Weiss sighed deeply, he had done something last night. Pushed himself again, he was on a combination of isoniazid and rifampicin, as well as either morphine or tylenol three depending on
how bad the pain was. They were all keeping the morphine on their persons and changing who had it so Oz wouldn’t be able to guess. The drugs were messing with his Aura, Aura healed without drugs so having drugs in the system of someone with an active Aura. Well the Aura would fight the drugs, it was only reasonable that he had to take so much for so long. Still this left them all dealing with a very frustrated and impatient Ozpin. He had been pushing himself in what few fights they let him anywhere near and had started disappearing for long periods of time. Only without Qrow, none of them were good enough at tracking or tailing to follow him.

Ozpin groaned in his sleep and woke looking up at Weiss. “What are you doing here?”

“Checking on you.” Weiss reached up and pet over his hair, pulling the duvet back up. “You should sleep more.”

“Too much to do.” Oz said but her hand was already making him sleepy. The high was still lingering in his body, not so much to impair him though.

“You keep seeming to forget we aren’t helpless. You need to focus on getting better, resting, if you keep pushing yourself at every turn it will only make you take longer to heal. What would Ruby and Qrow say if they saw you like this?” Weiss said still petting his head.

*If they knew half of what I was doing they would be disappointed in me.* Oz sighed and closed his eyes again. “I will try.” He meant it, he knew what he was doing was wrong. Still the Refuge hidden in the drawer called to him.

“That’s all I ask. I’ll be staying in today. Ren, Nora, Jaune, Yang, Raven and Vernal are going Grimm hunting.” Weiss said.

“So you get to stay behind and be my babysitter.” Ozpin grumbled.

“I volunteered. I thought maybe we could go for a walk, visit Lydia or start on your physio. Try and see if you’re improving. When you are ready.” Weiss said.

Oz shook his head. “I don’t want to bother Lydia, she’s already helped us so much.”

“I don’t think she would see it as bothering.” Weiss was surprised by Oz’s stance.

“No.” Oz mumbled and turned away from the heiress, the last thing he wanted was Lydia finding out the truth and he knew without a doubt she would see it all over him the minute he entered Crimson. “I’m fine, she’s got a city to manage.”

Weiss sighed and stood, petting through his hair once more. “I'll be back with some hot chocolate in a bit.”

She found Ren and Nora already in the kitchen. “How is he?” Nora asked.

“Not good, I think he went out last night. His sides are still bleeding, he's still being grumpy. Flat out refusing to visit Lydia.” Weiss said, she rubbed a hand over her face. “I think it has something to do with Lydia's Semblance being telepathy. I think he's desperate to hide something.”

“Well we know he's hiding something, or a bunch of somethings.” Yang said coming down the stairs. “He hasn't actually told us a lot about himself. I know that he has told Qrow and Ruby stuff but even then who really knows?”

“His secrets probably have secrets but this is different then that. Whatever is wrong with him is new.” Weiss said cleaning on the wall crossing her arms over her chest.
“Maybe we should just invite Lydia over?” Nora asked actually handing Ren chocolate to melt into the milk instead of eating it herself.

“I don’t that is a good idea.” Ren said breaking it up and dropping it in. Even Nora didn’t munch on Oz’s hot chocolate chocolate, it was identified as a sacred object in the house and left alone. “I think it would put Oz on the defensive, and we all know how he gets when he’s defensive.”

Everyone hummed in agreement. They had seen horny, sulky, grumpy, happy, frustrated and miserable Ozpin now. Defensive Oz was one they liked to avoid, getting a straight answer out of him became next to impossible.

“So what? Do nothing?” Nora asked.

“Hmmm, we could try bringing him hunting with us?” Weiss mused. “Hit a few bounties, there are still dozens of them since all the huntsmen have gone missing and we can cover him, giving him something to do will probably help with his sulkiness.”

“He seriously put his healing back when we last let him into the field. There was a reason we decide to leave him behind today.” Ren said whisking the drink and adding cinnamon.

“I still need to think of something do with him.” Weiss said. “He’ll go nuts if we force him to stay in this house for much longer.”

“Well asides from fighting and sex, he must have some hobbies! We just have to figure out what they are… he did read to us at school. Beowulf. He must like to read his story telling was amazing!” Nora said jumping up and down at the mere thought.

“Ruby and Qrow liked to sing. I’d be surprised if Oz doesn’t.” Weiss said.

“That won’t work. The surgery cut through his diaphragm, he won’t be able to breathe deeply enough to sing. It will only frustrate him more.” Ren said.

“I wish Ruby and Qrow were here. They’d know what to do.” Weiss said.

Ren grabbed Oz’s mug and poured the hot chocolate into it. He walked over and handed it to Weiss. “We’ll think of something before we go.”

“Thanks.” Weiss headed back to Oz, carefully with the life giving hot chocolate. “Oz, I’ve got hot chocolate.”

Ozpin lifted his head from the pillow. Upon smelling that she was not lying he slowly worked his way to sitting up. Weiss suppressed a giggle, once she had brought tea in and he burrowed under the duvet and pretended to be asleep for a whole hour. As per Lydia’s instructions, Weiss heated up the tea added more honey and offered it again. The pleading look Oz had given her, aww it was held in a special place in her mind. To be revisited whenever she was feeling down.

“Thank you.” He said putting a few extra pillows behind him. The cuts oozed slow blood and Oz hissed, a hand covered over one.

“Here.” Weiss gave him the cup and grabbed another cloth then pressed it to the cuts. “You need to stop pushing yourself so hard. You’re not doing yourself any good.”

Oz sipped his drink and chose not to comment.

Weiss sighed at that, she was getting used to his silence when he didn’t want to talk. She really
wished Ruby was here to help her. “Ozpin. We can all tell you’re frustrated, but this sneaking out you’ve been doing has to stop, it’s not helping you get better faster. You need to let yourself heal. If Qrow and Ruby were here they’d kick your butt for not taking care of yourself. Furthermore they’ll be back soon. Do you still want to be healing when that happens? Or do you want to physically able to shower them with your love?”

Ozpin shrank in on himself. He hadn’t been thinking about that, he just wanted to get better. Guilt turned in his stomach, he yearned for another shot of Refuge, anything to help him get better faster, which only made the guilt worse. He set the cup aside and covered his face with a hand. “I’m sorry. I just… I want to get better.”

“We all know. Just please, just… stop whatever it is you’ve been doing.” Weiss took his free hand in hers. “If not for us, then for Qrow and Ruby.”

Oz let his hand drop into his lap. “I will try.”

Weiss leaned up and kissed his cheek. “Thanks all we can ask for. Drink your hot chocolate, I’ll be back to help you in the shower in a bit.” She left him to get a change of clothes for herself.

Ozpin sipped his hot chocolate his eyes drawn to the drawer. He yanked them away and closed his eyes, no, no, no. He needed to stop using it, to stop cheating. Oz had a long drink trying to distract himself. The sweet drink did nothing to soothe his troubled thoughts so he fled to the shower. Anything to get further away from the temptation lying so innocently in the drawer.

In the end, Weiss decided on taking Ozpin for a walk. The thought still made her giggle, like he was Zwei or something but she kept that to herself, it wouldn’t do any good if he suspected such a thing. They had taken a cab to the city gates and were just walking through the surrounding forests. The air was brisk and Weiss had wrapped a scarf around Oz’s neck in addition to his other layers. She watched him as they walked, he was visibly relaxing the farther they got from the city, breathing a little easier.

“Thank you Weiss. This was a good idea.” Ozpin said coming to a stop to sit on a rock and rest.

She smiled warmly. “I’m glad you are feeling better.”

“I admit I was beginning to go rather stir crazy in Mistral.” Ozpin said, the wind blew through their hair. Ozpin felt something warm and soft brush against his cheek, whispers flew on the wind towards him making his eyes glance around them before settling on the bank of trees directly in front of them.

One of the trees shimmered before a woman stepped out from within its trunk, her skin made of green bark and her eyes a glowing red. Garrett shunted his away into control of Ozpin’s body. “Viktoria!” He all but jumped to his feet.

“My good thief.” Viktoria smiled warmly.

“You’re free of Vacou!” Garrett said reaching out to her, cupping her cheek with a hand.

“I have all of Vale and Mistral now. Between the Eye and the Crown I am much freer then I once was. It has been a great joy to have such forests to explore.” Viktoria smiled. “I have someone for
you to meet.” She stepped away and put her hand on the tree, a moment later a toddler came through with wobbly steps. She walked carefully to her mother and leaned on her clutching her leg for balance.

Garrett couldn’t help but stare, she came up just past his knee. Her skin was bark like her mother’s but with his skin tone, green hair falling to her hips and big red eyes. She had a cute little button nose and small pearly lips. Garrett couldn’t think of anything more beautiful, he knelt more than a bit stunned. “Hello, I’m Garrett. Your dad.”

The little girl’s eyes widened into saucers, she blinked at him twice then leapt at him with a declaration of. “PAPA!”

Garrett caught her and hugged her tight. He looked up at Viktoria who explained. “I was telling her stories about you even as she grew in my womb. She has wanted to meet you since she was able to form words.”

Weiss kept her hand on her sword, the scene was touching but she didn’t know what was going on. For now she chose silence, at least till she had an idea of what was happening.

Garrett picked his daughter up and leaned over to share a kiss with Viktoria, he was so happy his heart was threatening to burst. “She is the most beautiful girl I’ve ever seen.” Garrett kissed the little child in his arms on the temple. “What is your name?”

“Elizabeth! Or Lizzy, moma likes to call me Lizzy.” Lizzy said and wove her little hands into Garrett’s hair.

“Well it’s a perfect name for a perfect girl.” Garrett said and felt Ozpin pushing back against him. He quickly handed Elizabeth to Viktoria. “Ozpin is going to return soon. I can’t hold him back yet.”

Viktoria nodded sadly. “I understand, I will ask the Eye to watch for you.” They shared a brief kiss and Viktoria walked into the tree vanishing with Elizabeth.

Ozpin shoved his way back into control, pain lashed through his body as his chest protested lifting a twenty odd pound girl. “Oww.” He stumbled into the tree. “What the fuck Garrett a little warning next time.”

Garrett appeared standing before him. “My lover not yours. I don’t get in the way when you see yours.”

“That doesn’t give you the right to hijack my body.” Ozpin said.

“Who are you talking too?” Weiss asked walking over. Garrett took the distraction to vanish as well, only from Oz’s sight.

Ozpin’s gaze snapped over to her, he blushed. “Uhh, it’s a long story.”

She slid an arm around his back and helped him walk back over to the stone. “Then tell it.”

“Garrett is… well I’ve heard others who understand this way more than I do call him a ‘Awakened Soul’. A soul residing within my collective, that has become… separate I guess? Able to from thoughts of it’s own, remember it’s own memories. And sometimes, take over my body. I haven’t figured out how to stop him from doing that yet. He mostly just appears like you before me and talks to me. Viktoria was his lover from when he had a body of his own. She’s a woodland sprite, brought back by the Paw. We ran into each other in Vacuo and well, you saw Lizzy. I’m sure you can guess what Garrett did.” Ozpin sat heavily on the rock.
“That I can.” Weiss said. “I take it Ruby and Qrow know.”

“It was Ruby who let Garrett out by accident in the first place... I think.” Ozpin said, for a moment he was confused. Even as he said it he wasn’t sure of its truth, there was something conflicting about the idea but he couldn’t remember what or why.

“Are you sure he’s safe? I mean he did just take over your body and I don’t understand all this but he seemed, I don’t know very odd, different when talking to you compared to the woodland sprite?” Weiss asked staring at the tree the strange woman had emerged from.

“I think everyone speaks to their loved ones differently than others. Don’t worry about Garrett, he is mostly harmless and besides that’s not what we are here for right.” Oz shrugged it off and smiled, holding out his arm. “It’s easier to support me if you have a good grip, let’s take another walk around before we head back.” Already his body ached but he wasn’t ready to return to his pitiful life just yet. Weiss gently looped her arm through his, anybody watching them would just assume Oz was supporting the young woman on his arm and not the other way around.

Garrett was silently stewing, he had a little girl and she was perfect in every way. He had a family, he had no clue the last time that concept entered his thoughts. He watched Ozpin and Weiss seek out a new path. He had a little girl, her name was Elizabeth, Viktoria was free of Vacuo. These simple facts would not be forgotten now. He narrowed his eyes at the pair walking slightly ahead of him, he needed to get rid of Oz. Enough of these games, he had a woman he loved and a daughter waiting for him, he had wasted enough time.

Ruby found walking helped her queasy stomach, she was having a hard time keeping much of anything down lately. She was either always hungry or queasy and her body seemed unable to make up its mind. Her hands often found their way to holding her stomach now, she was having to tie her corset steadily looser. She had seen Qrow watching her when she dressed lately, his eyes going to her stomach. The silver eyed woman hugged herself, she could practically see the thoughts turning in his mind. What if she was pregnant? What could she do? What would he do? What would Ozpin do? She knew that Qrow didn’t want to have children that he saw the risk was too high for her.

Ruby paused mid step, was it that he really didn’t want children? Or was he picking her over any potential children? She sighed doubting she’d get a straight answer out of him if she asked. Right now he’d probably say that he didn’t want kids, just out of worry for her health. Ruby turned and walked down a side street. Ozpin was harder to guess, he had never mentioned waiting children but then they were at war.

She turned down another alley, she needed to figure this out. A hand traveled back to her stomach, it didn’t seem any bigger but she felt bloated hence the loosening of her corset. She was now two weeks late on her bleed, she didn’t want to acknowledge these facts but they kept building in the back of her mind.

Something creaked behind her and a knife was suddenly drawn at her throat and her arms twisted behind her back. “Look what I caught? Qrow Branwen’s pretty little whore.” Ruby wrinkled her nose, the man’s breath stank of ale. “Qrow! Someone’s grabbed me!” She looked around as best she could trying to send him images of her surroundings.

“I’m on my way!”
Other men appeared out of shadows, armed and leering. “She’s way too pretty for Qrow. Why anyone would bend over for that murderer is beyond me.” One stepped forth holding a combat knife out, he was tall and lean with blue eyes and clean garb. “I heard a rumour in the kitchen’s that this whore is carrying Qrow’s babe. Maybe I should cut it out of her. Qrow killed my son, it only seems like justice to take his babe away from him.”

The knife just brushed over her breast and Ruby called on her Aura. It flared as the knife touched her, the bandit’s eyes widened in shock. “She’s a Huntress!”

The man behind her tried to plunge his knife into her neck, but she dissolved into rose petals. Another man ripped out a shot gun and fired. Ruby was forced back into herself with a lurch, falling to the ground. She hurt all over, she hated when things managed to hit her petals. She scrambled to her feet only for one of the bandits to jump on her and pin her to the ground.

“It don’t matter if we can’t kill you quietly.” He pressed his shot gun to her head. “We can still have our fun.”

Ruby squirmed as she felt hands on her legs, then she heard that all too familiar crack of magic. She turned her head and grinned at the man. “Now you’re dead.”

The man turned just in time to see Harbinger cut his skull in half. Ruby rolled away from the corpse and got up. Qrow was looming over the bodies, his eyes unfocused for a second before resting on her. “Are you okay?” He rushed to her side reaching up to touch her cheek.

Ruby leaned into the touch and closed her eyes. “I’m fine. I tried getting away with my Semblance but a shotgun at point blank range is difficult to dodge and not fun. You got here before they could try anything else.”

Qrow let out a sigh of relief, he flicked the blood off of Harbinger and scabbard the weapon. He hugged her tightly. “I’m glad you’re okay. This mental bond has turned out to be really handy.”

Ruby snuggled into his embrace. “I get the feeling Lydia would say it’s why Vessel Souls can create them.”

Hawk and several other tribesmen burst onto the street. They stalled seeing the bodies around Ruby and Qrow, the Mabino men whipped out their weapons and pointed many a gun at Qrow. The red eyed man moved to draw his blade but Hawk held an arm out. “We explain this to the king, it is not a matter to be settled in a alley.” To the men she said. “Collect the bodies.”

They had all be brought before the king, an assembly forming in the hall. Xaio Roi sat upon his throne almost passive to the bodies covered in a white sheets and Qrow and Ruby. “From the beginning Miss Rose.”

“I was going for a walk through the town, I’ll admit I was not paying as much attention as I should have been. One of the men surprised me and held a knife to my throat. Then his friends came, one of them was angry that Qrow had killed his son and wanted to get even by taking something of Qrow’s. He tired to cut me but I called on my Aura and then my Semblance trying to escape. Only he shot me with a shotgun and interrupted my Semblance. He then pinned me down and one of the other men grabbed me by my legs. That is when Qrow arrived and… well.” She gestured to the bodies. “Shortly after that Hawk arrived.”

“And how did you know to come looking for her?” Xaio Roi addressed Qrow.
Qrow pursed his lips and tried to figure out what to say. “Ruby?”

“I think the truth. I’ll explain it.”

“If I may?” Ruby asked and the king nodded to her, she took a deep breath. “I am… I am what is called Vessel Soul. When I was reaching maturity my soul sought out the optimal genetic and soul mates to my own. To sum up, this processes eventually allows me to form a mental connect to my chosen mates. I called to Qrow as soon as I was attacked and sent him images of my location. That’s how he knew I was in trouble.”

“Sounds like a load of bullshit to me!” A spectator called out.

Xaio Roi studied Ruby for a moment. “Can you prove this? That you are a Vessel Soul?”

“Yes.” Ruby said she walked over to Hawk and Qrow. Speaking so softly that only Hawk would be able to hear. “You’ll have to protect his body, just in case.”

“I do not like this idea.” Qrow said but already sat down on the ground at his mother’s feet.

“Better than them saying I’m lying and trying to kill you.” Ruby said and took a long kiss from him calling his soul into hers.

It came so easily now, she stepped away and turned to face the king. Her eyes now red and silver merged together, she stretched her arms out wide and let Qrow’s Semblance rip forth. A table broke, a torch scones fell to the ground spraying fire everywhere. Ruby called it in before it could do further damage. When she spoke everyone could hear Qrow’s voice reflecting through hers. “Satisfied highness? Or shall I grab Harbinger and demonstrate? All my power carries over to Ruby, together we are even more dangerous than I am alone.”

“I am satisfied Qrow. You and yours are free, my men targeted your woman and you were within your rights to defend her.” Xaio Roi sighed and called out. “This gathering is adjourned.”

Ruby walked over to Qrow’s body and returned his soul to it. He rubbed a hand over his face. “That went well.”

As he stood Hawk spoke up to the King. “We will be taking our leave of your company now. Thank you for your support.”

“Go with my favour Chieftess Branwen. Qrow and Ruby, for all the actions that you have set yourself against my tribe Qrow. I find I like you. If you find yourself in a need of a place to hang your sword, my keep will always be open to you. Ruby, I have not met a woman your equal, perhaps in future we can speak together at length. I have a feeling my tribe could learn much from you. Riding swiftly and safely.”

Qrow and Ruby were to stunned by the invitation to do much more than bow and retreat.

Everyone had finally figured out how to keep Oz out of trouble. It had started when one morning after shopping Ren had bought a puzzle home. It was a relatively easy one, only two hundred pieces. He had left it on the table in the living room and headed out for another load of groceries. When he returned an hour later, the puzzle was complete and perfectly centred on the table. Ren had stood a
bit perplexed in the doorway of to the kitchen looking at the puzzle and since he knew the rest of 
their group were less into puzzles then himself hummed thoughtfully before pulling out his Scroll and 
texting Nora.

When she got home she brought two pieces of backing and a five hundred piece puzzle. While 
everyone else was busy including Ozpin, as Ren let him cut carrots now. Nora slid the complete 
puzzle onto one of the pieces of backing and set it aside for sealing later. After everyone had gone to 
bed Nora put the second piece of backing on the coffee table and opened up the puzzle. Leaving 
both out overnight. When Ren and Nora came down to start on breakfast the following day the 
puzzle was complete.

They both hummed sharing a smile. Nora rushed the puzzle away to seal it for later and when Ozpin 
came down that morning… actually came down...in the morning. Rather than hiding out till Weiss 
woke him up and helped them with breakfast the ex-heiress had been so surprised to find him cutting 
up a banana for pancakes, she had to pinched herself to make sure she was in fact awake.

Later while Oz was having a bath the cuts on his chest having finally healed enough that it was safe 
to soak. Ren, Nora, Weiss and Yang all had a private meeting. So later that night when Oz was 
fighting with the need to take more Refuge and with Garrett always talking in his ear he’d fled from 
the room and headed downstairs. He found the new puzzle, a large vanilla scented candle, hot 
chocolate in a thermos and a guitar waiting for him in the main room. His heart melted a little bit and 
Garrett glared at the items, wishing he had enough influence to knock the offensive items away so he 
could break down Oz’s walls again. Ozpin walked over and sat before the table, lighting the candle 
with the matches that had been thoughtfully left for him. He picked up the guitar and ran his hand 
over strings, he hadn’t played anything since Beacon fell. He set it in his lap and started to play 
simple chords.

Garrett glared. “You know, it would be easier just to take the Refuge. Rather then this stupid 
insomnia. You’re just slowing your healing, making yourself useless.”

“But I am not.” Ozpin pointed to the other to puzzles now sealed and mounted on the walls. “I’ve 
brought a little art into this place.” He pulled his Scroll out of pocket. “Now shut up, you and I have 
nothing to talk about and I want to play.”

He hit record on his Scroll and started to play, the tune was soothing but just that right level of 
challenge to entertain him. Garrett had to admit Ozpin was good at playing, the smile that played 
over the man’s lips. He looked happy for the first time since Ruby and Qrow left. He played a second 
song after the first, this time singing as best his chest allowed. When he was done he sent the 
recordings to Ren, Nora, Weiss and Yang. Then played music off his Scroll sipped his hot chocolate 
and set about putting the puzzle together.

That morning Ren and Nora found Ozpin snoozing on the sofa shivering on and off. The hot 
chocolate all gone, the candle burned partly down and the puzzle half finished. Weiss came down the 
stairs and giggled, Nora retreated back up the stairs to fetch a blanket while Weiss hooked her Scroll 
into the speakers turned the volume low and played Oz’s version of Sand by Ottmar Liebert.

Ozpin woke half way through the version of Scarborough Fair he had played last night and blushed. 
He looked into the kitchen and found Weiss singing softly along as she, Ren and Nora all worked 
with a little extra dance in their steps.

Yang came down and kissed him on the cheek as he sat up. “Thank you for the music, it’s going to 
make hunting so much more fun.” The smile he gave her would forever stick in her memory.

Just like that everyone learned how to really help Oz. Not just with tasks he needed help with, but to
engage with him. Some nights Yang would join Ozpin in the puzzle solving and he’d play for her.

Many evenings now were concluded with a movie, with everyone even Jaune, Raven and Vernal, much to the latters attempt at distaste of their selection. Collecting on the sofas to watch something. Oz’s not so subtle request for the Princess Bride appeared when Weiss had gotten him pencil crayons and had come down that morning to a stunning drawing of Westley and Buttercup having their kiss to surpass all kisses before on a pair of white horses. Weiss had quickly found a photo album to store the drawing in.

Garrett hated all of this, it was obvious to see Ozpin was happier. Even with the nightly adventures downstairs he was sleeping more. Down to only taking Refuge once a day when Garrett really pushed for it, even then the thief could see Ozpin steadily lowering the dose again. The teams Scrolls steadily filled with music, Ozpin had even sent Jaune a song once and when there was no backlash he sent another. Oz couldn’t tell what was going on in Jaune’s head but the young man was growing steadily less angry with the world. The teams played Ozpin’s songs while Grimm hunting even making videos of them dance-fighting to them when the Grimm pack was easy enough for them to play. This pleased Oz to no end, bringing them joy even when they were working.

Raven watched all of this unfold over the weeks and jealousy burned in her heart. She had never had this feeling of community in her home, that care for the ill and in turn the ill providing happiness to those around. She watched Oz’s strength return, slowly more of his songs had singing in them and the voice grew in strength with time.

Tonight Raven walked into Oz’s room, she knew she and Vernal would be leaving soon and had little time left to get her magic to evolve. It had been one of the commands her mother had bestowed upon her during the switch but Raven herself wanted Ozpin anyway. She hadn’t been lying to him when she told how his new found strength excited her. Now all she had to do was fill the space her brother had taken in his heart and she would finally have what she wanted.

She found him dozing on his back and stripped out of her clothes then prowled onto the bed. Oz’s eyes snapped open when he felt her straddle him. “What are you doing Raven?” He hissed and tried to sit up, while he no longer bled from his chest he was far from a hundred percent.

Raven pushed him back down into the bedding. “You’re healing, I felt it was time to try again.”

“One ‘no’ wasn’t good enough for you?” Ozpin wriggled he could see everything in the moonlight, those big full breasts and dark red eyes.

“That was when you could barely stand.” Raven ground her hips against him and smiled when she felt the response.

“Well No! There have another one, I am not interested.” Ozpin moved his arms trying to push her away only for her to grab them and pin them to the bed.

“As much fun as I recall you being in control was, I think I like you like this.” She wiggled her hips. “And you’re body is singing a very different tune then ‘no’.”

“It’s called biology Raven get out and look it up.” Oz glared at her as Raven scowled. “Leave before I decide to shout. I don’t think you want your daughter to see you like this. Don’t even think about trying to gag me, you can’t do that and pin me. I bet I could toss you even now. Leave, while you still have your dignity intact.”

Raven’s nails bit into his skin as she glared but she couldn’t find a way to fight him. She got up and grabbed her clothes, leaving without saying another word.
Ozpin let out a sigh of relief, he hadn’t expected that to go so easily. He took a big slow breath testing his chest, the ache was dull he pushed the duvet out of the way and took his erect member in hand. He hadn’t done anything sexual since Ruby and Qrow left, not being able to breathe probably had rather nipped his sex drive in the butt. Still he was curious, he closed his eyes and imagined Ruby pregnant, how her round and soft her belly would be. He started to stroke himself as he imagined Qrow with them, to hold and kiss while they shared Ruby together. His fantasy grew more detailed as his breathing deepened till he came into his hand. Oz grinned up at the ceiling, his chest did still hurt but not so much to kill pleasure anymore. Well he had something to add to his morning routine now, that alone made him feel much more like himself then he had in a very long time.

The wind howled as Ruby got up, thankfully it was not to be sick. She was trying to get her corset on before Qrow woke up, over the last few weeks she had been hiding from him. Going to bed before him, sleeping on her front so he couldn’t touch her belly. She had lost some of the definition of her abdomen the baby bump was getting too obvious to ignore. They were still aways from the tribe and the storm that had hit once they made it through the pass was slowing them down considerably.

With a huff she gave up and stuffed the item back into her bag. She sniffed trying to clear the tears from her eyes. She cupped her belly, cradling the little life within her, still not completely convinced that she wasn’t just getting fat. Thankfully there was an upside turning what should have been a three week trip into a five week. Even Grimm were seeking out shelter and she could layer up and hide her belly from Qrow without him noticing or so she thought.

Hands snuck around to hold her belly, as Qrow kissed her neck. “Come back to bed. Listen to that storm, I’ll check on the horses in a bit but you shouldn’t go out.”

“Shouldn’t we get going?” Ruby asked as the wind raised up to a roar.

“No!” Hawk called from outside. “This is the best shelter we can get around here. This storm is terrible, so stay put!”

“You heard her. Come back to bed.” Qrow moved away laying back down and patting the bedroll.

Ruby sighed snuggled back up beside him, the wind made it impossible to sleep. So she lay with her head on Qrow’s chest as he pet up and down her back with a finger. Her mind turned back to her baby, was she finally coming to terms that life other then her own existed inside her? Perhaps but she couldn’t find her voice to say anything.

They arrived two weeks later to the new Branwen camp, cold wet and tired. Falcon rushing out to meet them as soon as he heard horses enter the camp. Hawk accepted the hug and kisses from her husband but it was clear that the hard traveling had put her in a foul mood, even Qrow and Ruby agreed with her wanting nothing more than a warm place to sleep.

Qrow watched Ruby undress in their room of the family tent. His gaze was drawn to the now obvious baby bump, fear made his stomach turn. She was too far along to safely abort it now, if only she had listened to him all those weeks ago, but even now she was trying to hide it from him. “Ruby, please stop this. I've know for a long time now.”

Ruby sat on the bed, a few tears escaping her eyes. “I'm sorry, I just don't know what to do. I know
you don't want a baby but…” She held her belly carefully and shivered. “I think I… I think I do want it.”

“Ohh love.” Qrow moved over and wrapped his arms around her. “It's your body love, I can't tell you what to do with it. Now really is a bad time to have a kid, but we'll make it work if you're sure you want it. I’ll admit I haven't been thinking too much on what to do but I think now’s a better time to discuss it,”

Ruby nodded more tears collecting in her eyes. “I’m just so confused. I still don’t understand why it happened.”

“I haven’t figured that out either yet.” Qrow said and got up walking to Ruby’s pack and pulling out the little bottle of birth control pills. The little white pills had finally failed them, he checked the expiry, they were supposed to be good for another year. He popped the cap open and sniffed. “Hmm.”

“What?” Ruby asked.

“Something just seems off.” Qrow said, her pills usually had less of a scent to them. Dread started to form in his stomach, he tipped one out and tossed it in his mouth. Biting down on it then moving the powder onto his tongue. His eyes widened when everything clicked. “Ohh I’m going to KILL THAT BITCH!”

Ruby almost fainted with the rage pouring through the bond. “What?”

“Their placebos! Sugar pills! FAKEs! You take them whole so you wouldn’t have noticed!” Qrow shoved the bottle into her hands.

She put one of the pills in her mouth and crunched it too. Sugar was all she tasted. Her hands flew to her belly, it hadn’t been Qrow’s Semblance or the birth control. She hadn’t been on any, she had probably fallen pregnant within the first two weeks of their joining the tribe. She thought back to her first day, where she was pulled left and right throughout the camp. Ruby had left her things unattended, ANYONE could have changed the pills and she wouldn’t have noticed. “Oh Gods.” She whispered.

Qrow was already ripping is way out of their room and charging into his mothers. Hawk smiled at her son’s rage only for his fist to connect with her face, the side of the tent ripped open as Hawk tumbled head over heels into the snow. “You BITCH how dare you!”

Hawk rolled to her feet snow clinging to her clothes, any semblance of a smile falling from her face. “How dare I do what?”

“You swapped Ruby’s birth control! I know it was you! Everything you’ve asked her as been about her family history and her health.” Qrow advanced, a tent collapsed a few rows down from them courtesy of his Semblance.

“Well you weren’t doing your duty.” Hawk put a hand on her hip, smirking at him.

“That was none of your business! It should have been Ruby’s choice! You took that from her!” Qrow launched forward intent on killing his mother.

Falcon appeared before Hawk, his own Semblance flaring to life creating a perfect red orb around him and his wife. Qrow’s punch created a shockwave through it, but it held. Falcon spoke with a calm seriousness that sent shivers down Qrow’s spine. “Do not do this. Even you can not win against us both. Go back to your woman, she needs you right now and a fight within the family will
only cause everyone more harm.”

Qrow glared at his parents, but knew Falcon was right. His father’s shield was damn near impenetrable and he knew how to work with Hawk. He couldn’t help Ruby, protect their baby if his mother ran him through. He turned on his heel and stormed back into the tent, a quick look through his mother’s pack and he found Ruby’s real birth control. Ruby was already dressed and packing, feeling what he wanted. Qrow handed her the bottle and she packed it away as Qrow pulled out his Scroll and dialed for his sister.

“What is it Qrow?”

“Make a portal, we’re done here.” Qrow barely managed to control the growl in his voice.

“You and me both.” Raven hung up and a moment later the portal opened, Vernal stepping through.

“Where’s Hawk?” The younger woman asked, barely able to keep the sneer off her face in light of seeing Ruby’s ‘condition’.

“Don’t know, don’t fucking care! That manipulative bitch can rot in whatever hel karma has in store for her.” Ruby and Qrow grabbed their things and walked through. They came out into the living room, all their friends already gathered for what seemed to be a movie. Ozpin stared at them for a full second before leaping over the sofa and tackling Qrow in a hug.

“Have fun little brother.” Raven said and walked through her portal, its humming void closed up behind her.

Ozpin put Qrow down reaching up to touch him all over, he seemed to be in one piece. “You’re okay!”

“Only tried to kill mom once.” Qrow said with a sheepish smile.

Ruby was fighting the urge to shield her belly, her coat was hiding the bump for now.

Weiss bounded over and hugged her tight, her eyes widened as she felt a bump that Ruby hadn’t had before she left. She took a step back still holding Ruby by the shoulders. “Ruby! You’re-.”

Ruby shook her head and looked over to Oz who was still not convinced that Qrow was totally okay. His method of further analyzing had turned out to be kissing the smaller man senseless. They both looked so happy, all the tension and anger Qrow had carried with him over his mother’s actions seemed to melt away. Qrow moaned, standing on the tips of his toes holding on for dear life as Oz conducted his very thorough investigation.

“At least let me get your coat.” Weiss offered.

Ruby smiled and let Weiss help her out of it. “Thanks Weiss.”

Nora like everyone else was watching and just couldn’t hold it in, it was obvious as soon as Ruby took her coat off. “OH MY GODS! YOU’RE PREGNANT!”

Ozpin broke his kiss with Qrow and his head snapped over to look at Ruby so fast it was amazing he didn’t get whiplash. His eyes zeroed in on Ruby’s stomach as she blushed and held it with a hand. “Err… I… yeah.” Ruby’s voice was so quiet she might as well have been whispering.

Oz’s brain had stalled the little mouse running on wheel was exhausted as it tried to make the wheel turn. Pregnant… Ruby. Ruby was pregnant...
Raven had just finished replacing her pack in the tent she shared with Vernal. A bottle of white pills that turned out to be sugar lay on the ground, the bottle broken and the pills mostly dust by now. She should have known her mother would attempt something like this and it was clear from Qrow’s reaction over the Scroll that he had not long figured it out. Upon their return to the camp, Raven had sent Vernal to meet with Cinder. She hopped the Fall Maiden didn’t hurt her. As she set her bag down Hawk stormed in.

“What in the God’s name are you doing here Raven and where is Qrow?” Hawk slammed the table her daughter sat at, her bloody eye staring daggers.

Raven schooled her face and slowly stood. “Qrow took the opportunity and has returned to Mistral with Ruby. I take it, the fact that Qrow was so hell bent on getting out of here your little plan to keep him here didn’t work?”

“Oh my plan worked, I just hadn’t anticipated Qrow’s actions. There should have been more time but we had to return early. It seems my little bird did as you day take an opportunity when my back was turned and run away.”

Raven carefully placed her tin cup on the table, her mother’s mood was always unpredictable but it seemed that Qrow’s early departure had it swinging in a direction she wasn’t too keen on. Not if she wanted her own plans to pan out. “I think it’s a good thing he is gone, no more misfortune hanging over our people. Honesty I don’t know why you wanted him back in the first place. He is nothing but a bad luck charm for the tribe.”

Raven’s cup found itself a few yards away as Hawk swiped it off the table, leaning towards Raven. By this point many of the tribesmen had gathered around their leader and her daughter. Most of them were concerned and frankly shit scared, Hawk’s temper was renowned in the tribe, one did not cross the older woman. “You don’t understand a thing Raven, you have always been a disappointment to me. Barely thinking for yourself, always following orders, there is more to running this tribe and keeping our people alive then that! It’s what made Qrow better then you! He at least would think for himself, I wanted for him to be the next leader of this tribe. I knew he would be able to do it, he hides all that power inside him, just like his father. Unassuming but deadly, he would be a great leader, one that I would accept!”

“No! You can’t give the tribe to Qrow, he hates us, would sooner dissolve the tribe before taking its reins, you would be condemning us and I won’t allow it!” Raven’s own temper rose in challenge, her mother could not be serious about handing the tribe off to her brother.

“That’s what you think. Qrow left once before, then he returned to us and things were perfect again. Why did you have to go and ruin it?”

Tightening her grip on the blade Raven grit her teeth. “Does it matter? Fight me!” Before the words had even left her mouth Hawk’s own weapon had taken a swipe over Raven’s legs. Quickly she pulled up her Aura and twisted to avoid another slash.

Hawk advanced on her child, the sword at her side skimmed over stones and leaving a trail in the snow. The small measure of blood she had taken from her daughter dribbled onto the pristine white
ground. “Oh Raven, how naive you have become, you should know that bandits never fight fair and I am no exception.”

With heavy breaths Raven took a single step back and readied herself for the fight of her life. "Good thing then that I don't fight fair either. VERNAL!" She slashed her sword down, a portal opened from behind Raven as arrows flew through it and embed themselves in the wall Hawk was just standing in front of.

Hawk watched as several figures stepped out from her daughters Semblance, her eye widened every so slightly then burned with rage. “Raven, what have you done!”

The figure that stepped out with a bow in hand smiled, her black shoes clinking tiny black gems. “What she’s done is something you should all have, she chose the winning side. Oh I’m sorry I don’t believe we’ve met. My name is Cinder and it's time for you to fall.”

Chapter End Notes

*Announcer voice* And that fat mouse is going, it's going, one paw in front of the other. Keep at it little guy!
Ruby was pregnant... That meant baby.
*Announcer voice* Oh Oh there it goes the wheel is turning people, the wheel is turning!
Ruby, pregnant, baby... Father he was gonna be a dad!
...
...
...
Wait. Ruby was pregnant, when and how did that happen?
...
Shit.
.... I'm gonna be a dad.
*Announcer voice* And the poor fat mouse just fell over! Looks like this is the end fokes.
Oz's eyes rolled into the back of his head and he fainted.
Ardy: No that’s not how that scene is going to go, I just love the mouse in the wheel thing. It amuses me greatly.
Kry: ARDY! Happy birthday hun <3 and thank you everyone for all the continued support. Thank you too: Mysty_Sinclair, darkvampirekisses, Sportsfangirl815, threeguesses, ClockRose, Baker1762 and Frapadingue70
In Which Ozpin is Smitten

Chapter Summary

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11_aneHVaz8
The Song of Beren and Luthien, Ozma's and Salem's story reminded me of it hence it's use here.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The mouse turned the wheel, cobwebs pulled tight and got caught as the mouse labored so hard. The silky spun web got caught in the gears and the mouse huffed and puffed. Moved it’s fat hind quarters and the wheel creaked and turned, then got moving into overdrive the mouse running for all it’s worth.

Ozpin blinked. Baby, Ruby had a baby… growing, inside her. Qrow’s baby. Bun in the oven… well developed bun in the oven. The mouse huffed running it’s little hinny off. Ozpin took a step towards Ruby, she looked pale and nervous. “Uhh.” The mouse had to pause and huff trying to get it’s breath back. It got back in the wheel and started to get the gears going again. “You’re a…”

Yang giggled. “I think you broke him sis.”

Ruby stuck her tongue out at her sister. “Oz I- Ack!”

The mouse had finally got everything running again and Ruby found herself picked up and held in a crushing hug, Oz’s face to her breasts. “You’re pregnant.” Oz was the one all but glowing as he held her tightly.

Ozpin purred. Honest to all the Gods, purred. Loudly, everyone could hear as he nuzzled Ruby’s breasts. “You’re pregnant.” His smile took over whole face his eyes squeezed shut tight, tears of joy collecting in the corners.

Qrow covered his mouth with a snort trying to stifle his giggles. Well that answered one very important question, Ozpin would be all for keeping the baby.

Ozpin sat down where he stood, putting Ruby down before him and shoving her shirt out of the way before her brain had computed what was going on. Ozpin pressed a BIG kiss to Ruby’s baby bump. “Hello, I am going to be your papa.” He peppered Ruby’s tummy with kisses. His hands came up and he petted over the bump, feeling the warmer skin. He just wanted to take her upstairs strip her and kiss her belly all over!

Ruby was not sure what to do, she hadn’t expected to get mauled with kisses. Ozpin’s brain had clearly jumped out of the back of his skull, he was cooing, petting and kissing. Utterly smitten with her baby.

Giggles were starting to gather in the room, even Jaune had to cover his mouth in a effort to be quiet. Ozpin seemed to have completely forgotten about them, he was utterly transfixed by Ruby’s tummy.
“You okay there Ruby, you seem a bit stuck.” Qrow snorted as Oz continued to pet and coo oblivious to the world.

Ruby giggled and reached out petting through Oz’s hair, much of her worry vanished in his embrace. She wasn’t sure if she’d had ever seen Ozpin so happy. “Just a little, but that’s okay.”

Yang walked over and hugged Ruby. “I take it this wasn’t planned?”

“Nope, Hawk switched my birth control for fakes. We only just figured it out and by then…” Ruby gestured at her tummy. “Well I want to keep it.”

Her sister’s hair flared with a familiar fire at that. “That bitch! Wait till I get my hands on her.”

‘Don't bother Yang I already punched her.” Qrow leaned back grimacing, remembering the look on their faces.

“Ooooh~ did you hit her hard? Did she bleed?”

Qrow only shook his head. “Hawk knows her stuff, she probably figured my reaction and was mostly ready for it. I would have gone at her again but Falcon’s Semblance is pretty much an unbreakable shield and by that point I just wanted to get us out of there before he used it to keep me there.”

That statement had Yang and Weiss looking over at him. "You're going to have to explain that one later. Right now I think Oz is desperate to get the two of you upstairs, if you know what I mean."

Qrow grinned and sauntered over, wrapping his arms around Oz. “Come on lover.”

Ozpin hugged Ruby tighter and purred at them both, unwilling to let go. Yang giggled. “I think you’re gonna need a crowbar.”

“Na, wouldn’t work. Better to let him get it out of his system.” Qrow said and lifted both Ruby and Oz. Catching on Oz cradled Ruby to him as the three of them slowly and carefully made their way upstairs.

Weiss heard a door shut and grinned. “Perhaps we should make ourselves scarce for a few hours, something tells me even earbuds won’t be enough today.”

Nora climbed onto Ren’s back and beamed. “Where's the fun in that!”

Jaune who had started smiling a little more lately went bright red at the first pleasured scream from upstairs and cleared his throat. “Yeah that . . . sounds like a good idea.”

“Well I’m sure there will be a couple more bounties to take up, I know I could use some dough since it looks like little tiny baby clothes are going to be on the agenda soon.” Yang’s eyes softened, she was going to be an auntie. “Come on before we all look like tomato boy over there.”

The group laughed as they grabbed their things and quickly vacated the house, hopefully there wouldn’t be any angry neighbors or noise complaints but Weiss wasn’t dismissing it.

Ozpin set Ruby gently down on their bed. Ohh it had been so long since she had been there, her silver hair fanned out in a halo. He pursed his lips for a moment and brushed a hand for a moment drawing the magic back into himself. Enjoying her red finally back were it belonged. “Sorry, I
should have done that before you left.”

“It’s okay, I liked it.” Ruby said as Ozpin’s hand skimmed down her blouse pulled the buttons undone.

Ozpin dipped to kiss her tummy again, tears collecting in his eyes again. “You’re pregnant.”

Qrow chuckled taking his time to work his way out of his clothes. “I don’t think I’ve ever seen you like this.”

“It’s our baby Qrow. How could I not be happy?” Ozpin asked. “I’ve always wanted children but never had the chance or the right people before.”

Ruby giggled and moved away from him backing up on the bed, pulling her clothes off as she went. She loved how Ozpin was watching her, he looked utterly smitten. Qrow walked over to Oz and pulled him into a long kiss, his hands resting over Oz’s shoulders before sliding down to remove Oz’s shirt and pants. Qrow stepped away their lips parting slowly as he held Oz in place. The avian man swallowed thickly as his dry hands traced down to mirrored scars under Oz’s pectorals. He felt Oz’s flinch as he traveled over the red marks. “Don’t you ever scare me like that again.”

“Even if I had died I would have just come back.” Ozpin said, he reached out brushing a finger through Qrow’s beard, along his neck. They were here, back together again and bare to each other. Gods he had missed this.

“We don’t know how long that takes, or what it really does to you.” Qrow said stepping back to Oz and resting his cheek on the bigger man’s chest. “I don’t want you to go through that, I don’t want to wonder when you’ll come back. You’re here now and you shouldn’t leave just because you know you’ll be back.”

“I-. I’m sorry. It’s been… hard while you both have been gone. I’ve often not been in.” Ozpin looked away and admitted softly. “Very good places.”

Ruby moved to the edge of the bed and took his hand. “Hey we are here now. All of us, plus one. Things will get better.”

Ozpin smiled turning to her his hand moving to her little baby bump again. “Plus one.” He dipped down and kissed her. “I missed you both so much I hardly know where to start.”

“Start with her, I’ve noticed a few changes to her already but I’m not gonna spoil the surprise.” Qrow said and moved onto the bed, flopping onto his side. “I just wanna watch for a bit. I miss just watching.”

Ozpin raised a brow but Ruby pulled him into the bed, moving back into the middle. She settled down and Oz’s couldn’t resist dipping down to kiss her stomach again. Ruby giggled. “What are you going to do when I get more of a bump?” Ozpin kissed all around it. “Be prepared for lots of petting.” He muttered kissing his way downward to play his tongue over the pearl of her sex.

Ruby knelt oh how she had missed that, staying with the tribe hadn’t exactly lent to going slow and taking one’s time. Oz kissed and licked like he had all the time in the world, fingers tracing over her sex to slowly ease into her to make her ready for him. Qrow moved over and kissed Ruby’s neck, a hand petting over her breasts. Ruby glowed under their attentions, they played and petted till Oz couldn’t wait anymore. Qrow withdrew as Oz kissed his way up their lovers body to her neck and asked. “Is there anything that you’ve found you don’t like anymore?”

“Just take it slow and gently, I have been feeling more sensitive.” Ruby said as Oz shifted to loom
over her.

“Alright.” A hand pet over her thigh before hooking behind her knee and lifting her up a bit for him, all the slow playing they did already had her stretched and wet for him. Oz's eyes widened as he felt the changes Qrow had mentioned, she was tighter giving an almost swollen feeling. Oz bit his lip and moaned long and deeply as he slowly pushed into her. Ruby grabbed at him gasping as her body let him in, she pulled him down and tucked her head to his neck as he paused sheathed in her.

Qrow smirked watching the two cling to each other as he started to stroke his erection lazily. Oz drew away to look down upon her, it had been so long since they had a chance to be together. He loved the flush of her skin, how her breath made her breasts heave, his eyes flowed down over her body to that little bump. He shifted to brace himself on an arm, his free hand moved down to pet her stomach again. Ruby giggled and Oz rocked his hips, her eyes went wide and she gasped.

Ozpin bit his lip again, if this was what it felt like in the middle of her pregnancy. What would sex feel like as she got further along? “I think I have a new favourite.” Oz said as he rocked his hips again, watching Ruby gasp feeling her walls contract around him.

Qrow smirked. “Pregnant sex?”

Oz nodded moving in a slow deep rhythms, undulating his hips in smooth motions that had Ruby mewing. “The idea always really appealed but the doing excesses my imagination.” She was so wet already that they could hear it with each thrust.

“Hmm, you never mentioned it.” Qrow mused, he was also watching Ruby, her expressions as Ozpin pushed as deep as he could go were always priceless. He never would get quite that same overwhelmed expression of bliss.

“Never thought it would happen, or at least it was never an appropriate fantasy to voice. Now however.” Oz moved his hand to lift her hips and tested a longer stroke.

“Ahh!” Ruby squeezed her eyes shut, every little thing he did felt so much more intense then normal, she was only a couple weeks into her second trimester! Oz was in just as much in heaven, pushing for a little more, pressing a little bit more of his weight into his strokes. Ruby’s pleasured wails filled the room. Ozpin slowed down he didn’t have Lydia’s gifts and this was new so he decided on being careful. “You okay?”

Their petite lover took a few seconds to catch her breath and she wiggled testing the feel of everything. “Can I top for a bit?”

“As you wish.” Ozpin said and earned a giggle from Ruby. He withdrew and laid down as Ruby straddled him and slowly eased herself back down onto him. Ruby’s hands went to her belly as she took a slow deep breath as he filled her again. Oz cupped them, covering her hands completely and her stomach… their baby. Who sired it meant next to nothing to Oz, it was their baby. His big hands traveled over her hips to her behind feeling how she a put on a little bit of weight, as his eyes roamed up her body the glow to her skin. He imagined how her breasts would change as they grew fuller to accommodate milk. Oz took a large shaky breath as he imagined how she would change, he so longed to see it.

Ruby watched Oz seeing how entranced he was, slowly she rolled her hips. Her belly dipping forward with every little shift, she moved her hands to Oz’s chest and his returned to her baby bump, cradling it she moved.

Qrow smiled at the two, both so wrapped up in what they were doing. He could see Oz really taking
his time to touch Ruby, to feel how she was changing. He didn’t really understand Ozpin’s utter awe of the baby. His guts twisted in worry, would she be safe from his Semblance? Would the baby be? He had never entrained the idea of having a baby, there was just so many things that could go wrong. Things that could kill mother and child both, it was arguably the most dangerous thing a woman, who wasn’t fighting Grimm could face. Having a child. Yet here was Ruby both a Huntress AND pregnant. He didn’t know the first thing about raising a kid, sure he had helped Taiyang rarely, but his own upbringing was useless to go off.

The red eyed man watched as Oz gently added to the actions, his breath deepening as he pressed his hips up in time with Ruby’s movements the pleasure slowing building in them both. Qrow thought it was just so easy to for Oz to love, he knew what to do. He already accepted and loved the baby after knowing about it for less than half an hour. He was willing to bet Oz has raised other children, someone that had been around for so long had to have some experience. Maybe it would be best just to follow Oz’s example.

Sweat gathered on Ruby’s skin as she moaned finally reaching that blissful moment of completion. Ozpin’s hands returned to her full hips and he followed her over, she was so wet and tight, it was the purest pleasure to be within her. His chest ached but it was a slight sensation as he looked up into those shining silver eyes, Ruby smiled at him and giggled. She leaned down and tilted her head, the kiss was long and slow. Oz’s hands moving, one into her hair the other spanning over the back of her hips. He could feel her stomach press into his, the feeling made him purr. Ruby withdrew slightly, Oz leaned up and brushed his nose against her in a little esko kiss. “We’re gonna have a baby. All of us.”

Ruby giggled. “That still sinking in?”

Ozpin shrugged and smiled. “I’m just happy, it’s just… wonderful. Sure is going to complicate things but wonderful.”

“That’s an understatement.” Qrow said rolling onto his front, he liked watching but his mind was so full of worry that it was hard to feel any pleasure in it.

Ruby looked over to him, she could feel his unease bubbling over the bond. She raised a brow at Oz who nodded in understanding, he knew Qrow. Ruby eased herself off and him and moved to lay on her side, she was sore and sticky but had no pressing desire to rid herself of either feeling just yet.

Ozpin moved to blanket Qrow, hovering over him pressed a kiss to the smaller man’s shoulder. “What’s is wrong?”

Qrow closed his eyes as Oz settled, ahhh to be the one being shielded again. He had almost forgotten how nice that felt. Ozpin kept kissing his shoulders and back, it was relaxing, arousal slowly started to stir in his loins again. “It just… shouldn’t have happened, this way I mean. This was my moms doing and now we have to worry about a baby on top of everything else. We don’t know when Cinder will strike, if Ruby will be able to fight and what about her training? Or my Semblance, babies can kill their mothers when things go wrong and if something happened to Ruby because of my child… Because of me.” Qrow buried his head in the pillow and mumbled. “I have no idea what I would do.”

Ozpin shifted and wrapped his arms around Qrow, letting most of his weight rest on him but not all. Qrow let out a small happy sigh at the feeling. “You’re Semblance hasn’t harmed Ruby directly in a long time. I doubt it would harm it’s own offspring.”

“It did when she housed me.” Qrow mumbled.
“She was not pregnant then. A part of you was not a part of her at that time. Your Semblance was not responsible for the baby.” Ozpin said nuzzling Qrow’s neck.

“We still don’t know how it works though, I can amp it easily now but to make it go away…” Qrow shrank in on himself. “I’m a danger to both them by just being around. I mean Summer… Ash, for all we know it could have been my fault.”

“Qrow…” Ozpin sighed deeply. “What is really bothering you? Summer always had trouble conceiving, something Ruby clearly does not have. Were I to guess, I’d say Ruby will have a much easier time baring her child then her mother did. The riskiest period has already passed without incident.”

“I just…”

“Don’t know what to do. What to feel.” Ruby said, she was seeking him through their bond but all she could understand was a jumble of worry, guilt and fear.

Qrow silently burrowed into the pillow not saying a word.

“We’ll all have to learn. I’ve cared for toddlers but not newborns, but we’ll figure it out.” Ozpin said.

“How do I figure out when I’ve got nothing to draw from?” Qrow mumbled. “I never came around when Ruby and Yang were born, I was too dangerous to them. I don’t know anything about babies or raising anything. They want to learn how to use a scythe great, but what about when they cry? When they can’t even form words? What do you do?”

Ozpin pursed his lips, having now met Hawk and Falcon he had an idea of what this was really coming from. “Qrow, I know I’ve asked before and you’ve always been selective in what you’ve said. But how were you raised?”

Ruby was floored with the sudden level of pain, fear a different fear then before the sinking feeling of just waiting to hide. She zipped rose petal burst downstairs and grabbed the rose from her bag and returned. Sending all of it to Ozpin, who lacked the bonds help.

Oz froze as he felt it, that feeling of never being good enough. Being blamed for everything that went wrong, always being pushed to do better… and the terror of what happened when he failed. “Oh Qrow…” Memories of Hawk and Falcon being angry with him, how why the expectations of him were. Being taught to fight before he and Raven had really even figured out walking. “That’s no childhood, now I understand.” He kissed Qrow’s neck and hugged him tight, Ruby passed on just how safe that made Qrow feel. “It won’t be like that for our baby. The fact that you worry about this is proof enough that you are different from them, that you want to try and be a decent father. You can do what you want and if you ever don’t know if something is okay you can just ask. It will be okay.”

“I just don’t know how to be. I know my mother and father were shitty parents.” Qrow said, finally turning his head out of the pillow.

“You’ll figure it out. You had Summer and Taiyang to look up too. Plus don’t forget, it won’t be just us. I am willing to bet Ren and Nora will be all over this child. Yang helped with Ruby as is my understanding. Jaune has seven sisters, I am sure he’ll have suggestions for you.” Ozpin said.

Qrow groaned. “ Asking Jaune… how to be a dad. I think my pride just took a death blow.”

Ruby giggled. “Oh I’m sure it will live.”
"We all have new things to learn, fear that we may fail or make mistakes now and then is normal and you don’t have to do it alone. We will all be with you.” Ozpin said and returned to kissing Qrow’s neck and shoulders. “Feeling better now?”

Qrow purred and wiggled. “Yeah, I get the feeling you’ve got ideas for right now.”

“Maybe~ with how much you are enjoying being held. Would you up to Bottoming a bit? Or maybe go as far as subbing?” Ozpin asked hope tinting his voice.

“I think I could sub.” Qrow snuggled down into the bed.

Ozpin reached into the bedside table and pulled out Qrow’s collar, the smaller man lifted his head and Oz wrapped the soft leather around his neck. Ozpin kissed Qrow’s neck. “Shall we play?”

“Yes please Master.”

Ruby stood looking out of the window to the city below them and farther out to the horizon. Her hands moved to her belly and she petted over it. Ozpin’s joy was infectious, she felt happier and safer for her and their baby then she had in a very long time. The silver eyed woman heard movement from the bed and larger hands rested over hers. “Couldn’t rest?” Ozpin asked.

She turned and rested her cheek on his chest. “No. I’m just happy and wanted to look out.” She picked up a Scroll that had been left on the window. “You’ve been singing again.”

“It was something to do while I was healing.” Ozpin said.

“Hmm. Sing a song for me. Our baby needs to get caught up on what your voice sounds like.” Ruby said.

Ozpin chuckled then hummed thoughtfully, then started to sing in a low rumble.

:The leaves were long, the grass was green,
The hemlock-umbels tall and fair,
And in the glade a light was seen
Of stars in shadow shimmering.
Tinúviel was dancing there
To music of a pipe unseen,
And light of stars was in her hair,
And in her raiment glimmering.

There Beren came from mountains cold,
And lost he wandered under leaves,
And where the Elven-river rolled
He walked alone and sorrowing.
He peered between the hemlock-leaves
And saw in wonder flowers of gold
Upon her mantle and her sleeves,
And her hair like shadow following.

Enchantment healed his weary feet
That over hills were doomed to roam;
And forth he hastened, strong and fleet,
And grasped at moonbeams glistening.
Through woven woods in Elvenhome
She lightly fled on dancing feet,
And left him lonely still to roam
In the silent forest listening.

He heard there oft the flying sound
Of feet as light as linden-leaves,
Or music welling underground,
In hidden hollows quavering.
Now withered lay the hemlock-sheaves,
And one by one with sighing sound
Whispering fell the beachen leaves
In the wintry woodland wavering.

He sought her ever, wandering far
Where leaves of years were thickly strewn,
By light of moon and ray of star
In frosty heavens shivering.
Her mantle glinted in the moon,
As on a hill-top high and far
She danced, and at her feet was strewn
A mist of silver quivering.

When winter passed, she came again,
And her song released the sudden spring,
Like rising lark, and falling rain,
And melting water bubbling.
He saw the elven-flowers spring
About her feet, and healed again
He longed by her to dance and sing
Upon the grass untroubling.

Again she fled, but swift he came.
Tinúviel! Tinúviel!
He called her by her elvish name;
And there she halted listening.
One moment stood she, and a spell
His voice laid on her: Beren came,
And doom fell on Tinúviel
That in his arms lay glistening.

As Beren looked into her eyes
Within the shadows of her hair,
The trembling starlight of the skies
He saw there mirrored shimmering.
Tinúviel the elven-fair,
Immortal maiden elven-wise,
About him cast her shadowy hair
And arms like silver glimmering.

Long was the way that fate them bore,
O'er stony mountains cold and grey,
Through halls of ireon and darkling door,
And woods of nightshade morrowless.
The Sundering Seas between them lay,
And yet at last they met once more,
And long ago they passed away
In the forest singing sorrowless:

Qrow stirred upon the song’s completion. Nude like his lovers he came to them by the window and wove an arm around Oz’s and leaned his head on Oz’s shoulder. “I haven’t heard that one before.”

“It’s just lingering in my mind.” Ozpin said. “Come we should eat. I am not near done with either of you. I’ve three months to make up for.”

Ruby giggled and liked the sound of that, she led the way grabbing a housecoat as she went.

Bellows and screams filled the late evening air as Ren behead the Grimm that stole his family from him. The Nuckelavee gave once last gravely howl before its imp body slumped over the dead horse. Wisps of blackened flesh and shadow were whispered away on the wind and Ren watched as the Grimm finally departed, defeated. A wave of emotion washed over him as Nora ran over and kissed him on the cheek, it was finally over and the closure was welcoming.

With the help of Jaune, Yang and Weiss they had defeated the Grimm with ease and made their way back to the city. Picking up the bounty the group decided they stank of Grimm and sweat. Rather then returning to the house and taking turns in the limited bathrooms they headed to one of the bathhouses and settled in a large pool to soak their bruises.

The water was hot and steam rose into the air, lending to the humidity. “We should probably talk about the elephant in the room.” Jaune said as they all relaxed.

“What?” Weiss asked, throwing her long ponytail over her shoulder.

“The baby of course!” Nora beamed bouncing on the spot.

“We do need to plan. We came to Mistral to find Cinder, to protect Haven.” Ren said. “Ruby won’t
be able to fight soon, at least not without putting herself at great risk. We also need to think about what to do when it’s born.”

“Well we don’t know when Cinder is going to attack” Weiss said. “If Ruby gives birth before then we can all take turns helping her with it.”

“And after?” Yang frowned. “I wonder if it’s a boy or a girl. Or twins, Raven and Qrow are twins and Qrow is the dad.” She paled. “My Dad’s gonna kill us! He’s gonna become a grandfather and we can’t even tell him!”

“We could try a letter.” Weiss said reaching out to pet Yang’s hair. Had anyone other then her teammate dared to touch the golden locks, they would surely lose their hands. Thankfully with it being Weiss it seemed to only calmed down the other girl.

“I hope it’s a girl!” Nora said. “I’ve always wanted a little sister!”

“I know what to do with a girl at least.” Jaune said thinking back on his many sisters.

“A niece…” Yang sighed happily. “That would be amazing.”

Weiss looked between them and giggled, all smitten with the idea of a baby girl. “Well at least Raven is gone, we don’t have to worry about her and the bandits anymore.”

Yang’s expression turned sour. ‘Did you ‘have’ to bring them up?’

“Sorry.” Weiss paled a little, realizing that the happy vibe the group had going grew somber with her words.

Jaune’s saddened eyes turned down into the water. ‘No, Weiss is right. While we have so much to be happy about, Ozpin getting better and Ruby’s pregnancy we should really talk about what happened. I mean I know none of us killed those people but it seemed like for every one that we stopped there was a bandit behind us finishing the job.’

“I feel we have much to learn still. Perhaps it would have been better had we never agreed to aid them in the first place but with Ruby and Qrow as hostages until the matter was resolved and the Spring maiden now protected, what more can be done?” Ren placed a hand on Jaune’s shoulder. “We did not kill those people and I don’t think any of us would have chosen to do so, that is the difference between us and them. We are huntsmen but we must also remember that not everything is as black and white as we would want it to be. The world is filled with more grey and sometimes to protect yourself and those you care about, there will be opposition.”

Nora sidled up to her love. ‘It’s how we treat that which makes us better people.’

‘Yeah, I guess you’re right. I just wish we hadn’t had to hurt those people.’

Weiss curled up to Yang and inhaled the steamy air. ‘I think all we can do now is be better next time, make better choices and possibly save more then we destroy.’

Everyone hummed in agreement and the subject was dropped, letting back in for more conversation about their youngest member and her unborn baby.
Ozpin stared up at the ceiling, night had fallen. Qrow and Ruby were cuddling together and Oz slipped from their warm embrace. He dressed silently and pulled the needle and Refuge from its hiding place in the drawer. The haunted man turned again and looked over to Ruby, Qrow’s hand rested on her belly, protectively. Oz bit his lip, she was pregnant, they were going to be parents, the vision of a child little girl with dark hair and silver eyes beaming back up at him was foremost in his mind. He looked down to the needle and drug, she would need all of them at their peak. Ozpin spun on his heel and started out of the house.

“What are you doing?” Garrett asked as Ozpin swept his cloak onto his shoulders.

Ozpin ignored the Awakened Soul, instead running up the street. Rain pouring down on him as he ran but he continued despite the cold water, up and up he went coming to the high class district. Weaving his way down roads he knew very well, he came upon a ornate house not large but very lavish, a heaven should he ever have need of it. He did not give himself time to doubt his actions, he raced up to the door. Only then did Garrett feel just where Ozpin had taken them and panicked. “NO!” Garrett reached out but his hand only went through the other man, he couldn’t stop Oz.

The door opened as he came to it and Lydia in a blue nightgown looked upon him. He was sodden to the bone, furthermore his mind was open to her. Showing her _everything_. Her face was carefully blank as she extended a hand without a word.

Oz’s hand shook as he pulled the needle and Refuge from his pocket.

“No! Let’s go, we don’t need her!” Garrett reached out and grabbed Oz’s wrist.

“Leave Awakened Soul, you have no place here.” Lydia looked him straight in the eye.

Garrett jumped away in shock that she could see him. “You can’t make me do a damn thing bit-.”

Lydia placed a hand on Oz’s chest and not unlike Ruby had once done. Reached into Oz’s collective soul but unlike Ruby she knew what she was doing. Garrett felt the yanking like a chain and was pulled back in, vanishing as he was put back in his place. Lydia removed her hand and offered it again, this time with a small smile. Ozpin put the needle and Refuge into it, then dipped his head low to her. “Lydia please, I think I need help.”

Chapter End Notes

Kry: First off thank you too: darkvampirekisses, Mysty_Sinclair, Londie, Sportsfangirl815, Katherine Hassun, Frapadingue70 and threeguesses for all your comments!
Ardy: Secondly, as this has already come up a few times. Yes, what Volume 6 episode 3 revealed WILL be canon for Emerald Rose. I knew RT had a lot in store for us regarding Ozpin/Ozma and planned out Emerald Rose accordingly. Nothing in the old chapters will change, I was more then ready for this. That said, awesome episode eh?
Chapter Summary

Ardy: FYI this chapter as some very unpleasant themes and imagery, plus a suicide.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Boots leaned against each other, water dripped off of black cloak. A shirt lay in a pool of water upon the hardwood floor, a fire burned brightly in the hearth casting shadows upon the fine room. The couch was large, the sitting table empty.

Lydia sat silently fingers tipped with long nails stroking through black hair. She casually looked over to the thief glaring at her standing by the fireplace. She reached out and wrapped an arm around Ozpin who laid silently upon her couch, his head in her lap. The fluttering of his thoughts were tinged with weariness. “Make him go away please.”

Lydia smiled sadly, it was so rare that Ozpin just thought at her. “I am not sure I can.”

“You made him leave before.” Oz just stared into the fire, letting the orange flames blot his vision, his eyes damp and heavy.

“To make him go away like you want… Ruby’s bond to you allowed her to look through your soul. Are you sure you want me to do the same thing?” Lydia asked as Ozpin turned to lay on his back.

“I love you, I trust you. You are a Vessel Soul like Ruby, you can help I know you can. Please, I want to be alone in my own head again.”

Lydia sighed, he was so desperate, even if she had not been telepathic she wouldn’t have missed the gut wrenching agony that hid behind those copper eyes. Slowly she set a hand on his chest while the other drew soothing patterns through his hair. “Alright.” The old woman closed her eyes and called on her Aura, it was blue bright and light like the sky on a clear day. Ozpin’s rose under her fingers, green grass to her sky blue. With a gentleness that Ruby lacked Lydia eased her Aura inward seeking out Garrett.

“CRONES!” Garrett yelled dragging a girl no older than seven behind him by the hair. “I have your payment.” Her cries of pain only increased in volume as he tossed the girl forward and she rolled in the mud coming to a stop before a house built upon chicken feet.

A rattly wood door opened with a creak, a… ‘woman’ to use the term loosely waddled out. She was fat in the extreme, a apron stained in a number of unseemly things stretched over her lower half. Her skin was red and blotchy, rope held her breasts against her body. Upon her head was a basket, tied down into a cowl. “The thief returns sisters.” The stairs creaked under her mass, she walked over and grabbed the girl by the hair. She screamed her silver eyes flashing. “Even brought supper!”

A flock of ravens flew into the clearing and transformed into the Weavess. Opposite to her elder
sister she was thin and dressed in a ruined robe with a long red cap upon her head. Her one eye was infested with an insects nest, flies and maggots crawling in and out of it. “I sense much anger in this one. Such beautiful pain and war.”

Lastly the Whispess walked out of the bog, a big white sack stained with blood hanging heavy before her with thin child’s legs hanging out of it. A hood hid her features as did a skirt and tunic that hid her body. She came up and touched Garrett with long monstrous hands. “The rest of the payment.”

Garrett pulled a knife out and reached up to his ear, with a quick slice he cut it off and offered it to the Whispess. “Make him forget, forget Salem, forget the Brother’s Gods, make him forget his duty. He can keep the Maidens as I want that power. Make him forget everything before the point our souls merged. I want to control all of it. When I changed things I nearly created a paradox, destroy anything that puts that me at risk. Create for me a soul, a personality that he won’t even realize is not his own.”

“And when the Brother Gods return?” The Weavess asked approaching slowly.

“They get to meet the Keeper. I am so looking forward to showing them just what happens when they abandon their people. That we don’t need them anymore. I want to stand before the Elder Brother and show him what I’ve turned his Champion into. That HIS Omza is dead. I want to see his rage, I want to see him try and do battle with me only to be set against the Sentients. I’ll kill the Brother Gods, I’ll feed their souls to Rymrgand.” Garrett smirked. “And when O’Dimm comes to collect his prize he’ll find I already belong to Berath. Then they will have to war for my soul or let me live. I may even strike a deal with Rymrgand so when something does kill me he’ll tear this Old Soul to bits so no one can get it. I’ll win in the end. I always do.”

The Brewess laughed her fat mass jiggling. “Oh I like him sister.” She swatted her behind. “Too bad he’s not the type to play.”

“Let’s get on with this. Dinner needs to cook.” The Weavess reached up and touched Garrett’s temple.

The three crones, the three sisters and daughters of the murdered Lady of the Wood. Gathered around the corrupted soul and obeyed it’s whims.

Lydia started back into awareness still saturated in Garrett’s soul, it clung to her like a oozing swamp of despair and anger. This was worse then she had thought, just how much was the Awakened Soul in control? Just what was it doing? Just how much had it taken from Ozpin… who was Ozma?

She drove back in and tried to seek out the soul of Garrett beyond the memories, driving her soul past veils of shadow that hid him from her.

“Get out!”

Lydia was sent reeling, they seemed to be existing in a void filled with mirrors of memories. Garrett was as tall as Ozpin, with white hair but his eyes were grey. His red trench coat wove around him in an invisible air. “I won’t let you wreck everything I’ve been working for.”

“You should accept that you are dead, undo what you have done!” Lydia said.

The distorted image of Oz laughed loudly, his body bent over with maniacal laughter. “I’ve already won. Don’t you see, I’ve done what no one else could, I have destroyed who he was. All he
has left his what I give him, all he knows is five centuries of pain, pain that I’VE GIVEN HIM. I made him be alone, he’s mine to break and fix as I see fit. You may be a Vesseled Soul, but you can’t save him. You can’t undo what I’ve done.” Garrett drew his claymore. “Leave before I carve your soul out of your corpse.”

Lydia narrowed her eyes, he was right she couldn’t undo what he had done. However Vessel Souls were among the most powerful type of soul. She sent her Aura out in a wave of energy slamming into Garrett and binding him in rope, a flick of her fingers gagged him. Straight jackets appear around him immobilizing him, chains layered upon him. A mask that stole all his sense flowed over his face. “You’re right, I can’t get rid of you, or undo what you’ve done. But I can give MY Ozpin time to figure it out.”

Lydia finally withdrew calling her soul back into herself. Ozpin turned again pressing his face to her stomach and cried softly. She pet his hair, shared in his anguish over what had been done. She could feel his whole body shake in grief. “What did he do to me? Who were they? That girl…”

“I don’t know my love.” Lydia said, his thoughts were jumbled and confused. He was afraid of the things he didn’t know, horrified by what Garrett had done as there was no doubt that the crones had ate the girl. All the thoughts suddenly stopped on focused on one fact. Lydia sensed his change in direction and gasped in surprise. “Ruby’s pregnant.”

Ozpin nodded, thoughts of the new life that existed between them finally started calming him down. “Qrow’s.”

“But the war, the Relics…” Lydia made a snap decision. “If Ruby can bare it, I will look after it when you are all not able to. It will have a home with me while you and ours fight.” She could feel the rush of joy, thankfulness and denial all rolled into one.

Oz finally spoke aloud. “It’s my baby, I want to raise it.”

“I know you do.” Lydia went back to petting his hair. “I am just saying, if there comes a time when you, Qrow and Ruby have to make a choice for the safety of the child. Just know that it will have a home with me, just as you always will.”

Ozpin relaxed with a long sigh, just being around her helped him calm down. “Thank you, I know you mean well.”

The old woman smiled. “We should speak about the Refuge. To the extent of my knowledge it doesn’t have much of a withdraw. With your Aura restored, it will likely not bother you beyond perhaps insomnia for a while.”

“I’m so sorry for even taking it to begin with. I should have just come back to you, but I was…” Ozpin curled up again.

“Feeling alone, frustrated and angry. I have seen the memories, Garrett offered an escape. He does seem to be quite the honey tongued demon. He preyed upon the situation, upon you, from what I have seen he is a masterful manipulator. Even if it was all in your mind, it was him that guided you. It might have been your hand that held the needle but he was the one to push the trigger.” Lydia’s eyes flashed in anger. “I will not forget that anytime soon. I do not blame you for what happened. I only wish you had the bravery to come to me earlier.”

“I’m sorry.” Oz mumbled borrowing his face against her belly.

“Oz love. When we first met, you were a very broken young man. Angry at everything, lonely
when you weren’t angry and depressed to the point it was only by some miracle you hadn’t tried hanging yourself from a tree.” Lydia said, she was stunned by the memory that rose from Oz, it was like a river flowing now, his thoughts and memories washing over her.

 Ozpin stumbled through the brush as nude as a newborn babe and just as soft. His new limbs were not yet used to walking and he tripped often but he was starting to get the feeling and memory muscle back. He could only be glad that he had died in Vale. His Aura was protecting his skin as he came to a road not even half an hour from a town but the site that greeted him only made him sick. His old body, the last one had been kicked to the side and left to rot, no one had even had the decency to bury him. His dead soulless eyes were sunken into his skull, skin mottling around his face and hands, leaving blue and purple veins coursing over the body like roots of a tree. His limbs were twisted the wrong way, bent at impossible angles and cold dry mud caked them. Oz remembered how his body had come to be in this state and went green, he had been caught in a stampede that had been triggered by Grimm. His Aura had fizzled and crackled as the beasts swarmed his body, he’d tried to jump out of the way . . . memories were fading faster, why had he been unable to get away? He couldn’t remember. Why had the Grimm been stampeding? Why was he so sure it was the Grimm?

 His lack of clear memory and thoughts drove him to his knees as Oz heaved up leftover mucus and bile from his rebirth pool. He clutched at his stomach, he was so hungry. Why couldn’t he just stay dead for a little longer? He wiped his mouth off and stood and walked with wobbling steps to his corpse. He rolled it over and found his cane still held in a putrefied grip. The smell nearly made Oz retch again as he reached over and pulled the fingers holding the cane open. The sound of bones and skin breaking… Ozpin dived for the side and did dry heave. He held his nose shut with two fingers and yanked the cane free.

 Tears gathered in his eyes, his old body just lay there older but broken like a child’s toy and here he was the newer model, just waiting for the same thing to happen again. He sat on the ground listlessly and cried, he couldn’t keep doing this. He wasn’t strong enough. Oz pressed the heel of his hand to his temple, Gods what was he going to do? He had Lien but that meant going through the rotting clothing. He took a deep breath and crept over, his own eyes stared up at him greying in decomposition tiny bugs and larva flies crawled over the skin. Ozpin squeezed his own shut, and carefully patted down the old clothing of his trousers till he found his wallet. He pulled it gently out and flicked it a few times to get the rot off of it.

 Maggots fell off the leather and Oz put it down and carefully opened it with a finger. At least the Lien was intact. He closed it again and looked back at the body, it’s stomach had already burst insects crawling in and out of it. He covered his mouth again this time with an elbow. Those eyes stared at him, copper greying. He couldn’t just leave it like that.

 Ozpin moved to kneel and dug a small hole and put his cane and wallet in it. Then he stood walked over and then grabbed the ankles of his corpse and started to drag it deeper into the forest out of sight of the road. It had rained lightly recently so the ground was still soft, he just needed to find a place without roots.

 Eventually he did, he dropped the corpse and fell to his knees and started to dig in the mud. Dragging lumps of earth away and shoving them to the side as he dug a hole for his former body. His new soft hands grew slick with mud and grass as he spent hours making a deep enough space for the body. Even then it would be a shallow grave, an unmarked grave, tears threatened to overwhelm him again but he willed them back, blinking furiously. He walked over and grabbed the body by the shoulders and pulled it over into the grave it fell with a soft thump. Oz tried not to watch the maggots eating his old insides as he shoved dirt over the corpse. It began to rain again and by the time he was done he was freezing to the bone, coughing, sniffing and crying. He couldn’t do this
anymore!

Ozpin hauled himself to his feet and tried to run from his corpse, from the death that kept following him like a shadow but running was still outside of the abilities of the newborn body. He tripped and fell, the sky grew dark and his imagination played tricks on him, when the shadow’s danced he thought his corpse was walking after him. He scrambled up and raced back to the road as if it would keep him safe. Oz looked back into the forest but there was no body following him, no dead greying eyes trailing after him. He took a deep breath and unearthed his cane and wallet again.

Ozpin was losing track of how many times he had died in Vale. Every sound and noise, every turn of his head kept bringing the nightmare of being killed and reborn back. He needed away from here, though the first task would be to steal if not find some clothes.

Lydia had to cover her mouth as bile rose, she swallowed thickly as she finally emerged from the memories. “You came to Mistral… you came to me.”

Ozpin nodded against her stomach. “My memories are always in shambles when I get reborn. Something in me said that it was time for Mistral.”

“Then I am so glad you came. I could never read your memories unless you are focused on them or offering them to me. This is… horrible. To come into the world like that over and over, cold and alone.” Lydia said.

Oz just shrugged, he felt so much better for coming clean to Lydia. Fatigue was pulling at him, he wanted nothing more then just to sleep.

“Come to bed love.” Lydia said and shifted, Ozpin sat up and followed her as she stood and led the way to her room. In the darkness Oz could make out the big bed that hadn’t changed since he was last here. Lydia undressed him and brought him to bed with her. Tucking him in under the duvet and drawing his head to her breast. Ozpin looked up at his teacher, the first woman in this life to give a damn about him and held her gaze. “Thank you Lydia, for everything you do for me. I’m sorry to burden you with my life.”

“Nonsense Oz. I have never once felt burdened by your presence in my life.”

“Still, I am grateful to you. There is still so much I don’t know and I’m afraid of the things that I don’t know, afraid of the things I remember.” Oz closed his eyes as the sting of more tears threatened to overwhelm him. “But the thing that scares me the most is nothing other then myself.”

Lydia’s arms cradled the bigger man to her, her voice as soft as the clouds. “‘You are Ozpin, my love, only Ozpin and that’s all you ever need to be.’”

Ozpin sighed long and happy and snuggled tight around her, just happy to listen to the beat of her heart. When he was asleep which happened near instantly, Lydia picked her Scroll up and sent Ruby a quick text before setting it aside and petting Ozpin into a deep peaceful sleep.

Ruby woke with a shiver her back cold, which was odd. Generally she slept snuggled up to Qrow and Oz always found his way to spoon them both. Cold was something she never was when they were altogether. She yawned and stretched not feeling Oz’s comforting form behind her anymore. A
red blink was filling the dark room and she turned and grabbed her Scroll, the source of the blink, she opened it.

: Oz is with me, we need to talk. Come ASAP.:

“Qrow.” She said and sat up, pushing on his shoulder. “Wake up.”

“Shha?” Qrow sat up and looked around. “Where’s Oz?”

Ruby showed him her Scroll. “Come on, up.” She rolled away from him and grabbed her lazy day clothes.

“Can never just stay put can you Oz.” Qrow grumbled, he hated waking up while it was still dark outside.

“You can chastise him later. Lets go.”

The pair got dressed as little as they could get away with in the dark cold night and headed to Lydia’s. The door was unlocked when they got there and they let themselves in, the sound of spoon upon mug drew them to the kitchen were Lydia had four cups of peach lemon tea awaiting them. “Thank you for coming so quickly.” She looked to Ruby’s stomach and gave the younger woman a happy smile. “Congratulations.”

Ruby blushed. “Thank you, not planned but we are going to keep it.”

“I mentioned this to Oz, but I will say it here again. If you three find you can not keep it safe, that you must travel elsewhere. Know that your child will always have a place here. I will keep it from the war.” Lydia said and rubbed the corners of her eyes, she was just so tired. “We must speak about Ozpin.” She reached into her house coat pocket and withdrew the needle and vial of Refuge Ozpin had given her and set it on the counter between them.

“What the fuck Oz.” Qrow half fell onto a stool, he couldn’t believe Oz had gone that far.

“What is it?” Ruby asked sitting on a stool beside Qrow, reaching out to pet his arm.

“Refuge. A drug crafted from soul essence. Rare but far from impossible to make, it’s sometimes used in hospitals for the more… extreme cases. It enhances one’s Aura and gives the user a high. For those of weaker Aura it can create exhaustion and fatigue and for those of the stronger, insomnia is the frequent withdraw symptom. I believe Ozpin has been taking it for a few months now. He only came to me tonight with this.” Lydia said softly looking into her cup of tea. “Furthermore, I am very concerned about this Awakened Soul he bares. It has a great deal more control then it should. In most cases an Awakened Soul spends most of its time as just an observer, not normally able to physically interact with anything. It’s only in extreme stress when they step forth.”

“Like?” Qrow asked, he had a hard time pulling his gaze from the drug.

“Once I met a child, whose father beat him regularly. One night his father murdered his mother and then tried to do the same to the child. Only a soul Awakened within the child, an old warrior and killed his own father. Now the child and Awakened soul mostly live in harmony. It sometimes speaks through the child and helps in a fight but they work well together.” Lydia sipped her tea. “The soul within Oz is much stronger, I looked through his memories and soul. It’s very strange, a disconnect. He only remembers… selectively and most of those memories are of pain. Which does not make sense for someone to have lived so long and to only remember bad things. There is no joy in his memories.” She took a deep breath. “I believe this Garrett is controlling them. Crafting Oz’s memories to suite his own needs. This is why I have not included Ozpin in this conversation, I fear
the Awakened Soul would hear it. I believe it was this Garrett that pushed Oz to the Refuge, both of you were gone for a time and there was no one for Ozpin to turn to.” There was a hint of hurt in her voice.

Qrow leaned on the counter rubbing his eyes. “Yeah, I can see that. I’ve never liked Garrett, he always seemed shadily as fuck. His ‘helping’ only seemed to hurt Oz more.”

“I’ve bound Garrett as best as I am able. But it will not last. This is a battle that Ozpin will have to fight on his own but I felt you needed to know.” Lydia said.

“How did you bind him? Maybe I can do the same thing?” Ruby asked, latching onto the one piece of good news.

Lydia shook her head, her hair falling in a cascade of black shadows. “I’ve known Oz most of this life he presently holds. While we do not have a Recognition bond, we have a lesser bond. It is one of the reasons I have such an easy time reading his mind, when he chooses he sends thoughts to me directly. Beyond that, I am a much older soul then yours Ruby. You are near a newborn in that sense, you lack the sheer power to bind an Awakened Soul. I will maintain the binding but it will not last long when you inevitably leave Mistral.”

“And if my bond with him got stronger?” Ruby asked.

“It would not help with the energy requirement. Magic of this nature is no easy thing.” Lydia said.

Qrow finally spoke. “What about my soul? I’m already bonded to Ruby, maybe I could help?”

Lydia pursed her lips. “Perhaps, if I may?”

Qrow nodded and she walked around the island and placed a hand on Qrow’s chest. He thought her blue Aura to be beautiful, the way it washed over him in complete sincerity, after a moment she drew her hand away. “While your soul is not as old as Ozpin’s it is a Strong Soul. If Ruby can learn to bind, you would be able to provide the energy. Your magic is already well developed, you ooze soul essence already.”

“Huh?” Qrow very intelligently asked.

Lydia laughed lightly. “My dear Qrow. Muninn I should say. You are Muninn of this lifetime and every lifetime before. You are memory inbodied. For Oz you have traveled the world seeking for him, remembering for him. He unlocked your magic but it has been you that shapes it dear Muninn. Enhance sight to see, ears to hear beyond human, even your sense of smell to follow those who have gone before. This is all your magic that through your life you have shaped. Your soul matches your calling in the world. The two resonate and when you kill, when you hunt, when you walk through the rain on a moonless night. You gather soul essence to you dear Muninn, it’s taken decades but your magic still pools. I imagine you will learn to control it.”

“You know a lot about souls.” Qrow said.

Lydia smiled and shrugged. “My soul is both Vessel and much older then Ruby’s. One learns a thing or two.”

“So Ozpin is sleeping? Should we talk to him about this?” Ruby asked.

“Not right away, he loves that baby of yours and is seeking to right his wrongs on his own. I think he’ll manage it, he is extremely motivated. For now just keep an eye out for Garrett.” Lydia said, she hummed. “And try to work on your bond with him. If you can at least get to the telepathic stage I
imagine it will help nip Garrett in the butt when he does show.”

“That’ll try, though I still don’t really know how I managed that with Qrow.” Ruby said.

“It was likely made easier because you knew his soul name. Even after all these years I have no idea what Ozpin’s is or even if he has one. Not all souls do, from what I’ve gathered in my studies.” Lydia said then looked up. “He’s awake. You all should go home. You’ve a nice family developing, I find that can be the best medicine to any number of things.”

Ruby finished her tea as Ozpin came down the stairs, dressed just in slacks. He stopped stunned at the two in the kitchen his gaze flew to Lydia. “What did you tell them?”

“Everything they needed to know.” She replied.

Oz looked to the needle and vial on the table and took a step away. “I- I’m sorry.” He turned to flee up the stairs but Ruby zipped over and snatched his hand. She pressed it to her belly and everyone could see the tension fall away from Oz’s frame, his other hand coming up to cradle her tummy.

“Lydia explained about Garrett. We are not angry.” Ruby said letting his hand with a thumb. “I am glad you sought out help on your own.”

The tall man just looked to the floor for a long moment before seeking out Qrow who had been silent thus far. Red met copper and Qrow took a deep breath. “You’re not the only one who’s done dumb shit. I’d be a hypocrite to get pissed off about it. At least you didn’t need an intervention to break away from it.”

“Thank you.” Ozpin took a deep breath and he felt a bit better, at least they weren’t angry with him.

Qrow got up and gave the bigger man a hug. “Come on, let’s go home. Thank you for all your help Lydia.”

Lydia dipped her head to them. “Anytime.”

A few days later Ruby stood in their shared room and almost howled in frustration as she pulled at the lacing of her corset but it just wouldn’t close. She loved this corset she had been wearing it for almost two years, but now she couldn’t even lace it up. She put a hand on her expanding belly, she couldn’t feel anything but it was so obvious now. Tears gathered in her eyes, her body was changing every day… getting bigger, rounder, heavier. Ruby finally threw the corset across the room and started to cry. Ozpin heard the thud of it hitting the wall and knocked loudly on the door before coming in and sitting down beside her. He reached out and pulled her into his lap and started to pet up and down her back.

“What’s wrong?” Ozpin asked softly.

Ruby sniffed and tried to clear her eyes. “Stupid corset won’t fit anymore!”

“Ah, well. You’re body does have to make room for our baby. You’ll be able to wear it again after you give birth, it’s only for a few more months and you’ll be back to normal.” Ozpin kept
petting up and down her back.

“*I know, it’s just… overwhelming.*” Ruby said and snuggled into his side, wondering how he knew just want to say.

“I know, but we’re all here to help.” Ozpin kissed the crown of her head.

They heard a scuffled outside of the door then Yang burst through with Nora and Weiss on her heels. “We have decided to take you shopping! Come on, girls day out!”

Ruby giggled, her mood doing a turn around and bounced up off Ozpin’s lap and leapt to hug her sister. “Thank you!”

Ozpin chuckled and stood himself. “I’ll leave you girls to it then.” He left them to their giggling, very happy to have the help of the other women, especially Yang who seemed to have the best grip on her sisters new mood swings. He donned his boots and cloak and found himself walking through Mistral following the winding streets down. It was a nice day the wind blew through his hair, still he found himself in the lower levels. Thankfully this time of day meant the streets were rather empty as business boomed more in the evening and nocturnal hours. He came to a lurching stop when a black obelisk filled his vision. It’s three long pillars twisted together in a mockery of embrace. It’s black shined a dull grey, Ozpin stepped up to it and ran a hand over the engraved names. :Arien Smith: Alex Smith:

A memory swamped over Ozpin, much more intense then normal.

“This is so cool Alex!” Arien bounded down the road as they exited the train. Mistral of old spread out before them.

“I’m glad you like it.” Oz said moving to keep up with his little brother in all but blood.

“Are you gonna be a smith again? Like in your stories?” Arien spun and looked up at him.

“Yes.” Ozpin knelt and booped Arien on the nose. “And you are going to go to school, make friends and do all those things that one of your age should do.”

The young boy batted at Oz’s finger. “Stop it!” Though he giggled as Oz booped him again.

“You’ve just this cute little button nose, it just begs to be booped.” Ozpin said as Arien giggled. “Come on, I’ll give you a ride and we’ll find something to eat. I’m afraid you’ll have to stay with me today as I look for work.”

“Sweet!” Arien reached up and Oz scooped him up and set him over his shoulders.

Arien grabbed handfuls of Oz’s white hair as they walked up through the streets. “This is so cool! Look at all the people!”

Ozpin smiled as he walked up through Mistral with Arien on his shoulders. Unlike the young boy he scanned the crowds for any sign of sickness. He had a feeling they wouldn’t be able to outrun the death that had taken Vale over.

Several weeks later found Arien and Ozpin in a small rented flat above the blacksmith where Oz worked. Arien was bouncing about the kitchen as Oz cleaned up the breakfast dishes. “And today we’re gonna learn about the foundation of Mistral and the ancient tribes!” Arien said in a very hyper manner.
“I’m glad you’re having fun at school.” Ozpin set the last dish away to dry. “Now get your coat and shoes on or you’ll be late.”

Arien raced to the mud room grabbing his backpack as he went. Ozpin scanned the counter and realized a second too late that the customary brown bag lunch had not made it into the backpack. He grabbed it and raced after Arien caught him just as the child was getting ready to head out. “You’re missing your lunch.”

Arien stopped and let Oz put it in his backpack. “You know it’s only like a two minute walk away. I could come home for lunch.”

Ozpin kissed his temple. “That is hardly the point. You’re friends would miss you if you ran off to have lunch with me.”

“Oh yuck! No kisses I’m not two anymore!” Arien made a face. “I’m gonna get cooties on me.”

“Oh to be young.” Oz ruffled Arien’s hair. “Off you go, as you said it’s only two minutes away you don’t need me to walk with you anymore.”

“Right bye bye!” Arien zipped out of their flat and the store.

The memory shifted and Oz was working at a forge, simple horseshoes lined the tables when a teacher whom Ozpin did not recognize walked in with Arien who’s nose was running and he was coughing. Dread pooled in Oz’s stomach as he set his tools aside and raced over. He ignored the teacher and knelt before Arien, he grabbed the little boy’s arm and pushed up the long sleeve shirt he had chosen to wear. Little red dots covered it. “Ohh why didn’t you say something?”

“I didn’t want you to be angry.” Arien sniffed. “I’m I gonna end up like moma?”

Ozpin’s heart broke. “No, I’ll take care of you.” Oz gathered Arien into his arms while making an adjustment to his Aura making it form a thin barrier over his skin. He stood and addressed the teacher. “Thank you for bringing him. Have any of the other children shown signs yet?”

“Sadly yes, with so many refugees from Vale…” The teacher stopped herself and bowed her head. “I wish you luck.”

The memory shifted again to a horribly familiar scene. Arien had wasted away despite Oz’s best efforts, the red dots had turned black and covered his skin. The tiny boy was still and grey, Ozpin sat on a stool beside the body weeping. He looked down at his own hands, little red dots had started to form.

Ozpin lurched back into the present day and found himself leaning against the obelisk. He turned and slid down to sit hanging his head. Oz touched his throat, he could feel the noose around it. He wondered what had become of that body? Had animals eaten it? Or had it fallen to the ground to be consumed by the tree. He breathed deeply, a wave a grief at the life lost, that he had been unable to save. He looked down at his hands, battered and scared. Why had he been cursed? What had he done to earn this? He remembered bartering but everything was so fractured and jumbled in his head. His thoughts turned to when he had first started losing control to Garrett he had sought out assistance, very privately on his own time. A professor that specialized in the occult, Shakeslock and
moved from Vale a few months later. Ozpin had kept in contact and knew that Professor Shakeslock was here in Mistral. Maybe it was time for a visit.

The sun was sinking by the time Ozpin got to the little house, he knocked on the door to no answer. He glanced around quickly and shouldered it open breaking the lock with ease. Heading inside and calling out while he closed the door behind him. “Professor Shakeslock?!"

“Who’s there!” Came an old panicked voice from upstairs.

Ozpin rolled his eyes and glanced around the room, a thick layer of dust on the coat hangers and shoe rack had him growing with concern. He stepped into a side hall and quickly made his way up the creaking stairs. He came up to another landing, small as the first only six meters by four and the walls were lined with bookshelves. In the middle of the room stood a man small old, blind with a full beard and wrinkles. Around him was a pentagram with a large circle drawn in chalk. It took up most of the room and was surrounded by large candles grouped together at each point. Around it food and bottles with a foot chest with stacks of books upon it. “Professor Shakeslock?” Ozpin asked.

“Who the blazes--?! How’d you get in here?! Get out?! I don’t know nothing! Don’t wish to know anything. Understand?! No, no, no - out!” Professor Shakeslock turned and Oz nearly choked, blind eyes towards Ozpin speaking in a high panicked voice.

Oz coughed trying to clear his voice, he was so used to adopting his faked accent he sometimes forgot he did it. “Professor Shakeslock. It’s Ozpin, I’m not going to hurt you.”

“Liar!! Ozpin is dead! That demon sent you. I’m sure of it!” Professor Shakeslock pointed an old accusing finger in Ozpin’s direction, his shaking digit and perspiring face showing clear signs of his fear.

“What demon?” Oz asked, pulling off his backpack and setting it by the stairs.


“He didn’t send me, but he is why I’m here.” Ozpin said stepping towards the professor but staying out of the chalk circle pentagram. “I am Ozpin, I asked you to look into him. The Awakened Soul Garrett? Remember my curse with Master Mirror. Believe me now?”

Professor Shakeslock snatched his hand away and stepped back to the middle of the circle. “Hmph maybe.”

Oz sighed. “Look I came here because I need information. And you might be the only one man who has it.”

“I don’t believe you are Ozpin, he’s dead everyone knows that, but if you are cursed by that vile creature then there is no hope for you anymore. You need to leave.” Professor Shakeslock turned and walked away tucking his hands behind his back but staying within the circle.

“Look, fine. Just tell me what Ozpin wanted from you then.” Oz rubbed his temples, Gods save him from stubborn professors.
“I curse the day I set eyes on that man. He visited me in Vale one day, calling in on a old favor, even offered me Lien, all I had to do was find out who Gaunter O’Dimm is, and how to get rid of him. I agreed. Such matters are my speciality and I needed the Lien. I poured over countless tombs, delved into obscure incidents and analyzed folk legends.” He turned back to Oz, for he could hear the other man shift his weight. “I went so far as to move here, to be closer to Haven’s library. It's where I at last hit upon the mysterious entity’s trail.” He started to pace around the perimeter of the circle. “There are records of encounters for people forming contracts with that Demon, dating back thousands of years, in many cultures, under many names. But always as Evil incarnate. In this land we call him Gaunter O’Dimm. At times, Master Mirror, or the Man of Glass.” He stopped before Ozpin. “Unfortunately as I was deciphering the ancient scrawlings I went blind, my own curse, given like a gift by that monster. Yet I learned a great deal before it happened. For example, that he plays with his victims. And thrives on making pacts above all else.” Oz glanced up at the ceiling, noting it start to creak loudly dust calling from the wooden planks as the Professor continued. “Seemingly harmless contracts which drive their parties to madness. It’s all a game to him, the longer and riskier odds the more he plays and drives his victims to despair.”

“Know anything else about the man?” Ozpin asked briskly.

“Gaunter O’Dimm is no man! He is Evil! Evil which assumes various forms. Forget about him, or die, like all the others that fall for his transgression.” Professor Shakeslock shook his head.

“You’re alive.” Ozpin said, he was growing tired of the theatrics.

“Alive HA … I may be alive but I live in constant fear born of what I’ve learned about him.” He said tersely.

Oz tried again, “What’s with the surroundings? These runes - what do they mean?” the ceiling creaked again.

“They protect me. Here, Evil cannot touch me.” He raised his arms for a moment before dropping them.

“How do you know?” Ozpin gave the runes a closer look, to bad they didn’t mean much to him, the symbols were like nothing he had ever seen before.

“He told me himself. Paid me a visit once and a fascinating meeting that was. I was blind already but saw him clearly, as though he wanted the last thing I saw to be him. He smiled at me. Said he was honored I’d taken such an interest in him. He wished to thank me and explained he’d taken a similar interest in me.” He walked around the circle again while he spoke. “He drew the circle and said I’d be safe within it. His way of “repaying” me, you see…” He walked around the circle coming back to Ozpin.

“Ever tried to leave it?” Oz asked gesturing at the circle.

“If you’d heard how he said it, you’d be as certain as I am what leaving would bring. . . ” The Professor spoke softly.

Oz shook his head and got back to the topic at hand. “So Ozpin signed one of these packs with him?”

“Brilliant deduction. But have you guessed why? You must know he was the Headmaster of Beacon, he wanted for not in this life, but he told me what he bargained for in a past life. Or at least part of his story, Ozpin and O’Dimm -a meeting at a crossroads, a wish, a pact signed in blood, and a price to be paid upon its completion. Knowledge was what Ozpin offered, what he gave he did not
say.” Shakeslock paced. “Ozpin chose, and soon thereafter died only to be reincarnated in a new body. Immortal though not how he thought he would be, lesser in strength and in control.” The ceiling creaked and yet more dust fell.

Ozpin clenched his first, cursing the man that was, he barely remembered his Queen but this was a conversation worth remembering for. “What was it? What happened as a result?”

“Deduce huntsman. O’Dimm acts directly or indirectly? Hm? Ozpin merely signed the blood letter…” Professor shook his head.

Oz remembered his conversation, seeking out Shakeslock was one of the first things he had done when Qrow had left Beacon. Any other time and he would have noticed his absence and seeing as he didn’t want either of his lovers to know about this, it was the only time to do it. “Ozpin tell you this?” He asked prodding for more information, keeping the conversation rolling.

“He had to if I was to diagnose his case.”

“You make it sound like an illness.” Ozpin grumbled crossing his arms.

“It is worse. Many illnesses are treatable, but play with evil… a cure can be much harder to find.” Shakeslock said with a shake of his head.

Oz played into this conversation not being about him, it seemed to have worked opening the professor up. “So why would Oz want to get rid of immortality?”

“Love, he confessed to me he had fallen in love, one unlike any he had ever felt before. He was unwilling to continue without this love he had found. I guess it’s too late for that now, but at least this knowledge will be useful to someone.” The professor shook his head. “O’Dimm grants what you wish, not what you want. All who sign a pact learn the difference - and die by it.” The beam above Shakeslock creaked more dust falling.

“All?” Oz asked. “Is there no way to get rid of him?”

“Kill him, you mean? Kill Evil? Hmph. No. Yet the annals tell of a man who dissolved his pact - by defeating O’Dimm at his own game.” He walked over to a bookshelf looking unseeing at it, his hands hardly ghosting over the leather spine.

“Meaning?” Ozpin asked.

“O’Dimm wields contracts, word-traps, duels of wits like one does a sword or shield. Challenge him to such a duel, he’ll agree - and can be beaten. But remember, there is only ever one stake. The sole thing he truly desires - human souls. But I have read of only one to do this.”

*One man Gods.* Oz did not like his odds, he could not challenge O’Dimm at least not now, not with Ruby pregnant and not whilst he could still hold them in his arms. He’d have to wait till the pact was fulfilled and O’Dimm came to collect. “Thank you Professor Shakeslock. You have helped me a lot.”

The man in the circle gave him a wry smile. “Good. Very good. Ah, to feel useful after so many years locked up, living in fear - why, it’s pleasance itself.” As he finished speaking the beam above him cracked and broke, bits of wood falling down onto him. The bookshelf started to fall forward with a loud groan and Oz swiftly moved catching the heavy thing, books tumbling down as he pushed it back up. While he did this the blind Shakeslock backed up in panic and slipped over a bottle, his body falling outside of his circle protection. The rush of his older body falling was only halted when he cracked his head on the back of a foot chest dying instantly.
Oz paused to make sure the bookshelf wouldn’t fall again then rushed to Professor’s side. Chalk smeared over his shoes, breaking the circle and candles extinguished on their sides, their wax pooling on the wood floor. Oz hung his head and reached out closing the old man's eyes. He sat back and sighed then pulled out his Scroll to call the authorities.

After dealing with the authorities which consisted of hours of questioning and accusations before he was permitted to leave Oz opted for a drink before heading home. It had been a long draining experience and he was saddened by the Professor's death. Whilst pondering had things might have been different he found a quiet tavern and let himself enjoy a mug of mead. As time passed and Oz dozed a song sung by children reached his ears.

“His smile fair as spring as towards him he draws you.

His tongue sharp and silvery as he implores you.

Your wishes he grants, as he to adore you.

Gold, silver, jewels - he lays riches before you.

Dues need be repaid, and he will come for you.

All to reclaim, no smile to counsel you.

He’ll snare you in bonds, eyes glowing, afire.

To gore and torment you till, the stars expire.”

Oz’s eyes snapped open and he stumbled to his feet grabbing his bag and hauling it on his back as he spun in place scanning the bar. *No no no, he can’t be here! Our contract is not complete!* His fingers reached up to the left side of his eye, nothing no brand.

“Sir are you alright?” A waitress walked over to him.

Oz shook his hand and turned on his heel, he RAN blasting out of the bar and down the streets, putting as much distance between himself and the bar as possible. He glanced up at the moon, it was coming up midnight. *No, no, no!! He can’t be here, he can’t be here!* After the events of the day he didn’t want to cross paths with O’Dimm, especially while his mind felt so fragile and his memories jumbled around.

When Oz came upon a crossroads, he knew he was doomed, the sound of children's tune being stilled whistled filling the air. The world slid sideways and suddenly he was not longer in Mistral but at a different cross roads under willow trees. He looked up his soul filling with dread, he bowed his head to the bald man features plain as physically possible. The vagrant of a man was tapping a wooden spoon against his bright blue breeches. He wore a simple yellow tunic with a coin pouch around his neck and bags hang off his each hip. “Hello little King, long time no see.”

“Gaunter O’Dimm.” Oz raised his head defiant. “Why have you brought me here? Salem isn’t dead, you can’t collect.”

Gaunter O’Dimm jumped nimbly down from his seat upon the willow branch. “A little birdy told me
that you’ve been busy, friend. Getting yourself in such a mess at that little school of yours. Journeying across the expanse of Sanus’ deserts and not to mention traversing across the sea with our dear Nagelfar. Now that last one was an interesting one, why I heard she took a shine to you my little king, did the glorious Nagelfar make you an offer?’ The joyous man’s face fell. “You won’t be taking it.”

“I never told her I would.” Ozpin stepped away and crossing his arms.

The bald man approached with a casual walk threading his fingers together, where his spoon had disappeared to Oz didn’t know. “See now while I wasn’t privy to what went on whilst you were aboard her protection I also don’t believe you. I’m trying to decide how to punish you for falling into dear old Naga’s service. She’s marked you did you know, on your soul and body. I shall have to pay her a visit for that, I don’t like people marking my things.” Gaunter O’Dimm turned back to him a slight smile on his lips. “Don’t you like it? Jumping bodies, a fresh new young one each time your old one died. You asked for the power to defeat Salem, to be immortal. I granted your wish yet I see so little in return.”

“Our pact was that upon Salem’s death my immortality would end and you’d get my soul. There was no ‘fine print’ for you to wring more out of me.’ Ozpin fought the chill going down his spine, fog was thick in the air beyond this little cross roads, leading one to think there was nothing beyond.

“That was before Naga made you an offer, an offer you almost accepted fulling knowing you beyond to me.” He growled the last words and reached out and grabbed Oz’s chin. “I can’t have you running off seeking a way to break our contract, try it again and I’ll find a way to make that little Silver Eyes of your life a living hell.” He twirled his spoon as it reappeared as he let Oz go. “Pretty little thing, I know of many people interested in her.”

Oz snapped lunging for the man, pain seared on the right side of his face like a hot brand brand being pushed into his skin. “Ahh.” He stumbled to a halt, pressing a hand to the burning skin sparks flying from it.

“Now now, you didn’t think you’d escaped my mark forever did you?” Gaunter O’Dimm smiled as Oz straightened staggering away from him. A still glowing as if it burned with an internal fire S beside his eye the tail of the S above the end of his black brow. Below it was a oval a like cut through it extending into a T like shape one corner near touching his eye. The brand was harsh and angular, covering to just below his cheek bone. “It seems you need it reminding just who that soul of yours belongs to. I can’t have any more deities asking for your service. Fighting over your soul doesn’t interest me, though with all the people behind it. Well the effort might be worth it. Wonders know how long it’s been since I got myself into a real scrap.”

Gaunter O’Dimm turned the spoon over in his hands. “Make no mistake Ozpin, if I find you endangering our contract again, trying to break it. I will not harm you but your lovers.” He smiled and cocked his head. “As for that brand, tell them the truth, that you made a deal with me and I’ll let to fade out of sight from the common eye.”

Ozpin snarled tensing up but not moving forward again. “I will get out of this and when I do, I’ll rip you apart.”

Master Mirror smiled and said in a cocky almost joyful tone. “I’d like to see you try, or did you forget it was I who taught you mastery over your Semblance? You’re Semblance was what drew me to you in the first place, I do so love time.” With that he snapped the spoon, delicately between his fingers.

Oz jerked and fell to the ground, when he opened his eyes again he was back in Mistral. He reached
up to the side of his face feeling the brand, “Fuck.” he hissed under his breath and took a step forward. He couldn’t go home with on his face, he needed to process all of this. He turned walking up towards the upper city.

Meanwhile Ruby was taking a little bit of time away from her friends. Shopping had been fun but it hammered into her mind how her body was changing. Their room was starting to resemble a clothing store, She couldn’t remember the last time she had so many clothes, not since leaving Patch. At the sudden pang of homesickness her hands cupped her belly, it was becoming such a natural action to curl her hands over the little life inside her protectively. As she walked down an alley a damp cloth was pressed over her face. She kicked out but the drug quickly clouded her mind. As her eyes shut she felt the green rose being removed from her hair, it fell slowly to the ground bouncing slightly as it landed and Ruby Rose knew no more.

Chapter End Notes

Kry: Dun Dun DUNNNNN. Trouble on the horizon Ardy, what do we do?  
Ardy: *starts building a fort and summon Chao’s demons.* I’M SORRY!  
Kry: Also did anyone notice the addition of this story becoming a series?? :3  
Ardy: To be fair, covering 1-5 then 6-10 is just a way to make this Au manageable. Anyway I’m gonna go build my fort and brace for the heat.  
Kry: Ehhhh, wait for me please. Oh and thanks for the super awesome support last chapter, that means YOU darkvampirekisses, threeguesses, Sportsfangirl815, Mysty_Sinclair, Baker1762, Kiba, Frapadingue70 and Stormflower. Honestly the amount of support and comments last week was fantastic, so thank you all so much.
Lost

Chapter Summary

So this is where we earn that implied/referenced rape tag, there you are warned. We did include more than what we did in the original but I still heavily cut it. You'll also note that no new tags have been added and they probably will not be added. Figure that one out. :P

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Ozpin pushed the door open with a groan, rubbing his forehead. This was turning from a bad day into a worse one. First the death of the professor, then O'Dimm showing up, Oz decided to take in a bit of the night life, just a drink here and there and a decent walk between. It still left him to stumble around on his way back but the buzz he had going was worth it. It was well past dusk now and he hadn’t eaten all day and hoped that no one was paying too much attention to him as he entered. The door had barely clicked shut behind him before Qrow came barreling into the room. “Where the hell have you been?!” He snapped, he had been worried sick and Ruby still hadn’t come home.

Oz looked up confused at Qrow’s worry. “I visited a friend, he cracked his head open while I was there. So I’ve been at the police station for most of the day then I decided to have a drink because WHY NOT, now if you don’t mind I’m rather peckish and drinking on an empty stomach is never a good idea.”

That took the wind out of Qrow’s wings, he took a deep breath and curled his hands over Oz’s shoulders. “Listen, I’m sorry about your friend but we have a problem, Ruby’s missing. She left for a walk after the girls returned from shopping and didn’t return. I’ve called her four times since and she’s not picking up.”

“Well, did you try talking to her through your bond?”

Qrow pushed away from Ozpin, heat in his voice. “Of course I tried that first but it seems there is a limit to the distance there can be between us for me to hear her. I’m scared Oz, the last time she went for a walk she very nearly got herself hurt by a bunch of bandits.”

“Let me try.” Oz pulled out his Scroll and dialed Ruby’s number. Weiss Yang and Nora all ran into the kitchen in various states of panting.

“She’s not anywhere in the shopping district we went to earlier.” Weiss was bright red in the face and trembling with worry.

Yang wasn’t holding out much better as she hugged her teammate and looked between her uncle and Ozpin. “I’ve been asking around our neighbors, none of them have seen her.”

“Jaune and Ren headed towards the school, maybe she went there.” Nora said, trying to sound cheerful but even she looked rather pale.

Oz on the other hand heard all this and sobered up his ear to the Scroll, it didn’t even ring instead it
kept repeating ‘Line disconnected’. Dread rose in his stomach, Gaunter O’Dimm’s threat rising fresh in his mind. He looked up to Qrow the blood draining from his face. He turned on his heel and ripped the door open. “I’m going to look for her.”

“Not alone you aren’t.” Qrow turned to the four teens. “You lot call the police station and report a missing person.”

“Yes sir!” Nora saluted and pulled out her scroll.

“We’ll hit the streets again after she is done.” Weiss said pulling up her scroll and a map of Mistral.

Oz charged out the door Qrow quick on his heels, the red eyed man tried reaching through the bond to Ruby again but felt nothing. How far had she gone that their bond wasn’t working? Oz on the other hand was following that piece of his soul that was the rose like a bloodhound. The dark look on his features caused what few people they came across to scamper out of his way. Qrow followed silently, Oz’s dark mood was infectious but he was more worried than angry right now.

They turned down an alley and immediately saw the rose lying abandoned in the alleyway. Together they raced to the item, Oz picking up the rose both knew Ruby would never be parted from it willingly. Oz’s fingers tightened around he rose as he bowed his head and kicked at the wall in frustration. *All his fault, all his fucking fault.* He forcibly loosened his fingers around the rose, the stem return to normal from where it had crumpled. Looking over he saw Qrow staring at the right side of his face, he raised a hand hiding the brand.

“What is that?” Qrow asked staring at Oz, the bigger man so clearly wanted to hide it.

“Not important right now.” Oz half lied shaking his head and dropping his hand. “We need to find Ruby.”

Qrow nodded and started scanning the alley way, quickly coming up with nothing he jumped up onto the roof. Oz looked up and down the alley, Qrow had the right idea Ruby would have noticed if anyone was following her and jumped up into the roof across from Qrow. He could see the other man already kneeling staring at mostly uniform tile roofing. “Find something?” Ozpin asked, this really was more Qrow’s area, he had always been great at finding things.

“The tiles have been crushed around the edge, like someone jumped off them. Probably Ruby’s attacker, the wind still hasn’t blow away the dust and you’d need to be a huntsmen to exert this kind of force.” Qrow hovered over the tiles but didn’t touch anything.

Oz pulled out his scrolls and texted Nora with this information so she could pass it on to the police. “Nothing helpful for finding her through.”

“Oz, we need to find her, the baby …”

“I know. I’m going to find Lydia, she will help us, maybe get some people with ears to the ground but Qrow, we ‘will’ find her.”

The red eyed man only nodded, his control and emotions all over the place, they needed to find Ruby before something happened to her and the baby.
Lydia was in the middle of brewing a cup of jasmine tea when someone started pounding on her front door, quickly she sent her Semblance branching towards the door to find out who it was. Sensing the familiar thoughts of Ozpin and Qrow she rushed to the door and let the two men in. Their thoughts were a mess, confused and afraid but one thing was clear was the why. “What happened to Ruby?”

“We don’t know, she went for a walk and never came back. We found her rose in a alley where someone seems to have jumped from the roof and taken her.” Oz paced a trail over Lydia’s cream coloured carpet. Qrow curled his hands over the plush couch trying to hold his Semblance in some sort of control but he felt it slipping and Lydia’s cup dropped from the counter in the next room. He gave an apologetic look, Lydia waving it away. “Tell me what you need Oz?”

“Can you put ears to the ground for me, anyone and everyone you know. I will make it up to you but I need to find her Lydia, what if something happens to her or the baby … I don’t know what to do.”

“I will personally go to them myself, Oz.” Now the older woman stepped up and cupped her student’s chin. “You are my family love and with that Qrow and Ruby as well. I’ll do everything in my power to help you.”

Oz pressed into that hand, feeling Lydia’s presence all around him soothed some of the edges. “We need to get back out there. Thank you Lydia.”

Ruby awoke slowly her throat scratchy and dry, her stomach so far past hungry she didn’t feel it anymore. Groggily she peered at her surroundings, the room was small with wooden walls, cobble stone floor, a hearth and table. She shivered slowly understand that she was not upon a bed but a mattress pad that sat upon the floor in one corner of the small damp room. The next thing she noticed was she was also nude, and that a pair of golden eyes were watching her from the shadows in the darkened room. She reached up into her hair but the rose was gone.

“Tisk, tisk, I can’t have you calling for help now, can I?” Tyrian slinked off his chair coming into the light just as nude as she was.

Ruby’s eyes widened her face blanching, how had he known the rose could do that? It didn’t matter, she could still call for Qrow. Qrow, Qrow I need help. Tyrain has me. Qrow. Her heart hammered against her chest and she was sure if she looked down she would see it pounding. The creak of Tyrian coming closer had Ruby snapping her eyes back up at him. Her eyes were drawn to the large red scar on his torso, she vividly remember impaling him with Crescent Rose. His tail curled around behind him, she noticed in one hand he had a bottle of whisky and from the whiff of strong licker he had clearly been drinking from it as he waited for her to come around. He walked over, stopping just above her, Ruby turned her face away as he knelt she could already see him growing aroused. She covered her mouth with a hand and called on her Aura, only to find nothing there.

Tyrian straddled her with a insane giggle, his tail move to be posed above her. He grabbed her by the neck and pushed her down into the pallet. “My Semblance my lovely little Ruby, is to drain another’s Aura. From what my previous victims have told me, it’s like being as weak as a kitten. Are you a kitten my little rose?”
“Let go of me you sick perverted creep!” Ruby struggled for a moment before his hand tightened and cut off her air.

Tyrian enjoyed the gasping sounds she made before letting up, she twisted under him her hands reaching up to crawl away. He simply grabbed her hips and pulled them up, then grabbed her hands pinning them in place with one of his. He bent over and exhaled long and slow.

The smell of whisky filled Ruby’s nose, it reminded her of Qrow. She squeezed her eyes shut as he rubbed his erection between her butt cheeks, she could feel him grow hard. The smell curled around her as Tyrian spoke. “Now that’s no way to treat your lover.” He stroked her back gently, slipping down to her dry sex. He licked his lips and played with her pearl.

Ruby cried softly, she didn’t understand why was he doing this? The smell of Qrow’s whisky filled her nose again. “Tell me about Qrow, he’s gentle with you isn’t he? Loves you with every fibre of his being.” Tyrian spread his free hand over her hip, moving it around her front and over the stretched skin of her belly. “And what is this? You've gotten bigger since our last meeting or this something more?” As he said it, his hand pressed down ever so slightly, pulling a pained gasp from Ruby before he let up, his hand tracing up and down her bump. “I wonder who's it is. Qrows, one of those boys, or maybe it’s the big guy, I bet he and Qrow keep your tiny cunt so full you don’t know whose it is.” Tyrain gave another cackle as his hand drifted down towards the prize. “OH this is going to be so much fun!”

She felt rough hands, she was so used to callous and roughness from her lovers. Ozpin had a harshness that had started to dwindle since they had been together in Mistral. Qrow’s hands were always rough, a kind of roughness she’d learned to adore. She felt these hands tend to hers, clean the wounds and bind them so the did not bleed anymore. Her Aura was constantly being drained, so she couldn’t heal it herself. She felt a body move behind her, but she refused to open her eyes. Hands pet over her stomach… her baby. The slush of a bottle and a hand gently tilted her head up and lips were pressed her hers. The smell of whisky washing over her as his breathing grew laboured. When he was done with her he tended to the wound, changed the bedding, fed her, helped her drink then let her sleep for a time but not too much time.

Then it would start all over again, Ruby started to lose track of time, wondered how many days it had been. How many times he had taken her, he kept her clean, fed just enough to give her enough strength to be lucid, gave her enough to drink that dehydration didn’t hinder her performance. He always came to her with the smell of Qrow’s favourite whisky on his breath, and he’d talk and talk, sometimes the talk of a lover but most often of Qrow. Asking her if Qrow could arouse her like this, what he did, Ruby never answered him but she grew to understand that he was jealous of Qrow. He’d be gentle then hurt her, then take her while she was hurting.

She tried to hide in her mind, calling out for Qrow through their bond but slowly her cries grew to whimpers then further into whispers as she mentally fled further away. Why hadn’t they come for her yet? Why didn’t her Qrow answer her? She wanted Oz, she wanted her friends, she wanted to feel this baby grow safe and warm, cradled between her and her loves. Why hadn’t they come?

A throbbing burned over her breast and tears ran like silver streams down her cheeks. No, Qrow ‘would’ come for her, Ozpin ‘would’ come for her. They’d come and they’d rip him apart in their wrath. She just had to hold on but as the days went it got more and more difficult. Every time she got close to hiding behind her walls, he’d hurt her again shatter them. Touch her like a lover, hurt her a
A week later Qrow and Oz walked into a bar the former leading with angry eyes, his black iris’s barely a thin veil of red. Oz wasn’t faring much better, his expression cold and distant that only Qrow dared to approach him at the moment. It had been a week since Ruby had been taken and the two had exhausted all the areas in the upper and middle sectors of Mistral. Now they were deep down into the dark places of Mistral. Places the police as they had learned recently didn’t have the guts to venture down into. The roof was low the air thick with smoke and for the most part cards were being played. Oz walked over to the bar and ordered a drink, he had been doing that a fair bit more since Ruby had gone missing. Guilt and the brand on his face a constant reminder of his mistake.

The reason why they were here in the first place was because Lydia, bless her heart had managed to come up with a list of potential places in the lower Mistral sectors that Ruby could be being kept in. There were twenty locations on the paper but with a mention that some of Sigi’s shadier clients who knew the ins and outs of this area frequented the bar. Qrow and Oz hoped that with Lydia’s list they would be able to narrow down the number and find Ruby but that meant making a deal with some unsavory folk. Neither man cared at the moment, each only wanting their love back safe and sound.

Qrow walked up to a table with four men playing poker, he walked up the man dealing and stopped him mid shuffled taking the cards and sitting beside him. “Hello, shall I deal myself in?” He started shuffling the cards.

The man beside him that he had taken the cards from took his cigar from his mouth. He was a fat man balding with massive sideburns. “I thought we had an understanding, we don’t bother you. You don’t bother us.”

“That was before something very dear to me was stolen. About five five, silver eyes, red hair, a huntress. Pregnant. It’s safe to say she was taken by some rather bad people, being rather bad people yourselves it occurs to me that someone here might know something.” Qrow straightened the cards and shuffled them again.

“We don’t talk to the police, why should we talk to you?” The sideburns man said.

Qrow started to deal the cards. “Because if you don’t, then in five minutes I’ll be the only person at this table still standing.” The man laughed his friends chuckling along with him. “Five minutes after that I’ll be the only one in this room still standing.” He finished and moved to pick up his cards. “So who’s in?”

The balding man laughed and got up, everyone at his table doing the same. Oz threw back his shot and cracked his knuckles, oh boy did he ever need this. Qrow sighed and put his cards down. “Well that’s one way to answer my question.” With that he flipped the table trapping four of the men under it and rolled backwards before the men beside him grab him. Oz threw his shot glass at the bald man the glass shattering as the man fell.

Another patron of the bar grabbed his bottle and swung for Oz’s head. The huge black haired man neatly grabbed the man’s forearm and twisted it back till it made a loud SNAP! He ignored the
scream that followed and watched for a moment grabbing a full bottle of rum from behind the bar. Qrow dodged and weaved, he wasn’t using his Aura since he didn’t want to kill anyone when he hit them.

Oz stepped neatly to the side as another man flew past him, Qrow sending the poor man flying with a kick. Ozpin sent a few more then flying with casual kicks or a punch. He and Qrow meet and turned back to back, Oz offered Qrow the bottle of rum.

Qrow laughed and took it, taking a large drink. “Just like old times eh?”

“Something like that.” Ozpin smiled darkly turning this attention to the men surrounding them and raising his hands.

Seven minutes later the bar was trashed, with Oz and Qrow prowling towards the original man that Qrow talked too. “Where is she?!” Qrow snarled.

“I’m telling you man I don’t know.” The fat man backed away.

“Then you know, somebody who knows somebody, that knows something!” Qrow’s voice rose with each word, as he approached the man coming within striking range. “Who, what! ANSWER ME!”

The man threw a punch and Qrow ducked neatly under, grabbed the man and punched him straight across the face knocking him out. He let the man drop and glanced around. “Aw fuck, now I’ve got to wait for someone to wake up.”

Oz took the last drink from the now empty bottle, he peered down the brown bottle before setting it down on the floor. “Well that went well.” He wiggled his fingers activating his Aura to heal his knuckles, he shook his hand trying to get the blood off.

Qrow walked up to the bar and sat on the counter reaching under and grabbing a bottle at random. “We’re not done here, this place has more scum bangs passing through then any other in Mistral. Someone here knows something, I’ll happily go through each till I get something.” He popped the lid off with his thumb and took a long drink, whisky burning down his throat.

Ozpin leaned against the bar crossing one foot over the other and taking the bottle from Qrow. “I’m not questioning you, this has always been more your world than mine.” He had a much smaller gulp and gave the bottle back, he didn’t have the tolerance Qrow had and while the buzz was good he needed a more clear head. He glanced over at Qrow who took another long drink, they hadn’t had sex since Ruby went missing. Or really talked much about anything else. Every waking hour was spent looking for Ruby.

The red eyed man had dark circles under his eyes, his shirt was rumpled, trousers stained. Oz still found it strange to see Qrow without his cloak. He had gotten a replacement from Lydia but he was saving it for a mid winter gift, part of him wondered if he should give it early just because the red cape was part of Qrow’s look. Oz knew he didn’t look much better, his hair was growing long enough to hang over his eyes now. His armour had blood stains on it as this was far from the first time they had gone through a bar, they were just steadily working their way down through Mistral. Mud and blood on his boots, black trousers hiding more stains. His equally black dress shirt as ripped in places from where people had pulled at it. More then that he was tired, but neither he nor Qrow
would rest till they had Ruby back.

Qrow drank through Oz’s observation of him, they both had been drinking a great deal more. Qrow felt guilty about it but he drank to numb an ever present pain in the back of his mind. It was an alien sensation and Qrow knew it wasn’t coming from him, but every time he pushed back against it. It cut off completely, now he took it in stride as confirmation that somewhere, Ruby was alive.

Ozpin worried the table carving into it with a finger. “You sure you can’t feel her?”

“Pain, she closes it off every-time I try to reach her.” Qrow ran a hand through his hair pushing his bangs up and having another drink. “Why would she do that?”

“I don’t know.” Oz said sadly, if only Ruby would let them back in, they’d be able to find her in no time. “Maybe it will get easier to track her when we get closer.”

There was a groan, lucky enough it was the bald man. Qrow hopped off the bar and grabbed the man around the neck holding tight. “Hello this is your wake up call!”

“Oh come on man, give me a break.” The man whimpered.

“Certainly, what would you like? An arm? A leg?” Qrow growled. “Or how about we start with your fingers and work our way up?”

“Uhmm, you know maybe I do have information for you, a district. Not far from here.” The fat man stuttered.

Qrow looked over to Oz. “You see, it’s like I’ve always said, you can get more with a kind word and two by four, then you can with just a kind word.” He turned his attention back to the man and adjusted his grip. “Please continue.”

The man swallowed. “In the red light district, there’s been reports of screams and a creepy faunus lurking around an old abandoned brothel. Gold eyes, scorpion tail. It’s at the end of Silk Street.”

“Tyrian.” Oz growled the bar under his hand splitting cleanly in two with a thunderous CRACK. He pulled out the list Lydia had given him, sure enough whilst near the bottom the location matched. This had to be the right one.

Qrow dropped the man unceremoniously to the floor and charged out the door Oz on his heels. The red light district didn’t even take the two huntsmen two minutes to get to, it was wrapped around a circular well in the middle of a few connecting cliff faces. They were so close to the ground they could hear the waves beating against the rock. The house they sought out was mounted up on a wall and in good enough repair it looked usable.

They paused as Qrow extended his senses and bond, he could barely feel Ruby but he could feel her. It was as if someone had been draining her Aura away again and again. He didn’t sense anyone else, “It’s clear.” he shouldered the door open breaking the lock and raced up the stairs.

The house creaked and protested the huntsmen abuse as they thundered up its rickety stairs. Oz led them to the highest room and shoved the door open, they heard a whimper at the sudden noise. They both stopped in their tracks, their brains took in the details of the room but it didn’t matter to them.

Tyrian hovered over their lover, grinning maniacally at them. Ozpin and Qrow stopped stock still, Tyrian’s fist was posed above Ruby’s pregnant belly. “Yours?” He asked looking from Qrow to Ozpin.
Ozpin ready his Semblance at this point he didn’t care if it would give him away. He wasn’t going to risk Tyrian hurting the baby.

The Faunus spread his tail out behind and struck the hall, bits blasting away giving him an escape route. Qrow lurched forward only for Tyrian to swing his tail around to pose it over Ruby’s belly. The little woman was barely lucid at this point and unable to do a thing.

“Well it’s been fun my little rose, but it’s time for me to take my leave.” Tyrian eyed the two men, smirking and moved to take a step away. Just as he was taking one more step away his tail came striking out at the same moment.

Ozpin activated his Semblance but was already to late. “No!” He screamed as the stinger penetrated Ruby’s rounded belly. He let his Semblance go as he stumbled to her side Tyrian already lept away with an insane cackled. “No, no, no.” Ozpin pressed his hands over the injury, blood quickly covering them. He poured Aura into her but he had a feeling it would not save their baby.

Ruby’s head only fell to the side, as blood loss add to everything else. Qrow raced to her and took her head in his hands. “Ruby stay awake, please.” He reached for his Scroll. “I need an ambulance. Brothel on the end of Silk Street, missing a wall you won’t be able to miss it. My partner was just stabbed in her stomach, she’s pregnant and bleeding from it.”

Ozpin didn’t know what to do, what if Tyrian had hit the baby? He looked to Ruby her skin was growing paler and paler. Qrow’s hands covered his own. “Rip that bastard apart. I’ll take care of her.”

Oz warded with himself for a moment, anger at the faunus, worry for Ruby. If he did nothing then Tyrian would still be out there to hurt her again. His eyes narrowing as the anger grew inside of him like a red fog clouding his vision. He didn’t care what it took, he’d kill that faunus.

He stood and raced for the wall and saw Tyrian leap across the well and gave chase he activated the gravity Dust on his arms glowing purple as he launched himself from the house flying clear across the well.

Tyrian looked over his shoulder just in time to see Oz’s fist light up white with impact Dust before it hit his cheek. The Dust enhanced blow set Tyrian careening through the streets through two houses and out into a marketplace. A crater formed under him as people screamed getting out of the way. Tyrian pushed himself up and shook his head, his Aura crackling, he called on the stolen Aura he’d been stockpiling. He looked up and saw Oz walking through the ruins, he was the very image of power and fury, like some old god of war.

Ozpin stormed through crowd as they fled to get out of the way, his arms were now devoid of Dust. However both were still active, he saw the red Aura flicker over Tyrian and recognized the source. So he had been stealing from Ruby and that was why she couldn’t contact them. He snarled and launched forward fully empowered by Dust and Aura, the ground cracking under his feet. He kicked Tyrian straight in the gut the faunus, tumbled head over heels before right himself and activated his guns. He opened fire his eyes widening as Oz didn’t even pull out his sword.

Ozpin clenched his fists the bullets minor annoyances against his Aura. His eyes glowing green for a moment before Qrow decided to get in on the action. Oz’s Aura flared dark red and he smiled in a twisted fashion as his eyes changed to reflect Qrow’s power.

Tyrian’s eyes widened in fear not one laugh escaping his lips, he raced at Oz lashing out with his blades, Oz took each it hit without moving only stepping to the side when Tyrian’s tail struck out for his head. He grabbed it just behind the stinger and swung Tyrian over his head and down into the
pavement, first on one side, then on the other. BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM.

Oz’s saw only red as he hammered his prey into the ground over and over, craters growing on either side of him. He vented his pain and rage into his actions, his anger and loathing at himself. That his defiance of O’Dimm and brought this about, that his bastard had raped Ruby, had her for a week. All because of him, because he wanted out of this curse. Tyrian’s Aura flared again and again, till it broke, he struggled to look up at Oz when the man paused for a moment.

Ozpin planted his boot just under Tyrian’s jaw and hissed out squeezing the faunus’s tail till the plates crunched under his fingers. “You bastard.” Thinking of how he had killed their baby. Blood filled Tyrian’s nose and mouth but he smiled at Oz. “Was it yours?” He coughed out blood smiling maniacally.

The huge man’s eyes narrowed for a moment before he grabbed the tail four segments down from the stinger with his other hand and PULLED.

The sound was sickening as the plates broke and shattered, muscles dripped blood splattering them both. Tyrian screamed in pain as Oz tossed the upper third of his tail away not giving a damn where it landed. Tears streamed down the faunus’s face and it occurred to him he was going to die now. He smiled thinking about Ruby, the look on her face, the sounds of her, worth it, oh so worth it.

Oz moved his boot and reached down, wrapping his armoured hand around Tyrian’s neck. He lifted the man clear off the ground and raised his fist laying into Tyrian’s face. The scorpion faunus grabbed at Oz’s arm draining the Aura from the man just enough to keep the blows from smashing his face into putty.

A sniper round blasted into Oz’s shouldered with enough force to make him stagger. Tyrian took the opportunity and kicked with both legs into Oz’s chest. His eyes widened when Oz only grunted and turned towards the sniper fire slamming Tyrian into the ground again. He let go of Tyrian’s neck to bring his hands together and slam them down into the faunus’s chest. His teeth bared as he snarled, another sniper round hit him in the shoulder, making him jerk back but he just didn’t care. He only cared about the bones cracking and breaking under his fists.

He got a few more good hits in before a Bullhead rose up from behind the ledge and rained gatling gun fire down on Oz. He ripped out his sword batting the bullets away faster than the machine could fire, a blur of green and red. They annoyed him, keeping him from his goal, with a growl he launched himself into the bay of the bullhead slicing through the gun and grabbed a White Fang faunus by the head and slamming it into the side of the ship, its skull making a cracking noise as it was turned to goo. He grabbed the edge of the bay with his gauntleted hand and swung himself up onto the roof the Bullhead racing down and slicing through a wing.

It spun through the air and crushed into the mountain slide Oz leapt back off of it into the street. Tyrian was trying to get to his feet, Oz pulled his gun out and didn’t both to extended it just shot out Tyrian’s right knee cap.

“ARG!” The faunas fell to the side and clutched as his knee, as if he could keep all the bits together.

“Now. Where were we?” Oz grinned walking over and driving his sword through Tyrian’s the calf of the uninjured leg. He grabbed Tyrian by the ponytail and lifted his head up, the tears and snot disgusted him. They wouldn’t stop him, he knew that Ruby had cried and it didn’t stop this monster and it sure as hell wasn’t going to stop him.

However as he raised his arm to turn Tyrian’s skull into little bitty pieces when a thunderous BOOM filled the air. Whoever had been sniping him before had traded up for a MUCH higher caber. The
shot ripped through Oz and Qrow’s combined Aura and set him staggering back. A second shot set him reeling back with a hole blown through his shoulder.

Tyrian ripped Oz’s sword of his leg and looked up the staggered man, he could see a hole clean through Oz’s shoulder and his stomach dropped when Oz braced himself panting. White Fang soldiers pushed their way through the crowd and raced to Tyrian while others opened fire on Oz.

Ozpin dropped to a knee raising his armoured arm to cover all his vital bits, he had a good guess as to where the sniper fire was coming from now. BOOM! Another shot blasted into his forearm but the armour held as the force blasted out in a shock-wave pushing Oz a foot back and creating a trench in front of him. Oz looked up and saw the gleam of the sniper and felt a fresh wave of Aura from Qrow.

BOOM, Oz moved his hand and snatched the bullet out of the air with his armoured hand. These insects kept getting in the way of his goal, he turned his attention back to the White Fang members wielding the pea shooters and blasted forward grabbing his sword as he went. He couldn’t see Tyrian as he cut through the first line of White Fang in one red Aura extended slash, cutting the bodies neatly in two. BOOM this time Oz cleaved the bullet in two, the halves cleaving trenches on either side of him into the ground.

The sniper was getting frustrated, BOOM BOOM BOOM, his partner handed him a new clip as Oz cut his bullets apart. Tyrian had already been loaded onto a ship for evac to their nearest hospital but the more time he bought the faunus the less likely this manic would be able to track him down. Just who was this freak? Salem would be so pissed if Tyrian died.

Oz growled moving forward as he sliced the bullets apart, the White Fang team fled scattering like ants before him. He got a flare of Aura from Qrow just a two new Bullheads flew over head gatling gun fire raining down over the White Fang. A deep voice sounded forth over the speakers. “This is the police stand down.” The White Fang paid no heed running like their lives depended on it. The bay doors opened and policemen dropped down and gave chase.

Qrow landed beside Oz the rose in his hand, he saw the hole in Oz’s shoulder and grabbed the man as he moved to give chase. “Oh no you don’t, the only place you’re going is the hospital.”

Oz pulled from Qrow’s hold and took a step forward and growled out. “But that BASTARD is still ALIVE.”

BOOM, one last shot clipped Oz in the shoulder and the borrowed Aura failed. Oz staggered back pain lighting up over his shoulder and Qrow caught him. “MEDIC!” He yelled and one of the Bullheads lowered with all of his strength he pulled Oz on board and yelled for the pilot to take then to the hospital.

Oz hissed as the doctor stitched up his shoulder, the wound was clean and it would heal as soon as his Aura recovered. He gripped the bed rails beneath him as the doctor tried again to convince him to remain at the hospital.

“You really should stay here sir, the damage done is extensive and going to take more then Aura to completely heal.” He began wrapping up Oz’s shoulder, he was frankly amazed the man wasn’t unconscious with the pain.
Ozpin waited till his shoulder was bandaged and stood up grabbing his blood stained shirt.

“Where is Miss Rose?”

“Sir, please back sit down, she’s still in recovery... She’ll be fine, you took more damage than her huntsman.” The doctor gave in trying to assist Oz, the bloody shirt covered his chest and back and with it some of the old scar tissue. “May I have a report on your scaring? Pardon me but it seems very extensive and I need to add it to your file.” The doctor spoke calmly his eyes tracking the scars now visible for all to see that covered Oz’s arms.

“No and no. Already been through that once.” Oz pulled his shirt on and grimaced at the pain, he did up the buttons with one hand and put his weapons back on his hips and fixed his armour. “Excuse me.” He set off out of the white sterile room.

The doctor walked after him. “Sir I really must protest! You are in no fit state to be moving about, much of your shoulder blade is missing and the surrounding area may be prone to infection!”

Ignoring him Ozpin pushed the door open with his left hand his right arm hanging limply at his side. He looked down the hall and stopped, a panicked Qrow pacing back and forth in front of a white door. “I’m fine.” He growled at the doctor hoping the man would leave him alone, he had been hurt worse in the past and he was tired and angry.

He set off down the hall and the doctor did not follow, instead the older man threw his arms up and huffed before walking away. Qrow looked up to him and walked to met him. They hugged briefly Qrow mindful of Oz’s wound, he inhaled deeply letting himself be vulnerable for a moment and just enjoy Oz’s touch. “How is she?” Ozpin asked looking through the glass but the blue curtains were still drawn around Ruby’s bed for privacy.

Tears gathered in Qrow’s eyes. “I-I don’t know. I heard one of them say c-section when we arrived. I know Aura can heal a gut shot like that but what if…”

Ozp in pulled Qrow in closer with his good arm burying his face in Qrow’s hair. He didn’t know what to say. He pulled them towards a pair of chairs and they sat still cuddled together as best the chairs allowed.

They stayed like that for a long time but no nurse came to see them. Qrow eventually pulled away and had a drink. Ozpin watched him and said. “You shouldn’t be doing that.”

Qrow sighed. “I know.” He stored the flask away and Yang came rushing down the hall.

“They only just told me where Ruby was. What’s going on?” Yang raced to Qrow who stood and pulled her into a hug. “We don’t know.”

Yang looked at Ozpin, he seemed like he was wilting. Worry around the corners of his eyes. “What happened to your shoulder?”

“High caliber sniper rounds.” Oz gestured at his right shoulder with his left hand.

“ Rounds? As in more than one?” Yang rose a brow, she was still getting used to Oz’s faked accent.

“That would be correct.” Oz gave the woman a little nod, letting the accent slip slightly for her.

“Oh.” Yang commented as the doors opened and a tall blonde female doctor came out.

She instantly had the three’s undivided attention, the doctor looked up from her medical tab. “Back again I see?” She looked at Ozpin who shrank under her gaze of course it would be the same doctor
that had tended to him. “Hello Doctor.”

“How are your lungs treating you?” She asked.

“Fine, no complaints. Ruby-.” Ozpin asked but the doctor held up a hand and took a deep breath. “She will live. Qrow reported that you both tried to heal her with Aura seconds after the attack. That very likely saved her life.” The doctor closed her eyes and took another deep breath before continuing. “However the… initial stab punctured the amniotic sac and, much of the amniotic fluid was lost in her transit here. We … are trying to save the baby but it doesn’t look good.” Then the doctor placed a hand on Qrows shoulder. “They are in the best of hands but be prepared … for anything.”

Chapter End Notes

Kry: *pets Ardy's head* There don't you feel better now.
Ardy: Gonna be a ridiculous amount of work.
Kry: You were the one who was torn. You even wrote a fluff piece it was making you so depressed.
Ardy: Which I then took down, if that's not a spoiler of where this is going I don't know what is.
Kry: But you're happier now and we know our stuff, we'll even get all that extra angst in, just moving why and when.
Ardy: I hate drama and angst.
Kry: I know. Anyway thank you too: darkvampirekisses, Rilia, threeguesses, Sportsfangirl815, QueenofSpades19, Frapadingue70 and ZoeyTheWeeb
Ruby woke up suddenly, her eyes flickered around the room. Dark alone, not home with her dad, or at the house with Oz and Qrow but not with Tyrian anymore either. Where was she? Eyes blinking rapidly she shifted, the cot beneath her creaking slightly. She barely remembered what happened… her eyes widened. “My baby!” She reached for her stomach only for a pale hand to stop her. Ruby looked up and saw the doctor that had treated Ozpin. Her breath coming in sharp quick pants, Ruby began to notice the multiple tubes and IV bags linked to her hands and shook.

“Shhh. It’s okay.” She said and slowly lowered Ruby’s hand to her stomach keeping it away from the site of her injury. “She’s right here.” The doctor guided Ruby’s hand to feel her slightly swollen stomach. “She’s right here. Safe and sound. You both gave everyone quite a fright and we were worried for a while that we might lose her but it seems she’s as stubborn as her mother.”

Ruby’s breath released in a wave of relief, relaxing and petting her stomach, she didn’t feel any pain right now. All she felt was relief, her baby was okay, she was going to be okay. Images of that darkened room, damp and cold rose sharply but she gave the doctor a wobbly smile and pushed the fear back even as tears pricked her eyes. “More like her daddy.” She took in the warm brown of the doctor’s eyes. “We never asked your name.”

“Rutile.” Doctor Rutile said and then smiled. “Speaking of daddies, are you ready for them to come in? To be fair I don’t think I can keep them out much longer. Obsidian has been beside himself with worry.” She covered her lips with the back of a hand trying to mask a smile. “And I half expect Qrow to see how small of a ball he can curl himself into.”

Tears gathered in her eyes. “I-I… do they know?”

“They do. They were the ones that found you.” Rutile took Ruby’s hand within her own. “Please understand, many other women have been where you are now. We are not made any lesser by it. Those two love you. Love you more than the air they breathe I think. Don’t hide from them, they know you’ll need a period to readjust.”

“Okay, I’ll try. You can let them in.” Ruby said.

“Okay.” Doctor Rutile got up and left her in the dark room.

Ruby’s eyes roamed the room, it was quiet for a hospital and there was no second bed. The room seemed more lifeless to her but it was still an improvement over her recent prison. She sniffed tears returning to eyes, how would they react? They knew what Tyrian did, at least a little of it. Would they be disgusted? Would they reject her? Find her weak for not being able to run away? Her head swam with all these dizzying thoughts.

The door opened and Ozpin was the first through. She could see how his arm was hanging limpy by his side. What had happened to him? Had Tyrian hurt him too? Whatever had happened didn’t slow him as he raced to her side. “You’re awake!” He reached out to touch her and then stopped. “May I kiss you?”

Tears gathered in her eyes as she nodded. He was heartbreakingly gentle, like she was glass that would shatter if he touched her too firmly. The taste of his lips was a welcome one, familiar and free
of any taint. He reached up and brushed her bangs out of her face as he drew away his eyes scanning
down her body. “Is-.”

“You’re baby girl is alright. It was a close call and there will be some complications but I am
confident everything will be okay. I’ll get you the information you’re going to need while you have a
minute.” Doctor Rutile walked over to grab the clipboard before exiting the room.

Ozpin sagged with relief. “Thank the Gods.” He reached for her stomach but hesitated and looked to
Ruby. She pushed the blankets out of the way so he could see where her bandage was. His hand
held near all of her baby bump, his hands were so much larger than Tyrian’s. That alone helped her
breathe a little easier.

Qrow hung back in the shadows, she looked so fragile. His eyes moved to her belly, their child was
still with them. They had saved it. They had saved her. What might have happened if they had been
any later? He took a step forward and then another approaching silently, there was a stiffening to
Ruby’s body, like it was posed for threat, those silver eyes he knew so well flashing with fear as he
reached out. Qrow withdrew his hand, why was she afraid of him now? What had Tyrian done? A
great sorrow came over him but he still had other ways to touch her. He reached out over the bond
and sung softly, not words but long lulling hums. Love and longing, joy and fear. He expressed how
he had missed her, worried for her and that no matter what he still loved her.

Ruby looked over to him again, she reached out and he moved to carefully hug her. He felt fear flash
through the bond again and withdrew quickly. “What did he do?”

“Had way too much of your favourite whisky.” Ruby said grateful for the distance he returned to.

“Oh, right sorry.” Qrow knew he probably smelt pretty strongly. The young woman felt the guilt and
sorrow through her bond and more tears rained. What was wrong with her? She wanted her Qrow
but everytime she thought of him coming closer she couldn’t shake that maniacal laughter. Had
Tyrian ruined their relationship? She prayed not but her hand couldn’t stop shaking as she leaned out
to pet Qrow’s wrist, just once but it was enough for a quick shot of relief to seep in.

Oz observed the pair, his fury simmering on the surface and for once glad that Ruby couldn’t feel his
emotions over a bond like the one she shared with Qrow. If he ever found Tyrain again … pain laced
his shoulder and arm but he was reluctant to remove his hold on Ruby, afraid that if he would she
might disappear again.

There was a knock to the door before it was shoved open, Yang and Weiss standing in the way, the
former had wet eyes and was looking the roughest Ozpin had ever seen her. Yang’s usual head of
hair was in tangles and a mess, her clothes obviously slept in, what little sleep any of them had
managed since Ruby’s abduction. Weiss in comparison was openly weeping, her face red and eyes
swollen as she hung behind their blonde teammate.

Yang, seeing her sister awake rushed into the room, almost barreling her way past Qrow. “RUBY.
Don’t you ever scare me like that again.” With more care she cradled her baby sisters head in her
arms, shuddering in relief at the familiar weight and petting her hair.

Weiss took a seat at the edge of the bed near Oz, her hand taking Ruby’s from him as she gently
squeezed it. “We are so glad you’re okay.”

This brought on a new wave of tears, Ruby tightening her hold on her sister. The three women drew
closer, Weiss laying slightly over Ruby’s legs at the bottom of the bed. Her head pillowed on Yang’s
leg as the older girl lay beside her sister just holding her like how she always had as they grew up.
Ruby felt the warmth and familiar feeling and leaned in closer, her quiet sobs buried in her sisters
Qrow took a seat at the far side of the room just quietly reflecting. He wasn’t sure what to do for her. Obviously Tyrian had twisted her perception but he was at a loss about what to do to help her. Oz came over, his larger frame drawfing him in a hug, his injured shoulder hanging limp at his side. “We’re figure this out Qrow, I know we will. Just give it time.” Sensing the nod from his lover Oz drew back, kissing Qrow’s lips coming to sit beside him.

An hour passed as the family just sat or lay in their chosen places, the room taking in a warmer atmosphere that almost lulled Ruby into sleep. As it was the rest of the room couldn’t quite stop the urge to doze, finally letting their minds rest after having their red headed member missing. Even Oz, whether it was the painkillers the doctors had shoved at him or the relief of having Ruby back alive he too dozed, his head hanging awkwardly in a position she was sure would make him uncomfortable before too long.

Ruby looked around the room, so many tears being shed, the cold of the room replaced by a achingly warmth she hadn’t realized she missed. Qrow, Oz, Weiss and Yang. She didn’t doubt the others would be waiting their turn. Carefully her hand petted her swollen belly, mindful of the bandages. “We are so loved, I’m so happy you’re still with me.” Tears thickened her voice as she rested against her sister, shutting her eyes to get some rest. “I’ll keep you safe, I promise.”

Doctor Rutile returned to find the room full and everyone dozing. She walked over and checked Ruby’s fluids and medication on the IV stand.

“Hello Doctor.”

She spun around to see Ozpin awake, looking at his arm she frowned. “Your arm should be in a sling.”

“I do not frankly care. Just what was done to Ruby? I know he-.” Ozpin clenched his good fist. “I know he raped her, I want the details.” He’d woken the minute the door had opened but had waited for the intruder to enter the room fully before relaxing slightly and dropping his facade.

The Doctor looked between her sleeping patient and the man who clearly would not rest until he had what he wanted. She released a long breath, she could almost respect a man so determined to keep his loved ones safe, almost … “As you are aware, there is some scarring under her left breast, which I imagine will vanish once her Aura focuses on it. Right now its primary focus is to heal the more urgent injury, namely the puncture site and keeping the baby from miscarrying. Mild Dehydration and slightly more severe malnourishment has been what’s kept her so weak meaning her Aura will take longer, be slower. From what we found he did not hurt her sex organs aside from the stab they are completely fine. From what Qrow reported to me, he seems the type to be more after her mind then anything else.”

“She’s afraid of Qrow now. She said that Tyrian drank a lot… of Qrow’s favourite brand of whisky.” Ozpin looked over to the man still sleepily half on his chest.

“Then I recommend both of you hit the showers, you have an odor about you as well.” Rutile said and walked over to a cupboard. She pulled out several new bandages and a cloth sling. “First let me tend to that arm. Do you have a friend who lives close?”
“Yes. Lydia is only a half hour walk away.” Ozpin shifted sitting up, moving Qrow to lean against the wall.

The doctor grabbed a pair of scissors and walked over, cutting his shirt off. The thing was so soaked with blood it was past any attempt at cleaning. After cutting the bandages away she studied his shoulder and sighed. “You’re misaligned. Brace yourself.”

Ozpin bit down on his forearm, trying to muffle the yelp of pain as flesh tore as she fixed his shoulder and bound it again. Qrow woke at the small sound of pain Ozpin made and looked over. “You’re arm.” He sat up rapidly.

Ozpin reached out and grabbed his wrist. “It’s fine, the doctor is just resetting it now. We should leave, get cleaned up. Lydia’s close, she’ll have a room and shower for us to borrow.”

“Ruby probably won’t wake for a couple hours, I’ll wait till you return before explaining everything that will need to be done.” Rutile looked at the three young women. “I think I’ll see about finding another bed, those cots are not meant for three.”

“Thank you, we’ll be back when we are clean.” Ozpin got stiffly up drawing Qrow with him, they both took one last long look at Ruby before departing for Lydia’s house.

There was a single light on at the front of the house and the door opened right before Qrow moved to knock. “How is she? And the baby?” Lydia let them in and helped Ozpin remove his cloak.

“Both will be okay,” A small smile appeared on Ozpin's lips. “We're having a girl.”

Lydia couldn't completely contain the delighted squeal. “That's wonderful, I'm so happy for all four of you.” She leaned up and hugged Oz and then backed away scrunching up her nose. “When was the last time you bathed?”

Ozpin and Qrow smiled sheepishly, the former rubbing the back of his head. “Err…”

Lydia scowled. “To the shower both of you! The one in the guest suite is fully stocked, I don't want to see either of you till you smell of vanilla!”

“We're going!” Ozpin fled up the stairs with Qrow on his heels, they ended up in a large square shower with two shower heads. Ozpin stripped and headed straight in while Qrow hung back. As he stepped in he couldn't help but stare at Oz's arms, the Dust now gone and the scarring… white, red and silver. Burn scars were always ugly, the skin warped and destroyed. The tattoos had done a brilliant job hiding the damage but now… there was no hiding anymore. He took a step forward, reaching out to touch one of the larger twisted area of skin. “How does this not hurt?”

Ozpin turned to Qrow, he had been enjoying letting the water was the blood away. Now though the sight of red running down both of their bodies was disconcerting. “I forgot the tattoos were gone…” He stepped away from Qrow putting his back to the wall.

“Oz-.”

Oz put a finger on Qrow's lips. “Please don't. I know what I look like, I know it horrifies you. But don't you dare say it should have been you. You are mortal, when you die that's it. Maybe I'd be able to find your soul again if it reincarnates, but I will never risk that. When you were gone, I… I fell down a pit of self loathing, I know I am ugly, I know this it's not what you bargained for. But I had hoped it wouldn't matter, that you wouldn't shun-.”

Qrow shut him up with a kiss. His hands grabbed Oz’s shoulders and pushed him against the wall.
Oz parted his lips and Qrow slid his tongue forward attempting to dominate the kiss. The taller man reached up and wove his hand into Qrow’s hair. Ozpin felt wet on his face but it was not from the water.

Qrow stepped away back under the spray of water. “I don’t understand why you think your looks matter to me. You were the first person to ever want me. No one else in my life ever did... at least not till Ruby.” Qrow didn’t meet Oz’s eyes, staring down at a corner of the shower. “I don’t think you could ever understand how much that means to me and how much the scars don’t matter to me.”

“They matter to me though. I can’t believe that you don’t feel anything when you look at me now. No one is like that, regardless of how they were brought up... I don’t even know what I am trying to say.” Ozpin said turning his arm so the scars were hidden.

Qrow was struggling to figure that out as well. “I wish we had the same bond I share with Ruby. Sharing Aura just isn’t the same.” Qrow reached out and took Oz’s good hand, gently pulling the man from the wall and back under the water.

Oz reached out and touched him, tracing his hand over Qrow’s slim hips. “You have no idea how jealous I get of that. That you two don’t have to stumble around words, trying to figure out how to say what you feel. You just share it, it must be so much easier to understand.”

“Sometimes. Sometimes that doesn’t help. Take now at the hospital she is so afraid of me, I called out to her over the bond it helped, but it didn’t fix anything. It’s not a cure all Oz.” Qrow bit his lip. “I don’t know how what that bastard has done is going to affect us. Will she always fear me now, will she reject me? I’m afraid of that Oz, so so much.’’

“We ‘will’ help her Qrow, my word to you on that. We will have days that are going to be hard but ... I believe we can grow stronger, we’ll have our days in the sun again soon. I promise.’’

“Since we are talking about this... Lately, especially with how much time we’ve been apart. I’ve been feeling, a bit guilty about this.” He gestured to them both. “We’ve both been so focused on Ruby, while we were away. We didn’t share with you, what we were doing and feeling. Maybe that was a mistake, but when was the last time we just enjoyed each other? No emotional explosion, or just happy you’re back sex. I mean take the time and take it slow?”

“Beacon.”

“Yeah.” Qrow said and stepped away collecting a large drop of liquid soap into his hands. “We’re both going to have to help Ruby. But I think maybe we should try to take more time for ourselves as well. Can I have your hand?”

Ozpin offered it to Qrow palm up. “You’re taking this all extremely well.”

“One moment at a time, Oz.” Qrow lathered Oz’s hand with the soap, taking special time to cover all of it completely before shifting to start to massage, pulling on each finger gently with long smooth movements. Following the paths of muscle on Oz’s hand, using the soap in lieu of an oil.

Ozpin’s eyes partly closed as his head dipped forward. It hurt slightly as Qrow caressed the tension out of his muscles. Bit by bit the pain faded to a feeling of pure relaxation, a looseness to his muscles he forgot he could have. “You haven’t forgotten a thing have you?”

“That you love having your hands played with? No, Oz. I think I can say I’ve had you at your best and worse. I remember all the things you’ve taught me over the years. Lately it’s just been a problem of remembering to use them, taking the time to use them.” Qrow traced over a scar on Oz’s wrist,
moving more soap down. He studied Oz’s skin though in a relaxed manner, new cuts and divots, twists of red skin were fire embraced it. “You are always the type to give and give, to take but never just receive. Not like Ruby and I do. Never just lay back and let someone else do the work.”

“I like giving. I find it hard to relax into other states. You know that.” Ozpin said, his skin felt hyper aware of Qrow’s touches. Despite his injury arousal stirred in his loins.

“Still, I think you need a thorough reminder that these.” Qrow traced a welt. “Don’t define you.”

“Ohh how the tables have turned.” Ozpin said with rumble.

Qrow laughed and leaned forward resting his head on Oz’s chest. “It’s been a while, I’m allowed to grow up… a little bit.”

“Just a little.” Ozpin purred and squeezed Qrow’s fingers. “We should get a move on and back to Ruby.”

“Yeah, revisit this idea when she can watch.” Qrow said and leaned up leading in another long kiss. Water pouring down upon them as nude bodies embraced, with relaxation and care.

Once Qrow and Oz left Ruby finally looked down to the injury site, peeling the sheets away. She could still feel the pincer tear through her skin like a leathery blade, so sharp and tight, burying into her soft body before being pulled out. She hadn’t been too awake at the time, her Aura and energy so low she could barely lift her sweaty head off the cot, the feeling of sticky substance coating her hair and cheek, the smell … Colour washed out of the young Huntresses face, cupping a hand over her mouth to stop her from retching.

The movement however stirred Weiss away from her position at the foot of the bed. ‘Ruby, what is it?’ Seeing her partner with hands closing over her mouth while she tried to be sick spurred the ex-heiress to jump up, running to the side of the bed where a bedpan had been left she thrust it under Ruby’s face. Immediately the redhead emptied her stomach into the bowl, the sound of her sobs mixed in with the gagging filled the room. Weiss patted down Ruby’s back gently, her hand hardly making contact but the warmth and closeness of her friend seemed to ease some of the tension in Ruby’s shoulders.

Only after she was sure Ruby had finished did Weiss remove the bucket, quickly dumping it into the conjoined wet-room and shutting the door. She might be a fair caregiver but she didn’t much care for the smell of vomit. Weiss poured a cup of water from the pitcher on the side and handed the cup to her friend. ‘I’ll call Oz, tell him what happened.’ Before she could take a step away Ruby’s hand reached out, gently taking hold of Weiss’s sleeve. ‘Ruby?’

‘Please don’t.’ Her voice was hoarse and low. ‘If you tell them, they will come back. I-I … need some time. Please.’ She begged, her head down, hair covering those silver eyes.

‘You don’t want me to tell them?’ The only response Weiss received was a shake and she sighed. ‘Well what about Yang? She’s your sister.’ Weiss looked over to where the blonde bombshell had been sat but couldn’t find their brawling teammate, perhaps she had gone to get something to eat?

Ruby lifted her head and Weiss almost dropped her jaw at the hollowed eyes and sickly features she would never had thought her partner capable of. ‘No, please Weiss, can you keep this between us
… for now?’

Weiss could only nod, seeing Ruby so stressed and sad did a number on her determination. After Ruby took a few sips of water she lay back down, one hand coming up to cradle her swollen stomach, the other clenched at her chest. Unsure what to do now Weiss stood. ‘‘I’ll let you get some rest.’’

‘‘Can you not stay?’’ The younger girl asked, holding her hand out to her friend.

‘‘Okay’’ Weiss whispered, Ruby shuffled on the bed to make space while Weiss carefully lay down beside her, their faces so close she could feel her breath on her cheek.

Weiss trailed a hand over her friend’s hair, gently combing the medium red locks with her fingers. She remembered a time when Winter use to do this for her, she found the action so relaxing, feeling her sisters warm fingers detangle and caress each lock of hair. Granted Ruby had much less hair then Weiss but it still seemed to have the desired effect. Ruby’s eyes took on a sleepy daze, her eyelids half closed as she relaxed to Weiss’ administration. Sleepy tears escaped as her face sunk deeper and deeper into sleep.

Just as she was dozing, her eyes open a mere fraction Ruby wet her lips. ‘‘Weiss …’’

‘‘Yes?’’

‘‘W-would you be my baby’s Godmother?’’ The redhead whispered.

Confused Weiss stilled her hand. ‘‘I thought Lydia was going to be the Godmother.’’

Ruby gave a barely there nod, her voice still a whisper. ‘‘I think she would be lucky to have you both … You’re my best friend Weiss and I love you but you don’t have to if you don’t want to.’’

Touched Weiss felt a tear slide from her eye as she brought her forehead to Ruby’s, letting them lean against one another. ‘‘I’d love to Ruby.’’

Weiss could feel the tiny smile pull around her friend’s lips just as Ruby fell asleep. ‘‘Thank you.’’

By the time Oz and Qrow returned to the hospital Ruby’s room was full of nurses in pink scrubs and the good Doctor was back again, this time equipped with a new armoured sling and a sinister smile. ‘‘Mister Vorlon just the gentleman I was hoping to see.’’

Oz eyed the sling with distaste and noticed that she was effectively blocking his entry into Ruby’s room. ‘‘I’m not wearing that thing.’’

Doctor Rutile gave him a deadpan look, her smile dropping. ‘‘The bandages you have on are all well and good for temporary use but if you expect that shoulder to heal within the coming year you’re going to need more support for it and I don’t mean for you to use your Aura for speed healing. Now you can behave and allow me to put your arm in this sling which will not only be more comfortable but also allow you to heal correctly or I can ask Mister Branwen if he wants to hold you still while myself and several of my best nurses fuss over you and forcibly put it on.’’ The warm brown eyes of the doctor smiled again. ‘‘Then you can go in and see Miss Rose while I explain the next steps for the pregnancy.’’
Oz eyed the sling again and turned to Qrow. The other man only smirked slightly giving the hint that he wouldn’t mind pinning his lover while the Doctor did her thing. ‘’Traitor.’’ Oz muttered under his breath.

The next few minutes was spent with Oz ‘allowing’ Doctor Rutile to remove the old bandages and replacing them before moving the sling over his arm and explaining how to clean around it and replace it on his shoulder. Qrow took all the information in like rain during a drought, asking questions and observing how to apply the sling correctly while Oz made the appropriate grumbling sounds of an unhappy patient.

Finally they were allowed into Ruby’s room where three nurses were currently hovering around the room like hummingbirds, wheeling around equipment and screens. One was replacing Ruby’s I.V bag while a fourth woman in purple scrubs was speaking softly to their young lover. Weiss and Yang stood by the window, when they noticed the two men they waved them over.

‘’Hey you’re just in time, Ruby’s about to get an ultrasound.’’ Yang had some of her sunny disposition back and was smiling at them as they came to stand by the window.

Qrow looked confused though. ‘’I thought they had already done an ultrasound when she came in, that’s how we know the baby is a girl.’’

Weiss crossed her arms, looking at Ruby as the midwife explained things to her. ‘’That was just for the sake of diagnosing Ruby and the baby. Apparently they had to do it so ensure the baby was safe, this one is for Ruby and you two to see the baby yourself.’’

The midwife patted the young mother to be on the hand and heaved off the bed, walking towards them. ‘’So are either of you lads the father?’’ The midwife was a bulky older woman, well into her fifties, her hair was in a very unflattering black bob that just covered her ears. There was the telltale sign of overworked around her dark brown eyes but she smiled with twin dimples at them.

Qrow shuffled on his feet, unsure what to do. Would Ruby want him there? He sent out a prod through their bond and feeling just a content agreement. ‘’We are the father.’’ He said pulling Oz by the uninjured hand next to him.

The midwife looked between them but didn’t comment, only to wave them over to the bed. As they stood beside Ruby she lifted the dressing gown away and spoke softly to Ruby. ‘’Alright Miss Rose, just like we spoke about, the gel will feel a little cool and sticky but it will allow me to run the wand over your stomach so we can see your baby.’’ Gently and avoiding as much of the injury as possible she layered a thick coating of transparent blue gel over Ruby’s swollen stomach. Once that was over she took a white wand that looked more like a microphone and started pressing it softly over the baby.

It was a little uncomfortable and the midwife had to press it down in a few spots but soon the screen that had been black and empty started to fizzle with lines. It took a few minutes to get the image clear enough to make out shapes but as soon as the picture of her womb and the little body inside showed up Ruby burst into tears.

There she was, her precious baby girl. It might have been just black white and grey but the lines clearly showed the baby resting inside her. Lay on her back and cradled above her bladder the baby shifted inside her, kicking a foot out. Ruby couldn’t feel the kick, there was still a lot of room inside her womb but her heart felt it. Her baby was ‘moving’ she was alive, her tiny heart beating. The little form turned onto her side facing the screen and although Ruby couldn’t see any features she knew right away her baby had felt her silent plea.
“She’s beautiful.” Disbelief choked her, her baby was beautiful and she already loved her so so much. Ruby turned towards Oz and Qrow, the first real smile since her abduction on her face.

Oz was staring at the screen, tears running in rivers from his eyes as he smiled wide, any and all pain forgotten in that moment. He itched to run his hands over his lover, kiss her belly, would the baby be able to feel it? Would their little girl be able to hear him?

Qrow had the most scared look on his face as he watched the baby shift inside. His own eyes were bright and wet and he couldn’t seem to force down the lump that was lodged in his throat. That was his baby, a new life he and Ruby had made between them. He had been scared before at the concept, fearing what his Semblance could do, what he would do but now seeing the tiny life move around inside his love he was both terrified and ecstatic. He never thought he would have a child and yet this here was exactly that and she was alive. Despite all his worries and all his fears Qrow knew there would be no more doubt in his heart, this was their child and he loved her.

Ruby took in the sights of Qrow and Oz, still unable to stop crying. The midwife did something with the screen before removing the wand. Ruby almost protested, she wanted to see her baby more, wanted to watch that screen longer but the feeling of paper towels gently wiping the now warm gel off her stomach halted her protests.

“Well, the baby is in a good position, clearly she is comfortable and content. It looks like the sac healed well and the fluid is uncontaminated meaning that the baby is as safe as possible. Of course until the wound is completely healed, you are still at risk of infection and any infections could affect the baby so we need to watch out for that.”

One of the nurses still in the room wheeled out the ultrasound machines as the midwife pulled out a pen and pad. ‘‘I’m going to write you up for a prescription of prenatal vitamins, lets get your weight back up. I’m also going to get you a dietary list, things to eat and what not to eat. Now I know at the moment exercise is off the table but once the injury has fully healed some light exercise and stretches will make it easier to carry through your last trimester.’’

Oz looked around the room and asked the question everyone wanted to know. ‘‘Do you know perhaps when she can come home?’’

‘‘Hmm, well I’d like to see her again for another scan in two weeks, her cervix was damaged in the incident but it seems to be healing just fine now. I would also just to make sure the baby is growing normally but as soon as she is fit and able to move around she should be fine to go home. She will need lots of bed-rest though and if there is any bleeding, painful cramps or extreme vomiting she should immediately come back. What do you think Doctor Rutile?’’

‘‘I would like to observe Miss Rose for at least another three days before she can be discharged, mostly for possible infections but I don’t see anything else we can do here that cannot be done at home. Of course I hope you all take on the advice given today and follow our instructions to a T.’’

‘‘Absolutely, Ruby’s health matters to all of us and the baby of course,’’ Oz leaned a little closer to Ruby, his hand coming up to squeeze hers gently. Ruby squeezed back but said nothing.

Yang came to the other side of the bed. ‘‘If we can handle keeping Obsidian from causing havoc I’m sure we can keep my sister from doing the same.’’

Oz chuckled. ‘‘Oh I see how it is and here I thought you were looking after me because you loved me. You watch yourself Miss Xiao-Long.’’ Everyone chuckled at the joking manner, tension easing from the room.
Qrow moved closer to Ruby but when his leaner frame brushed against hers she stilled. Quickly he stepped back but in doing so stumbled over the IV stand and landed on his butt. Laughter stopped as Yang raced round to help her uncle up, Qrow dusting himself off with a quiet thanks. For some reason he couldn’t bare to look in Ruby’s direction, it hurt so much to feel her usual soft self stiffening in his presence, by his touch. He was scared to look at her and see the rejection in her eyes. “I’m gonna go grab some coffee or something.” Without another word he left the room.

The midwife and Doctor also left shortly after with promise of pamphlets and prescriptions. Ozpin took the newly vacated chair close to Ruby while Yang and Weiss came to sit on the bed. Weiss’s eyes straying to the door. “Is Qrow going to be okay?”

Ruby ducked her head in shame, this was her fault, because of Tyrian she couldn’t relax in Qrow’s embrace anymore. Her tiny shoulder shrugged. “Maybe someone could go check on him please.”

Yang decided it was best for her to go and left the room leaving Ruby with Weiss and Oz. The latter reaching over to take Ruby’s hands again with his uninjured one. “Ruby, Qrow will be fine but I really need you to talk to me please. I don’t know how to help you if you don’t.”

“I’m sorry, I just need … I don’t know, some time to figure things out in my head.”

“Okay.” Oz whispered, kissing Ruby’s hand. “Just promise you won’t push us away. This baby needs all of us and Qrow and I, we need you Ruby.”

Ruby lifted her head slightly and nodded, a wiry smile playing her lips as she sniffled.

“Uncle Qrow.” Yang chased down the taller man as he stood in front of a vending machine. He just seemed to be staring into the selection, to anyone walking past he probably looked deep in thought but Yang could see the sheen of tears that he attempted to hide. Yang came up to him and leaned her head on his shoulder, she wasn’t sure what to say to him. Obviously this wasn’t something she knew how to fix so she just stood silently.

“We should probably tell Tai what’s going on.”

His voice seemed very defeated, Yang frowned. “Is that safe?”

Qrow hummed “Not really but I’m use to sending letters with more hidden information, plus he should know that he’s going to be a grandad.”

“Sure you want to risk your head so soon?” His niece asked, bringing some humor back in.

“Pfft. Nope but Tai is going to kill me either way or at least castrate me once he finds out.” Qrow punched the button for a regular coffee. As much as he ached to drink from his flask he knew it wouldn’t help any right now.

“He would probably be more pissed if he found out after the fact rather then before.”

“Hey, watch the language kid. There’s going to be little ears in a few months, I think we could all do with curbing the swearing.”

The blonde woman only snorted at that. “Yeh right, I’ll believe that when I see it. Who do you think
I even get it? Certainly not dad.’’

‘‘Yeah, well I know I’ve not been the best of role models.’’ Thoughts of the baby growing, learning from him left a bitterness in his mouth.

Seeing her uncle down again Yang gave his arm light punch. ‘‘Hey, you’ll always be my favorite one. Come on, show me how to write the super secret letters then.’’

Grinning the two found a quiet spot by a window and had several parchments of paper in front of them. Yang started off the letter for her dad but things quickly grew weird as they laughed and took turns commenting on each point. Soon it didn’t resemble much of a super secret letter so much as a sloppy mess of a conversation between the two, playing a game of snatch the pen and how much embarrassing stuff they could write about one another.

They probably could have taken it more seriously but in the end the finished letter made them both smile and as Qrow wrote the address to Patch and posted it he felt lighter for it. Swinging his arm around his blonde niece the two made their way back to Ruby, Oz and Weiss sure in the fact that once Tai read it he was sure to be in a lot of trouble in the future.

Dear Dad,

Hey dad, it’s Yang. You’ll never believe some of the stuff that’s happened since I left Patch. Well first off I should say I found mom, got some answers, got more questions but I suppose it wasn’t ever going to go as I hoped.

Then she got Raven to send her to me, honestly Tai your daughter is a handful. Of course by doing so she also met my parents and opened a bag a worms I hadn’t wanted to see ever again. Then they decided to butt their noses in our business and that was a disaster.

Oooh big time, let’s just say Grams is a family maker . . . Oh and I’ve heard about the whole orgy business, SOOOOO didn’t need to know about that.

Raven’s fault, I assure you.

Yeh things have been much more difficult then we expected but we are all safe now.

Though Tai, you should know that Ruby … she and I were unexpectedly messed with, mostly by my mother.

I think you should get use to being called grandpa at some point dad.

Try not to gut me and my other halves next time we see each other please.

You did knock her up.

Hardly my fault.

We will write again dad but until we know how safe it’s going to be, letters will probably come long and far apart.

Birds always fly home at some point in the year Tai, I just think this year is going to be making a pass instead. Hopefully the teachers at Beacon are making some lead way with the Grimm but if not
know that the conflict is moving to Mistral. We are working on keeping it here or stopping it but if we can’t the next logical step will be the winter continent.

Give Zwei lots of cuddles for me dad. We love you and miss you.

Yang and Qrow.

Chapter End Notes

Kry: FLUFF glorious fluff.
Ardy: tooth rotting goodness.
Kry: . . . Alright enough of that bullsh*t
Ardy: Still this has been a trying chapter to write
Kry: So much fluff … thank you too: darkvampirekisses, threeguesses, Frapadingue70, ZoeyTheWeeb, Sportsfangirl815, Stormflower for all your comments!
Qrow slipped out of the hospital after the ultrasound, the image of his baby girl imprinted into his mind. Tiny, so very fragile… his… he was going to be a father. His stomach turned and clenched painfully. He made tracks to the nearest bar, his feet kicking up water from muddy puddles he didn’t even attempt to avoid. He didn’t even think about the direction he was heading in, a part of him knew it was pretty damn sad that he knew where they all were.

The first bar he came across was lit with warm orange light, it was too early for most residents of Mistral but there was the odd one of two men sitting at the far windows and another at the end of the bar. The red eyed man barely took in the details of the place before making his way to the bar, pulling out a Lien card as he went. “Open a tab. Whi-... Vodka. Don’t care what kind.”

The bartender barely spared a glance at the lean man and poured a glass pushing it over as he took the Lein. “You look like you want to forget something.”

“I’m gonna be a dad.” Qrow grabbed it and chugged.

The greying man raised an impressed brow. “Straight from the hospital then?”

“Yeah.”

“Hmm.” The bartender moved away.

Qrow drank. The kind of drinking he hadn’t done in a very long time. Everything that had happened turning over in his head over and over as more and more glasses littered the sticky bar surface. Was it a blessing or curse to be unable to get that grey image of his daughter off his mind, did he even want to?

Qrow drank as the sun moved over to the other side of the sky, he drank when it set and the crowds of people started milling inside the bar. Music went unheard, stumbling drunks and dancers went unnoticed or ignored. His red eyes grew more and more bleery as the alcohol washed over him and still his mind couldn’t deviate from that image. It had been so small and moving, even where he had been stood he could see the little life shift inside Ruby.

Eventually the bartender got the message that Qrow would drink till he fell and cut him off, asking him to leave. Qrow hardly looked up, simply swinging his legs off the stool, almost falling straight into a table filled with giggling women. Somehow in the crowd of people he managed to make it to the door and the rush of cool air attacked him. Qrow lurched over falling, the world tilting as fresh cool oxygen filled his lungs, there was a stab of pain to his knees as he fell and it took several attempts to stand back up without the wind pushing him down again.

Street lamps lit the way home but they were fuzzy and Qrow had the sudden urge to climb one of the poles and hug the buzzing light. The huntsman tried reaching for the lamppost but his feet took him beyond it and he smacked into a wall. Stumbling he checked his nose, no blood, which was good and decided to go home. Maybe Oz would be back by now?

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Between the stumbling and thinking Qrow managed to only get turned round twice. Eventually he stumbled home as the sky reached its darkened hours and stepped inside. He was just staggering past the living room when he noticed a head over the back of the couch. “Oz?”
The head turned and Qrow barely held in a groan as Jaune glared at him with murderous eyes. Well fuck.

The minute Oz returned home to find the living room a disaster he knew something had gone askew. The couch had been upturned and the coffee table was in pieces. He spotted two broken cups and another smaller wooden end table missing two of its legs while on one wall was a crater the size of a bowling ball, plaster and paint falling off in chips. Loud angry voices came from the kitchen and when he entered he could see Yang leaning against the wall as she watched Jaune and Qrow beat ten pails of crap out of one another.

He looked over at Yang who just rolled her eyes and sighed, given the state of the furniture the two had been at this for a while. He watched as Jaune threw a punch only for Qrow to kick him squarely in the chest, the younger man flew back and hit the wall creating another crater of broken plaster his Aura dying.

Qrow started to walk over with a drunk stumble. "Just jealous, pretty, shapely," Qrow made an hourglass shape with his wobbly hands. "Ruby likes me more than you, having my baby did you know?"

"Not that ‘you’ seem to care. Here you are pissed as a fart, barely able to stand up straight and you of all people are going to be a dad. It's laughable. You're a disgrace." Jaune wiped at the blood leaking from his nose and charged Qrow again. Whether it was from impaired reflexes or timing Qrow was unable to avoid the young man as he used himself like a battering ram, throwing them both into the wall on the other side of the room. Qrow grunted and shoved hard, Jaune falling away from him into a heap on the floor.

Oz had heard enough, he walked up behind Qrow and pinched the base of his neck by his shoulder very firmly. Qrow's eyes rolled back into his head and dropped like a marionette with its strings cut. Oz caught him as he fell and slung the younger man over his good shoulder in a fireman's carry.

"Sorry Jaune." Ozpin said to the young man as he sat on the ground, lip and nose bleeding and bruised all over.

Yang went over to the other blonde and helped him up before looking at Oz. "Do you need any help?" Yang asked.

Oz shook his head. "I'm just going to put him to bed, grab some clothes then head back to Ruby."

By the time Ozpin got them upstairs and dumped Qrow onto the bed. The red eyed man was starting to be lucid again, he looked up at Oz with pale eyes. "We're having a kid. I'm gonna be a dad."

"You're also drunk." Oz said well and truly not impressed with Qrow's behaviour. Though it would be a lie to say he was surprised by it.

Qrow continued as if he hadn't heard Oz, cupping his hands together. "She's so so so small and tiny and fragile. Mine..." He hiccuped. "What are we gonna do? Tyrian... I can't even touch her anymore yet, we're gonna have a baby."

"You need to sober up before you do anything." Ozpin said. "Strip and get some sleep. I'm going back to Ruby."
“Sure~ thing Master.” Qrow giggled and stripped before falling into bed and starting to snore.

Ozpin sighed, this was the last thing any of them needed, especially Ruby. Qrow couldn’t afford to be drinking like this. The only way he could see to stop him was to stay and at the same time Ruby needed him. Quickly he stuffed some clothes into a backpack and picked out some soft comfortable clothes for Ruby, throwing them inside also. Once the bag was packed he took another long look at Qrow before leaving.

Downstairs Jaune was nursing a bag of ice to his face while Yang started cleaning the debris away. Ren and Nora entered the room shortly after, armed with trash bags and brushes. Ren handed Jaune a cold drink and took in the bag on Ozpin’s back. “I assume you are returning to the hospital?”

“Yes, I don’t want to leave her for long and Weiss and I will take turns watching over her tonight.” Oz took a step towards the door and turned back round. “I know its a lot to ask but can you four keep an eye on Qrow please. He’s asleep at the moment but if he wakes up before I get back try and keep him occupied and call me, I’ll come straight back.” Three of his former students nodded, no surprise when Jaune seemed to ignore him. “Oh and Jaune … I am sorry about Qrow tonight.” The blonde lad just waved him away, holding the ice to his face more.

Nora beamed at him and swished past, wielding the brush as she did her hammer. “Don’t you worry bout a thing Ozzy, if Qrow tries to leave I’ll whack him over the head.”

Chuckling softly he ruffled the ginger head. “Let's hope it doesn’t come to that. Thank you Nora.”

As they waved him goodbye Oz couldn’t help feeling a little helpless about what do to. He wished he could be in two places at once but for now he’d have to contend with splitting his time as much as possible, both his loves needed him. Maybe once Ruby was home things would be a little easier. He hoped so.

Qrow woke up slowly blinking owlishly, his mouth feeling like sandpaper. He groaned and hid his face in a sour smelling pillow. The scent filling his senses and with a lurch he bolted off the bed and ran into the bathroom. He head barely making the toilet bowl before he heaved into it. Vile smelling bile spewed from his mouth like a fountain, mixing in with the bleach cleaned toilet. There had been very little in his stomach bar alcohol and now his body was rejecting it vomiting over and over until his stomach protested loudly and his head pounded.

Qrow’s legs slunk onto the floor, circling the toilet as his head hung over the bowl, spitting the remains of vomit and bile from his mouth. Slowly, once he thought it was over did he let the rest of his body slide onto the floor, his bare torso lying on the cool tile was a relief. His heated head was still spinning but the floor soon became his best friend as he lay there trying to grasp the remnants of his brain as they floated away.

Praying his Semblance didn’t act up now he slowly got back up and used the sink to heave himself off the floor. Quickly running the cold tap he splashed water over his face, swilling out his mouth and wetting his hair. The mirror was not so kind to him, showcasing shadowed eyes and a pale face twinged with green. There were a few bruises healing over his cheek and chin and a spot of dried blood at the corner of his lip. Memories of his fight downstairs made him groan, how much damage had they done? “Won’t be getting the deposit back on this place, sorry Oz.” He muttered, running a hand through his wet hair.
A sense of restlessness rose up inside him as Qrow let out his frustration, yanking at the sink with a growl. He heard a groan and let go, his hand automatically reaching for the canteen he always kept but then fell away. He could vividly remember Jaune’s words and now they came back with like a swipe down his mind. What was he doing? He was going to be a father and the first thing he did is get so drunk he tried to climb a lamppost. He fought a student, a poor excuse for a fighter sure but he still beat him into the walls, gave him a couple of bruises, broke his Aura. How pathetic.

He needed something to let out his frustrations and with Oz hurt he didn’t want to turn his anger on the others. No he needed something to fight that he wouldn’t feel guilty about killing later. Qrow stripped himself of the rest of his clothes, changing into his huntsmen gear and strapping Harbinger onto his back. Oz probably asked the kids to keep him out of trouble, which meant they would probably be downstairs waiting for him. Quietly he went over to the window and opened it wide, the fresh air would clean out some of the smell and prove to be a better entry point for him to return to.

He didn’t even glance back as he turned into a bird and flew from the house, putting as much distance between him and their Mistral home as possible. His heart begged him to go to Ruby and Oz, he needed them so much but right now Ruby couldn’t even look at him. It wasn’t fair, he wanted to hunt down Tyrain and rip him into teeny tiny pieces. To hurt him over and over like he had done to his Ruby but knowing Salem’s forces the little insect was probably so well hidden by now he wouldn’t be found. Qrow turned his attention to finding something else to fight, something he could really beat into a pile of mush, he needed to find some Grimm.

Rain poured down on a red eyed man, his scythe cleaving through the air, slaying Beowolf after Beowolf. He was about six hours flight upon crow’s wings out of Mistral and there appeared to be no settlements for several miles, making it a perfect spot to let out his anger and frustrations. It turned out he hadn’t needed to hunt for the Grimm as they came to him, drawn as they were to his emotions and bloodlust they crept out of the woodwork almost the moment he set down from his flight. Their blood red eyes and shadowy forms pouring out of the night itself but that was exactly what he wanted. It didn’t take a genius to see that the Grimm even as numbered as they were, were well and truly outmatched.

Qrow set all his emotions on each swing, every punch and kick. Soon all that had welled up inside him, all his anger, all his sorrow, the despair and hopelessness drained. His eyes were so far past tears that they remained dry, the first few hours of tears and screaming had exhausted his voice too much for him to even growl now.

Qrow cursed Tyrian in every word in every language he knew. He felt a claw strike at his shoulder his Aura flaring up to protect the vulnerable skin. Qrow growled something feral and turned around to face the Grimm behind him. Pulling Harbinger around he cleaved the beast around the middle separating the upper half of its body from the rest of the fading blackness. There was no reprise as the Grimm scenting his negative emotions and continued to pour from the treeline. The avian man had to use his other senses as his eyes were so blinded by pain and rain he could barely see. Qrow was soaked by the pouring waterfall of rain flooding the ground around him, his hair clung to his scalp in black tangles.

As the last of the Grimm fading into the dark and Qrow dropped onto the ground, his knees felt the shocking cold beneath him. He let the cold water cling to his skin, felt it seeping through his thin clothes and choking his bones. What was he going to do? Ruby, his heart panged painfully, was terrified of him. Tyrian had hurt her and he had used Qrow to do it, took what he could of him and
turned it on the one he loved. He could only imagine the cruelty at the scorpion hands and she had held out against him for a week.

Qrow pictured those crazed yellow eyes and bit his lip, drawing blood. How he wished he could destroy him, he understood how Oz had felt. The need to rip in and scrape that insane face over hot coals burned inside him. Hands clenched at his side, Qrow felt his nails dig into the callous palms, the pain was excruciating. The rain around him started to grow heavier, thunder boomed in the distance as a flash of blinding light lit up the sky. The door holding his Semblance back, its many chains bolted over it began to crack under his pain. His Aura tried to heal his small lacerations around his mouth and hands but as the door splintered more it washed in with an inky black. Red eyes rimmed with black started burning and darkening with his anger, the need to destroy the creature that had harmed his Rose.

He wept in loud screams, they curdled the air around as his misfortune grew. The ground was soggy and wet under his face but it was also cool on his tear stained face. Why Ruby? Was this his fault? Had his Semblance caused this, to take the light from his heart and plunge him back into a world of darkness and loneliness? He would give back every happy memory if it meant bringing Ruby’s smile back, if it healed her.

O'Dimm watched the man kneeling on the ground with hooded brown eyes, his cries and pain made even the Grimm back away for now. Now Ozpin had no choice but to adhere to his contract, O'Dimm doubted he would make the same mistake twice. Guanter smiled as he faded into the night and if he didn’t he could always turn his sights on Ozpin’s other lover.

Qrow walked slowly, each step excruciating. His feet dragged forward with each and every painful step, his body so cold and muddy he could only imagine how bad he looked. His clothes soaked through leaving him shivering as he passed a tavern, the need to fill his flask and his belly was great. The lights of the tavern beckoned him inside, he could feel the heat from where he stood in his mud splattered clothing. On the wall were several Grimm bounties, most outdated but there a list of fresh ones. A group of Ursa sightings in the area and he warred with himself over fighting empty or fighting full. The night had reached its peak and he wanted nothing more than to go inside, instead he turned on the darkened path and walked away back into the woods. It didn’t take long for him to find his prey, the Ursa meeting him before he got too far in. The Grimm growled at him and charged towards the now motionless man, its beady blood eyes flaming.

Qrow debated taking his weapon out and instead threw his fist out, pushing everything he had into the motion as he connected with the Ursa’s face. The force knocked the creature back several feet and into a tree which then cracked at the stump and began tumbling to the ground. Qrow walked towards the beast as it lay stunned from his blow, he jumped up and stood in the centre of its bone armoured chest. The Ursa began slowly moving, trying to shake him off, its feeble attempts not dislodging the huntsman as he knelt one knee just above the exposed throat. Qrow took one hand and lifted it as though to punch the Ursa again, instead he flattened his hand and gathered some of the red oozing Aura, readying his strike. The Grimm sensing its impending doom roared at the red eyed man before its throat was severed by Qrow’s hand as he plunged it through its throat.

His hand had come out the other end, sticky with Grimm's black blood. He stayed there as the carcass faded into ash and drifted away with the wind blowing around him. Only when the beast had completely vanish did he stand again, this time more wobbly on feet from lack of food and dehydration. He lifted those eyes to the sky as he hardened inside, the water from the rain moistening
his lips even as his emotions grew bleaker. The tavern forgotten he pulled his scroll from its place in
his wet pocket and opened it. There were still a list of jobs he had accepted since first arriving in
Mistral, all those that the missing Huntsmen and Huntresses hadn’t completed. His thoughts turned to
going home, to seeing Ruby and Oz then like a blanket his wants were pushed down under a weight
of bleakness. His voice was scratchy from crying and lack of proper use, the tone flat and quiet in the
rain. “One down, twenty to go.”

A crow slept in a tree waiting for the sun to rise, under it the thin branch creaked and gave way.
The crow squawked and flapped its wings a few times slowing its fall and gliding down before
turning back into a man with a stumble. He fell to his knees and panted a minute, he was tired and
hungry and he ached to go home back to Ruby and Oz. Qrow reluctantly pulled out his flask, he had
been weak to turn back to it when Ruby had been taken, he knew it. Tyrian had used this habit of his
to hurt his love, his partner and he in her absence he had gone running back to it. It had always been
for her that he had stopped in the first place, now what was he doing?

The mud clung and seeped into his pants as he thought it over. He was out of rage, too exhausted
to hold onto it anymore, his thoughts were clearing for it. Qrow turned the flask over in his hands,
running them over the familiar edges and textures. If Tyrian had used this to hurt her, then he had to
give it up. He had been a better person for her in the past, now he needed to be better for the all of
them now, himself, Ruby, Ozpin and their little baby. He knew it was a habit that would eventually
kill him, just with the immortality Oz had taught him and the threat of Grimm all the time. Well, he
just hadn’t cared before, he had given it up for months before. He could do it again, even if he had to
do it alone.

He stored the flask away again, stood and shook the mud off his pants the best he could. It was a
bit more of a lurch then usual but he transformed and took flight for home.

He landed before the door with a lurch and transformed and looked up to the big house he had
rented for them. It had cost a pretty Lien card but he had it to spare, he looked down at himself.
Muddy, rain stained, exhausted, he sighed but quietly opened the door and stepped inside. Pale red
eyes peered into an empty living room, he crept instead and toed off his muddy shoes. He headed
quietly to their room and stood for a moment just taking in the mess he had made. He could still smell
the scent of alcohol and vomit as it clung to the room, the sheets were stained and the bathroom was
no better.

Ruby wasn’t coming home to this, ever. Before he even registered doing he was stripping all the
sheets. He was going to burn everything, buy new things, comfortable bedding and clean everything.
He would do it for them.

By the time everyone else started to wake up Qrow was knee deep in the bathroom, scrubbing the
facilities. Yang took one look at the room and smirked. It seemed her uncle had finally seen some
sort of light, heading downstairs she put the coffee on and began helping Ren make breakfast. Qrow
would need food soon enough and Oz had tasked them with keeping an eye on him.

The next few days Ruby regained enough strength that doctor Rutile and the midwife were happy to
release her. Oz had hardly left the hospital bed whereas Qrow was barely seen. After the day of her
Ruby had seen Qrow only once, when he and Yang returned after sending a letter to their dad and even then he had stood as far away from Ruby as possible and still be in the room. Ruby wasn't sure whether to panic about the space growing between them or feel relieved by it. It was just that every-time she thought about Qrow holding her just as she desperately needed him to she recoiled in fear. Memories of Tyrain's cruelty during that week, had it really only been a week? Felt so fresh in her head.

She was given a wheelchair and was to be confined to it for another week. Both Rutile and the midwife were impressed by the rate of her healing. Rutile even checked to see what her Aura was doing. The rate it was regenerating was leaving them both stunned. Of course Ozpin had an idea of what was going on there, but with Qrow making himself so scarce he couldn’t get the doctor to wave a meter over him. Still in the end she was let out of the hospital with an escort of Ozpin, Yang and Weiss.

As Yang opened the door Nora flew through the doorway. Ozpin caught her by the scruff of her shirt lifting her off the ground with one arm. “Gently.” He said and put her back down.

Nora threw her arms around Ruby’s neck with decidedly more care then she would have normally. “Welcome back. How’s the baby?”

“Good, we have a picture.” Ruby said and pulled out her Scroll giving it to Nora.

Nore opened and pulled up the picture. “She’s so cute! REN!” The ginger woman bounced over to her lover. “We’re gonna be aunt and uncle to a ADORABLE girl!”

Ren caught her as she showed him the picture of the baby. He kissed her head. “Don’t get too excited there is a long while to go yet.”

Ruby looked up to Weiss. “Could you and Oz help me with a shower? I’d really love to get properly clean.”

“Sure.” Weiss said as Ozpin rolled Ruby in her wheelchair to the stairs.

“Uhh Oz. Don’t you only have one arm?” Ruby asked as Ozpin moved to offer his good side to her.

“Ruby, I could probably lift you with three fingers. Just put your arm over my shoulder and bring your legs up.” Ozpin said.

“Okay~.” Ruby put her arm over his shoulder grabbing his back as she lifted her legs up he wrapped his arm around her and lifted with ease. Ruby giggled and leaned forward kissing him on the cheek. “You know sometimes I forget how big you are and how it can be a real pain in the butt. Other times it’s just plain awesome.”

Oz chuckled as Weiss collapsed the wheelchair and lead the way up the stairs. “Being large does have its uses, as does being small.”

“All the better to cuddle.” Ruby said and nuzzled Oz’s neck.

While Ruby had been in the hospital Qrow had taken the time to clean their room. So when they arrived it was spotless, even the linens hadn’t been used. Ruby looked through it and said. “I don’t think it’s been this clean since we moved in. When did this happen?”

“Qrow.” Weiss said unfolding the wheelchair again. “He’s been kinda… quiet ever since the ultrasound. I saw him removing all the alcohol from the kitchen the other day, he’s been in here cleaning a lot. It's weird.”
“Oh.” Ruby said softly, she already had an idea of what was going on there.

Weiss opened the door to the bathroom and Ozpin followed setting Ruby down on the lip of the tub. “I’ll leave you two too it. I don’t think I’d be much help.”

Ozpin departed leaving the two girls.

“So shower or low water bath? I know you’re not supposed to soak your bandage.” Weiss said and pulled out a plastic stool from under the kitchen sink. She’s seen Qrow squirrel it away there a couple days ago.

“I guess sitting shower, for as long as I have the strength for it.” Ruby pulled at the buttons of her shirt.

Weiss put the stool in the tub then helped Ruby undress and then onto the stool. “Do you want me in there with you or just holding the shower-head?”

“You can come in. I do want a really thorough cleaning. I know they cleaned me up at the hospital but it’s not the same.” Ruby said.

“Okay.” Weiss stripped and stepped into the bathtub behind Ruby. She grabbed the shower head and turned the water on, only letting it touch Ruby when it was hot. “Hot enough?”

“Yeah.” Ruby tilted her head back and Weiss held the head so water ran through her red locks.

Weiss listened as Ruby purred, she moved the head back and forth then over her body. “Hold this please while I get some shampoo.”

Ruby let the water rush over her through careful to keep it away from the bandage. She let it wash through her sex but didn’t touch the area. Ever since they had rescued her from Tyrian she felt very shy about the area, even to herself. Part of her wanted to explore herself, make sure he really hadn’t hurt her. The other part didn’t want to know. She closed her eyes as Weiss started to rub the shampoo through her hair. It felt so good to finally be cleansed of the sweat. When Weiss prompted her she gave the shower head back and they repeated the process for conditioner. When it came time to soap her body Weiss turned the water off. “Want me to do your back?”

“Yes please.” Ruby drew her hair over her shoulder while Weiss readied her washcloth. When she was done she handed it over and waited while Ruby did her torso but couldn’t help but notice Ruby avoid her sex.

“Ruby are you okay?” Weiss asked moving forward so Ruby could lean back on her. She could tell the crimsonette was getting tired.

“Tired but otherwise fine. Why?” Ruby happily leaned on Weiss, letting the other woman take the cloth from her.

“It’s just… you need to clean there too and your avoiding it.” Weiss said wrapping an arm around her friend.

Ruby was silent for a long minute. “I… I’m just afraid something will be different. I know the doctor said he didn’t hurt me but he was still… I just can’t… not yet.”

“Would you like me too?” Weiss asked. “Maybe it will make you feel better to know for sure everything is as it should be.”
Ruby worried her bottom lip but then very softly said. “Okay.”

Weiss took the cloth back and with extreme care washed through her friends feminine folds. Ruby hid her face against Weiss’s neck but didn’t make a sound. When she was done she set the cloth aside and traced over Ruby’s mound then through the outer lips of her sex. “Anything feel different?”

“No.” Ruby whispered against Weiss’s neck.

Weiss moved her gentle exploration to the inner folds, she knew it was all the same from when they played at The Crimson. “How about now?”

“Fine.”

Weiss cupped her sex. “Now?”

“It doesn’t feel any different.” Ruby said still hiding against Weiss’s neck.

“That’s because it isn’t any different. You’re okay, nothing changed. He didn’t change you.” Weiss removed her hand and hugged Ruby holding her against her. “Does that help any?”

“I think so. Thanks.” Ruby said and untucked herself from Weiss. “I’m getting tired.”

“Okay, let’s just get rinsed off and you back into your wheelchair.” Weiss said.

Largely thanks to all of Weiss’s practice they finished quickly and had Ruby back in her chair. Weiss wrapped Ruby up in a couple towels and wheeled her back into the bedroom. Ruby took the time to scan the room again, Weiss let her roll the chair on her own as she went to the bedside. She lifted the corner of her pillow and found the rose there. The green and red pattern of flames vibrant and healthy. Her heart melted a little bit as she picked it up and wove it into her damp hair. Qrow must have put it there. White lace peaked out from under the corner of her pillow and she pulled the item out.

It was a cotton nightgown and a heavier fuzzy housecoat. The lace was embroidered so it would not touch her skin but was purely ornamental. The cotton itself was extremely fine, likely one of the softest things she had ever touched. Her hand went to the scar Tyrian had carved into her, the gown was thick enough to hide it as well. “Weiss help me with this please.”

Weiss came over now dressed herself. “That’s lovely. It must be from Qrow. Oz has either been here or with you. I don’t he’s had a chance to go shopping.”

Ruby sighed a small happy sound and brought the nightgown up to her nose. A very light scent of peaches, as she unfolded it dried peach petals fell from it. How had he found those? Ruby picked one up and pressed it to her cheek, it was still soft. She reached out over the bond, he wasn’t close but now that she wasn’t lost to pain her range was a bit improved. She sent him her appreciation and love, he returned with adoration and a feeling of a gentle hug. With a whispering of “I love you.” before fading away.

Weiss took the nightgown and arranged it so Ruby could get her arms through. “I think this was very thoughtful of him.”

Ruby lifted herself so Weiss could pull the gown down over the rest of her. “He can be like that when he wants to be. There is a reason I picked him. For all his flaws he can be good.”

“I’ve started to notice.” Weiss said helping Ruby put the heavy warm housecoat on.
“Had fun with him then? We haven’t really talked about it, you looked really happy riding him at the Crimson.” Ruby said.

Weiss lifted up the pillow and sure enough found thick wool socks, she grabbed them and returned to Ruby. “Well, he was really … kind I guess, James was like that too. He called me Mistress and I felt that really hot. I really liked being in a more dominant position.”

“Hmmm.” Ruby looked away.

Weiss found slippers under the bed, Qrow had really thought of everything. “Ruby what are you thinking?”

“It’s stupid. But I don’t like it when people touch me anymore. Oz is okay, he has really big hands and they feel.” She trailed off and shook her head. “You’re okay too and you make me feel safer right now then Oz does for some reason.”

“Maybe it’s just that I’m female. You were hurt by a man, it does make sense to be put off by them now.” Weiss said helped Ruby guide the chair back down the hall and called out. “I need a strong muscly male!”

Ruby laughed trust Weiss to make her feel better. “Would you help me with touch Weiss? Maybe if you and Oz are together with me. It will help keep everything separate, from what happened.”

“I’d be happy to help. I’ll ask Ozpin if he had any thoughts.” Weiss said and Jaune came up the stairs.

“One Jaune elevator coming right up.” He said and Ruby laughed reaching up and Jaune picked her up with ease and carrying her down with Weiss following with the wheelchair. Thanks to the efforts of Nora, Ren and Yang most of the damage done from the fight between Jaune and Qrow had been cleaned up. Ruby did notice the crater in the wall as they entered the living room but Jaune who was following only shook his head when she inquired, pointing it out.

''Ruby quick. Tell Ozzy here to do as he’s been told.'' Nora was straddling Ozpin’s lap a hand on the back of the couch holding her up, the other holding a steaming cup that smelt familiarly of lemons up towards her lovers face. Oz for his part was trying not to just shove the ginger headed girl off his lap but the cup was coming dangerously close to his face and he wasn’t sure if she was going to force it down his throat or pour it over his face. Both options sounded morbid.

“What are you trying to make him drink?” Ruby asked, letting Weiss help her out of the wheelchair so she could sink into the comfortable couch. Her first instinct was to sit next to Oz but Nora was shaking the cup around so much she didn’t think it would be wise.

Oz gave her his best puppy dog look. “Ruby, she’s trying to get me to drink lemon and ginger tea.” As he was distracted, pleading with Ruby, Nora attempted to swoop in, almost battering his mouth with the hot cup. Oz kept shaking his head away from her but Nora was growing more playful, pinning him down.

“You. Will. Drink. The. TEEEEEEEA.’’

A voice sounded from the doorway that Ozpin knew very well. “Yes, Oz drink your tea. Given that you can’t seem to go three months without injuring yourself.”

Ozpin obediently took a sip as Lydia strode into the room. Her hair down as she wore simple jeans and a blue t-shirt, with a basket in one hand. Nora stared at Oz who drank the tea now without a fuss. She looked over to Lydia. “You’ve got to teach me that!”
“Perhaps I shall, given that he can’t seem to take care of himself, someone must.” Lydia removed the basket, slipping it onto the new coffee table close to Ruby. “Ruby, I am so pleased to see you’re safe and home again. How are you feeling?”

“Errr, a little sore and weak but the baby is fine and I will be too.” She didn’t add the ‘I hope’ but from the look on the older woman’s face, she had no doubt heard it.

“That’s understandable, I heard you’re having a girl.”

“Yes.” Ren returned to the living room with a tray of hot chocolate and cookies. Ruby’s stomach did a little flip at the gooey treat, oh sweet delicious chocolate.

Lydia took her seat next to Weiss on the couch, blowing at the mug of chocolate while Ruby and the others each sipped their drinks. Oz now holding his tea looked longingly at the tray, catching Lydia’s attention. “You drink your tea first before you even think about hot chocolate.”

While Oz pouted she pushed the basket closer to Ruby. “These are for you dear. Think of them as a get better soon gift, there’s some lavender scented candles and body oil. I hope they prove to be soothing for you and the baby.”

Ozpin perked up, if he had been a cat his ears would have flipped forward. Unfortunately for Nora who was still straddled on Ozpin’s lap she felt the change in him also and her cheeks went a beetroot red. Lydia looked at him and then laughed. “Ohh, one track mind much my Oz?”

Touched Ruby peeked into the basket and the scent of lavender filled her lungs, it was just a tad sweet but soothing. “Thank you Lydia, I’ll make sure to put them to good use.”

Nora blinked once, twice looked at Oz and raised a brow then licked her lips. Oz near yelped when she ground down in his lap. Ren came in and giggled covering his mouth. “Nora… his arm’s still broken.”

Nora pouted. “Fine, but this wasn’t my fault.”

“If I had two working arms…” Ozpin growled in a low purr.

Nora bounced off his lap and to Ren. “Hey could we borrow the oil?”

Lydia smiled and reached into a pocket. “I felt with how many couples were here bring some extra would not be a bad idea.”

“Thank you!” Nora took it from Ren and looked up at him with a smile.

Ren grinned. “Well we’re off to get lubed up!” He picked Nora up and dashed up the stairs.

Oz looked over at Ruby, then kissed his hand and waved after the two. “Goodnight everybody!”

“I suddenly feel very sorry for Ren.” Ruby said.

“Ren? I feel sorry for Nora, she may have the enthusiasm but he’s got the stamina.” Yang said.

Weiss looked over at her. “How would you know that?”

“Errrr you know what, nevermind.” Yang blushed bright and inched toward the exit.

“Hey Yang I’ve a question. Why is it called a blow job?” Ruby asked, it had been a question on her mind, there after all was no blowing involved.
“Cause fellatio is a bit of a mouthful.” Yang said.

Ozpin groaned and covered his face with a palm. The physical pain of a bad pun, but he couldn’t just let it lie. “Well if someone wants to demonstrate the truth to that statement…”

“Ozpin behave! No sex for you till your arm is healed. And no speeding it up.” Lydia said through her lips were pulled in a smile.

Oz pouted. “Can I argue the technically of it being oral sex?”

Lydia fixed him with an unimpressed look. Then as she followed Oz’s thoughts rolled her eyes. “Good grief. I’d say maybe you do need to get laid but then knowing you it will only encourage you.”

“Hey showers have many uses! Plus one good hand is all I need.” Oz said with a smirk.

“You just need Qrow to come back.” Weiss said.

At the mention of the red eyed man all eyes flicked to Ruby who looked down to the basket in her lap. “Where even is he?”

“We don’t know.”

Later in the evening Ruby sat in the living room with Yang, Weiss and Jaune. Ozpin had gone out to look for Qrow and Ren and Nora still hadn’t returned from upstairs when they escaped to have some together time a few hours earlier. Lydia had returned home with the promise of coming back at the weekend to spend some time with Ruby, secretly she thought it was probably more to make sure Oz wasn’t overdoing it then anything. Ruby curled onto the couch her head resting on Weiss’ lap, a thick blanket warding off the evening chill.

They had just finished eating, Yang had made their family recipe of chicken noodle soup with fresh rye bread and apple crumble with custard. All the comfort foods of home, it made Ruby ache with homesickness, she wished their dad was here but having this little piece of home would have to do.

Yang and Jaune took up the other couch, her sister flicking through the channels for something to watch when the news came on. “On tonight's news, an update on the condition of Mistral lower city section. The emergency services are still attempting to gain control over the situation that occurred just a few days ago. Many witnesses state that a fight between the white fang and a lone huntsman broke out resulting in over twenty casualties and over a hundred people were injured. One witness was even able to record part of the fight and has been brave enough to send it to us, lets watch shall we.’’

Ruby was shocked into silence her eyes wide as the fight between Oz and Tyrain played over the screen, she had never seen such brutality. She hadn’t known what happened after being rescued, hadn’t realised that Oz had gone after Tyrian and the damage done … Ruby’s hand went to her mouth as she watched Oz with a raw power and anger she didn’t know existed. The disregard for civilians life, the buildings burning rubble and debris scattered around. She turned green at the blood that pooled around Tyrian and had to force back the gagging when bits of White Fang intestine littered the ground. She couldn’t see beyond the gleeful snarl upon Oz’s features, she could tell he just didn’t care! The anchorwoman went on to narrate the battle as a sniper pulled out a bigger gun
that shattered Oz’s Aura then set about going through his shoulder.

Ruby could feel the tension grow in her friends as they watched the damage and conflict unfold as Oz fought with Tyrian and the White Fang. Her eyes were glued to the carnage and when the television went blank Ruby and the others spun in their seats to see Oz holding the remote. His face was carefully blank as he pointed the remote at the television but in his eyes was a anger that sent shivers up Ruby’s spine. “You probably shouldn’t have seen that just yet.”

Chapter End Notes

Ardy: So I’m having some internet issues so consider this your Saturday update. Thank you too: darkvampirekisses, Baker1762, threeguesses, Tez and Frapadingue70
Kry: With luck things will smooth out soon!
Ozpin sighed and knocked lightly on the bedroom door, Yang had put something to brace it shut. “Ruby, please come out.”

“Go away!” The voice that made it through the door was tearful and Oz leaned his forehead against the wood. As easy as it would be to break it down it would mean nothing if he couldn’t talk Ruby into opening the door, however that was proving to be the more difficult task.

“Ruby please… He almost killed you. Almost killed our baby. Did you really think I would just let him go? I couldn’t just do nothing, couldn’t let him go. And if we ever meet him again, you can count on that Qrow and I will kill him. I will not lie to you.” Oz turned and sat slowly on the ground. “We love you. He almost took you from us. He deserved everything he got and more. I couldn’t let him go, so long as he is alive he’s a threat to you. So yes, I did try to kill him.”

Within the room Ruby and Yang sat cuddled together. Yang rubbing up and down Ruby’s back. Ozpin continued. “I love you, would do anything for you. To see him hurt you, every ounce of mercy in me fled, if I had to go through it all again I wouldn’t change what I did. Do I regret that innocent people were hurt, yes but it was going to happen. That’s war Ruby, I wasn't expecting the White Fang but there was little to be done, either I run away and let people get hurt or I fight and people get hurt.”

Silence met him admission and Oz sighed. “Please tell me what I should have done differently, had it been me or Qrow what would you have done?”

“That's not fair.” Came the soft voice inside.

“Life is not fair Ruby, had there been no Salem, no threat . . .”

“You can't use that as an excuse! I know people are going to get hurt, I am not that naive but . . . I can't stand to see innocent people hurt Oz and you turned a blind eye to their pain in your anger.” Ruby said. “You didn’t even notice, you didn’t care.”

He sighed. “You’re right, I didn’t even notice, didn't care. I was so consumed with taking out the threat to you that I failed my duty as a Huntsman. To protect the people. I’m sorry.”

Downstairs Jaune and Weiss were stood at the stairs talking quietly as Qrow came in through the door, his head and shoulders wet from the drizzle outside. He immediately heard the sound of Oz talking upstairs and turned his confused expression on Weiss. “What’s going on? Who is Oz talking to?”

The former heiress sighed. “Ruby. She’s locked herself in the bedroom with Yang.”

Now that was confusing. “Why?”

Jaune leaned against the wall, giving Qrow a sour look, he was still pissed at him. “Why don’t you go see for yourself.”

Qrow picked his way quietly up the stairs and saw Ozpin sitting against the door to their room. He walked over and whispered. “What happened?”

“She saw the footage.” Ozpin said in the same volume.

“Ah.” Qrow said. “Wait here, I’ve a secret weapon.” Qrow made for the kitchen and went through
the cupboards seeing what they had on hand. Chocolate milk, strawberry icecream... hmm he grinned he could do at least one of his ideas right away.

Gathering up his ingredients he set to work, five minutes later he had strawberry chocolate milk shakes for four. Cookies would have to be for later, after cleaning up quickly he set the four tall glasses on a tray and headed back upstairs. Ozpin raised a brow at the drinks but then Qrow called out. “Ruby, I’ve got milkshakes. Let’s please talk about this and not through a door.”

To Oz’s surprise they heard shuffles from the other side of the door. He slowly stood his arm was feeling very sore though he was still very drugged up on pain meds. Yang was the one who opened the door and peeked through “Strawberry?”

“Strawberry ice cream with fresh strawberries and chocolate milk.” Qrow held the tray higher. “I figured you were in there so I brought one for everybody.”

The door opened the rest of the way and Qrow’s breath caught in his chest. Ruby looked better, clean hair shining softly. Her pale skin no longer pasty. “Hello my love.” He called out softly and Ruby looked up at him. She looked unsure of him, but it was better than the full out flinching from before. She was wearing the nightgown he had got for her. The silence grew heavy in the room and Qrow sung out over the bond again.

Ruby closed her eyes and let herself enjoy his mental voice, not roughed by too many years of drinking. Qrow silently progressed into the room and offered her a milkshake. Ruby took one from him without a word and slowly took a long sip of the milkshake through the white and red striped paper straw and hummed happily, her eyes widening. Qrow always made the best milkshakes, just the right chocolate to strawberry ratio. How long had it been since she had one? She took another long sip and smiled a bit more, thinking about how she normally got to have breakfast milkshakes on her birthday.

Qrow continued his mental song, keeping the connection between him and Ruby open as Yang and Oz came over helping themselves to a shake. Qrow took the last and set the tray aside, the four enjoyed the drinks in silence. Ruby finished first and rested her head on Qrow’s shoulder, her first physical touch with him since before the incident as she listened to his song. Smooth and lulling, it made her sleepy.

Ozpin watched just a bit jealous as Ruby relaxed into Qrow’s side. Yang looked more than a little amazed at the sudden shift in her sister. Qrow set his shake aside and reached out petting her hair with a finger. “I love you, I adore you, I’m sorry, I will keep you and our child safe. I love you, I adore you.”

Ruby purred at the emotions that came over the bond, Qrow smelled nice and clean. The taste of strawberry lingered on her tongue, it was easy to feel Qrow and not Tyrian. Her eyes burned slightly behind her lids as she took it in, surrounding herself with his feelings. So long as she kept her eyes closed, she could feel him, he was going right around her brain and lulling her soul. “I love it when you sing.” Ruby murmured against his arm.

“T’ll have to make a habit of doing it more often.” Qrow said softly.

“I wish I could hear it.” Ozpin said setting his now empty cup aside.

Ruby moved away from Qrow and laid down on her back. She was already exhausted, healing like this took a lot out of her. She looked over at Ozpin. “I’m still upset with you.”

“I know and I understand why. You chose Huntsmen though, you can’t pin this all on me. You’re
still naïve at times and I don’t take back anything I have done or said. We may just have to agree to disagree on this point.” Ozpin sat beside Qrow and pet his leg.

Qrow preened at the touch, he missed being touched. Ruby watched them, her two Huntsmen kick ass Grimm killers. She knew that Qrow had killed swathes of bandits and many many more. She had never thought about the human blood Oz had on his hands though. Were they really so different? Ruby sighed, no they weren’t she was just used to thinking of Qrow as someone who killed when he had to. Never Ozpin, at Beacon when they first started spending time together he had been untouchable and cold. She would have never dreamed of him having the fire he set on Tyrian. She knew he could be very passionate, she mused on that. Was this another facet of that passion? Or was this how Oz reacted when one of his toys was broken?

“If I asked you not to do it again. Would you?” Ruby asked looking over to Oz.

“It better never happen again.” Ozpin said in a dark growl.

“That’s not what I meant.” Ruby said.

Oz sighed. “Probably not, the best I can promise is to attempt to be more aware of my surroundings. Not the easiest thing mind you in a blood rage.”

“Here, here.” Yang said, she knew that feeling well.

Ruby gently touched her tummy, she knew Oz’s eyes were already on it. That he wanted to pet and kiss, she knew he loved their daughter. Tyrian had almost killed them both, maybe just maybe she could understand why Oz had wanted vengeance. Preferably a very bloody vengeance. “Okay. I won’t be angry with you over this. I suppose I understand, it’s still scary as all hell to see you like that.” She cupped her stomach. “But I can understand why you did it.”

“I’m sorry I frightened you.” Ozpin said his eyes falling on her stomach. He reached out and looked to her for permission.

Ruby moved her hands and let him pet her stomach. She had filled out a bit for the week in hospital, the nurses had a bit too much fun trying to pour food into her. She knew it was mostly for the safety and health of her baby, it’s really why she had managed to eat at all. His hand felt nice on her stomach, she knew he loved their baby.

Qrow stood silently and gathered up the tray and cups, Ruby looking up at him. He let his gaze fall away. “I’m sorry. If I knew how to forget I would.” Ruby’s voice was soft in his head. He did enjoy that she wasn’t shutting him out, even if all the conversations were purely mental. “You’ve spent enough time with me to know this isn’t the kind of thing you can forget.”

“I still don’t know how to fix this.”

“Relearn. He taught you one thing, so learn another. Ozpin would be best and I’ve a feeling Weiss is interested as well. I’ll go now, let me know your next doctor visit goes. My Aura has been a little weaker then normal, I am wondering if you’re borrowing it again.” Qrow headed out as Ruby watched after him.

The door clicked shut behind him and Yang asked. “What were you two talking about?”

Ruby just shook her head and looked out the window. “Could you go check on him Yang, please?”

“Sure.” Yang said and headed out after her uncle.
When she was gone Ozpin said. “I really wish you two wouldn’t do that. I get that, it’s a way for you both to get to the heart of your feelings. But..”

“You feel left out. I’m sorry.” Ruby said. “We were just talking about how I could heal from this. He recommended relearning how to be touched and that he thinks the bond is drawing Aura off of him again.”

“Is it?” Ozpin asked still petting her stomach.

She shrugged. “I think so, even at the hospital I was healing fast. Even now aside from my muscles my internals healed at the hospital. Doctor Rutile was amazed, she said at the rate I’m healing I’ll probably be better in a few days. Speaking of which would could you help me walk around? I’m supposed to walk around to prevent muscle adhesions.” Ruby worked on propping herself up.

“That’s interesting. That you can call on his Aura without doing it intentionally.” Ozpin shifted offering his good arm.

Ruby took it and let him help her to the side of the bed. His arm around her middle was both comforting for it’s support but still made her uneasy. She stepped away from him and started a slow circuit of the room.

Ozpin watched her as she walked with a hand pressed tight to her wound. “How’s the baby? I know you can’t feel it yet but surely you get some sort of sensation.”

“Just contentment, kinda like a whisper in the back of my head.” Ruby said, she walked another circle of the room before asking. “Oz, would it be okay if I spent more time with Weiss? Like sexually? She helped me in the shower and touched me. It didn’t freak me out, Qrow mentioned that relearning would help and well Weiss is as far from Tyrian as I can get.”

Ozpin clenched his first but took a breath and relaxed again. “Qrow’s right, as are you. Are you alright with me being present for this?”

“Of course. We’ll probably need your advice.” Ruby said walking over and sitting beside him again.

Oz pursed his lips thinking about it. “What did he do? Exactly Ruby, this is… I need to know this. If only so I can help with it. Believe it or not, Lydia has had clients with this very problem. I know that people have come to her to help with this issue. To relearn how to feel pleasure again.”

Ruby reached up to the rose in her hair, if she shared the memories with him Qrow would see them too. The silver eyed warrior bit her lip, would that really be so bad? For him to know. Ruby took a deep breath and called up her Aura, closed her eyes and let it flow through the rose.

Ozpin sucked in a breath as Ruby showed him. She showed him all of it, front to back everything she remembered. Even why the bond failed them, that she hid, that she shut down rather then let them see what was being done to her. That she felt shame over all of it she could still feel the stinger cut through her skin over her breast, his way of branding her with his initials. When it was over Oz reached out to her then withdrew his hand. “I’m sorry. We should have gotten to you sooner.”

The pregnant woman shook her head sharply. “If I had been stronger, if I hadn’t hidden. You could have!” Tears gathered in Ruby’s eyes, she pressed a hand to them. “I should have kept trying to contact Qrow, maybe if I had tried more the range would have gotten better. I could have gotten away! If I had just tried.”
“Ruby love.” Ozpin reached out and set his hand on her shoulder. “It’s not your fault, I... if I hadn’t been so selfish none of this might have happened.”

Ruby cleaned her eyes and looked up at him. “What are you talking about?”

Silence stretched between them as Oz looked out the window. Ruby wasn’t sure he would answer her, then he started to speak. “I haven’t been completely truthful.” Ozpin reached up and brushed his black bangs out of his face. Revealing the brand that had been burned into the side of his face. “Remember back at Beacon, when I gave you that detention? To help me do some research in the library?”

“Yeah, you wouldn’t say what you are actually looking for.” Ruby reached out and touched it, it felt rough like so many other things about Oz now but this, it felt different somehow, colder...

He turned his head away but didn’t dislodge her fingers. “It’s a brand, ‘his’ mark of ownership in a way. His name, well he’s got many. I best remember him as Gaunter O’Dimm or Master Mirror. Salem... I don’t remember even why I’ve set myself against her anymore. I do remember bargaining with Gaunter O’Dimm, I think it was for immortally to last long enough to fight Salem but when I finally got to be with you and Qrow again. I started looking into ways to break this curse. Hired someone to do it for me. I checked in on that someone the day you were taken, only to find O’Dimm had visited him already. He had blinded and practically imprisoned him. He told me what he had learned, though it wasn’t at all helpful, then there was an accident and he died. Later O’Dimm confronted me, threatened to hurt you and then look what happened.” Oz finished sounding defeated. “This is all my fault. I’m so sorry.” Tears gathered in his eyes. Finally after all this time he had told her the truth and the weight of his grief, his guilt settled over his heart like an avalanche of stones.

Ruby released the breath she had been holding, her heart aching. “You couldn’t have known. Oz,” Ruby traced down to hold his cheek. “this wasn’t your fault. I know you, I understand you want to be free of the curse, so you could be with us wholly and completely. I don’t blame you for trying, or for what’s happened. You’ve always wanted to that freedom, the actions of one man does not make them your doing, no matter how he phased it. Now come down here so I can kiss you.”

Ozpin dipped his head and kissed her lips chastely. “Thank you. You are far too good for me.”

Ruby snuggled into his side, having him know took a weight off her heart. While she doubted the topic was finished with she didn’t wish to speak of it again now, especially since it hurt her love and changed the subject. “So think you and Weiss can help? I don’t want to be afraid of being touched, I already miss it.”

“Once you’re healed enough. We’ll get started.”

Yang walked into her room, she had been sharing one with Weiss to see Qrow sitting on her bed which was odd. His flask was beside him, tears filled his eyes. He pointed at the flask, his voice breaking. “Yang, would you take that away please.”

Yang grabbed it and stuffed it in a pocket. The significance of what he asked her wasn’t lost. “Uncle Qrow?”
“Ruby just shared the memories through the rose. Of what he did.” Qrow stood and hit the wall creating a crater. “That bastard.” Qrow’s eyes narrowed.

“Uncle your kinda scaring me here.” Yang said getting up and reaching for his hand.

“I knew he drank, did his damnedest to be like me. But I didn’t understand just how far it went. How obsessed he was, with both of us.” Qrow said through grit teeth. “Ruby was just a means to an end. He was out to hurt us, all of us. He’s done a good job hasn’t he?”

“She’s back now and will be okay.” Yang said. He was seriously starting to worry her, she had never seen her uncle like this.

“Yang, she’s pregnant in the middle of a war. He went after our kid as soon as we got there, he could have killed it at anytime but he waited till we were there, so we could watch him try to take them from us.” Qrow clenched his fists. “We all wanted that kid so badly. He fucking knew that, he tired to take the one thing we all valued from us. Where would we be now… if he had killed the baby?”

“In misery.” Yang said starting to understand.

“In no shape to fight.” Qrow said. “That’s all any of it has been about. Hurting not just Ruby but all of us, so when the fight comes to Haven we wouldn’t be in any shape to fight it.”

Yang tightened her grip around his hand. “Uncle, please stop. He didn’t win, Ruby is okay so is the baby. It will all be okay now.”

Qrow pulled away from her and sat down again, covering his face with his hands. “I’m sorry, he just… she, she was so strong Yang. I don’t think I would have had that strength in her position. Now she’s back and he still has a hold on her, I’m trying. Gods know that I am trying but I don’t know how to fix this. I miss her so much. She here, yet I can’t have her. Can’t hold her.”

“She likes it when you talk mentally to her, she likes it when you sing to her. You can both get past this uncle, she still loves you. It will just take a little time.” Yang said moving her hand to rub up and down his back.

“I know. Gods I miss Tai right now.” Qrow said and chuckled.

“Dad has always been better then me at this kind of thing.” Yang said.

“You’re not half bad yourself kiddo.” Qrow reached up and ruffled her hair. “Thanks for talking with me, Ruby’s usually the one to get me out of these sorts of loops.”

“She was the one that told me to check on you.”

Qrow stared ahead and then the huffed a breath, most of the tension easing from his body. “I know.”

Ruby, Ozpin and Weiss were gathered in the training room, the winter rain was chilling the air but it was loud so much so that no one would hear this conversation. Ruby was resting with her head in Weiss’s lap.
“So how are we going to do this?” Weiss asked petting through Ruby’s hair.

“You will be the only one touching Ruby sexually till she is ready.” Ozpin said looking out at the rain.

“Ruby what do you think of all this? I won't do anything if you don’t want to.” Weiss ran her hand through her friend’s hair.

Ruby purred softly and softly spoke. “I’m frightened, a little but I don’t want to let Tyrian win. If I never allow touch again then it’s like he’s won and I know I’m stronger then that. If it means going slow and trying new things I’m okay with that. I love Oz and Qrow, I don’t want what he did to me to wither that love away.”

“Okay but on one condition. If at any time you feel its too much or you want us to stop you’ll tell us. I imagine these things take time and I’m sure Oz has plenty of patience if you find it too hard.”

Oz took a moment to bring up the second part of their topic “I think it’s time to touch more on anal sex. It’s not something you have experienced before and is untainted. As for having anal sex, I think while you’re still healing it would be best to just get you comfortable with having that area touched by hands or lips at first. Until the midwife gives the okay I want to keep penetration off the table. There are plenty of pleasure points to be discovered without it.”

“I’ve also never had the opportunity and would appreciate a few lessons, if you wouldn’t mind, Professor~.” Weiss battered her eyes, smirking.

While the two bantered and flirted Ruby snuggled deeper into Weiss, happy that they were taking the first steps to her getting better. She longed for the day when she could approach Qrow and show him how much she loved him without the fear of her memories holding her back.

The discussion went unspoken that Qrow and Weiss would switch beds. This shift left Oz on the literal and metaphorical edge of the bed, Ruby snuggled Weiss and sometimes Oz would snuggle to Weiss’s back but more often pick a side and stick to it. Tonight Ozpin woke in the middle of it, a fluttering of Aura over his skin. He propped himself up with one arm and looked over. Ruby was sound asleep snuggled up to Weiss, so it wasn’t her calling to him. He quietly slipped from the bed holding his arm, the effect of the painkillers were fainter now but he didn’t much feel like taking any more right now. Oz picked his way out of the room, his slacks hanging low around his hips. The gifted Aura called him down, as he neared the training room warm orange light started to fill the staircase. He stopped in the eve of the door and smiled. “Qrow, you didn’t have to do all this.”

Candles, dozens of them dotted around the room in extra strong glass cases to ward off his Semblance. A futon had been spread out on the floor and covered in silken sheets. Heavy rugs covered the ground. Sticks of sandalwood incense burned filling the room with a pleasant scent. Oz took several steps in only for Qrow to step out for where he had been hiding and wrap his arms around Oz’s back, mindful of his bad shoulder and stood on his toes to rest his chin on the bigger man’s shoulder. “Can’t a guy be lonely? I haven’t been alone in a bed for this long since Beacon and missed you.”

“Ruby’s only been home for four days.” Oz said taking a deeper breath as Qrow pet down his abdomen.
“That’s four days without you or her.” Qrow traced over Oz’s love handles. “I said I wanted to take more time for just us. I’m putting the effort in, call it a submissive gesture.” He nipped Oz’s ear toying with the lobe.

“That’s four days without you or her.” Qrow traced over Oz’s love handles. “I said I wanted to take more time for just us. I’m putting the effort in, call it a submissive gesture.” He nipped Oz’s ear toying with the lobe.

“Hmm, when you put it like that.” Ozpin purred and Qrow stepped away and took his good hand drawing him toward the futon.

“How’s your shoulder?” He asked.

Ozpin was distracted by Qrow’s nude and very well cleaned and trimmed form. “Uh, fine I haven’t managed to upset it yet.”

Qrow pushed Oz’s slacks off and took a step back drawing Oz with him. “Well your mission tonight will be to lay back and enjoy yourself.”

“Qrow~.” Ozpin purred as he sat in the middle of the futon, Qrow straddling him and pushing him back with a hand.

“Lay back’ being the key words here.” Qrow said with a smile.

Ozpin let Qrow have his way and put his head on the pillow that had been placed for him. “You know my preferences.”

“And your shoulder is busted, so you’ll just have to be receptive today. When it’s fixed you can have your way with me however you wish. Just let me have tonight.” Qrow leaned down and kissed Oz long, slow and sensual.

Ozpin purred into the long kiss. “Well I already like where this is going. Just don’t tell Lydia.”

“She’s gonna be a Godmother right? She’ll find out either way and all she’ll learn is how I love to take care of you.” Qrow sat up and reached over collecting a clear urn and powering a little oil into his hand. “It was actually Ren and Nora that gave me this idea.”

“Lydia got Ruby lavender oil as a get well gift. I’ve so many ideas for when Ruby is ready for them.” Oz said and let his eyes slid closed.

Qrow massaged the warm oil over his lovers pectorals tracing his thumbs over Ozpin’s nipples. “Like?”

“Lydia’s left my room largely intact at her house. More importantly she’s got a bath that’s for pampering huge even for me. I want to take Ruby there, bring her in to relax in the water and give her a massage just like this. Before that I want to get her into anal play, I’ve wanted to for a very long time. A nice massage in the hot water, then a full body one on a nice silken bed.” Ozpin let out a shuddering breath with a soft moan of pleasure as Qrow started to massage his hand.

“What else?” Qrow asked working the tension out of Oz’s palms moving bit by bit to his fingers.

“When she’s all relaxed and happy, hmm. I want to have her anally, would have to be so slow and gentle but it would be worth it. I’m confident she’d love it, furthermore it would be a completely new sensation to her.” Ozpin looked up as Qrow put his hand on his chest.

“Sounds like a lot of fun. Almost tantric.” Qrow shifted gathering more oil and setting about to massage Oz’s abs. “Do you have more to this fantasy?”

Ozpin chuckled. “Now you just want to hear me talk.”
“Yes.” Qrow admitted licking his lips as Oz rose to full attention under him.

“Sometimes in this fantasy you’re there too. Sometimes it’s me on the bottom, bottomed out in her silken wet core, while you’re above us. Taking her slowly by that tight ass of hers, that I’d be able to feel you move inside of her as she writhed in bliss upon us. The pleasure for her so intense that sometimes she can’t even scream.” Oz bit his lip as Qrow leaned down and kissed the wide tip of his erection.

“Continue.” Qrow said and kissed down Oz’s member.

“We’d move in tandem, my hands on her hips guiding everyone. Her head would throw back and you’d weave a hand into hair and kiss her neck as you rocked into her. Watching the two of you, Gods it makes me throb just thinking about it.” Oz closed his eyes as Qrow pushed his legs part and licked over his scrotum.

Qrow teased two fingers over Oz’s perineum then pressed inward before massaging in a tight circle. Ozpin bucked and grit his teeth. “Qrow.” He growled in a low warning.

Qrow moved back up Oz’s body. “Please I brought everything for it. I’ll stop with fingerling but I want to make you feel good. I still remember the time James fucked you. Watching you orgasm like that was glorious. I want to hear you howl again.”

Ozpin wore with himself, he didn’t like being vulnerable like that he’d rather have a mouth around his cock then anything anywhere near his ass. Lydia was the only one that had unfettered access there, it wasn’t that he didn’t trust Qrow. Oz looked down at his finger, Qrow and Ruby’s red ring was around it. “Where’s the rose?”

Qrow leaned over to the edge of the bed where he had stashed it when he heard Oz coming down the stairs. “Here why?”

Ozpin reached up and took it form Qrow then threaded it through the other man’s feathered locks. “You’re good enough to shield this from Ruby right?”

“Yeah.” Qrow said a bit confused as to why Oz wanted him to have it on him.

Ozpin closed his eyes and focused, he activated his Aura and sent the emotions and thoughts he held about anal sex to Qrow.

“Ohh.” Qrow’s eyes widened as he got the message. “Oz’s you’ll always be my dom. You don’t have to worry about that.”

“I know, it’s just a difficult feeling to explain.” Ozpin said as Qrow moved back down his body.

Qrow returned his fingers to massage behind Oz’s balls as he licked over the head of Oz’s member. “I understand why you let James top you now. He was always closer to your level then I’ve ever been.”

“It’s just some stupid tick in my head. I’m sorry but it’s part of why I like to give, I just hate being submissive to a sub. Even if it’s not really submission but being on the receiving end. Uhhh.” Ozpin groaned as Qrow wrapped his lips around his erection and started a slow dive. “Gods it’s been too long.”

Qrow hummed his agreement causing Oz to clench up under him. He started to slowly suck bobbing his head, he missed the taste of Oz on his tongue. “I’ve dreamed about this since we got Ruby back. Part of me just wants to edge you so badly, make you desperate to finish then stop and
Ozpin was surprised to feel the thoughts through the sent Aura. “I doubt you’ll ever get me to scream.” Oz reached down and stroked through Qrow’s hair.

“If you let me at your prostate I totally could.”

“No position comes to mind right now that I could maintain and that wouldn’t put stress on my shoulder. Nice try.” Ozpin fought the urge to thrust as Qrow sped his actions drawing a long groan from Oz. “Fuck Qrow, get up here and ride me.”

“No.” Qrow pulled up off Oz’s member giving it a loving kiss. “You’re all tensed up again.”

“Qrow…” Ozpin rumbled as Qrow reached for the oil again.

Qrow warmed it with his hands before returning to Oz’s chest. Drawing the tension out with long strokes moving downward again, a smile flitting over his lips.

“What?” Oz asked closing his eyes again.

“I just find it funny that when you changed the colour of your hair it changed your groin too. I guess I kinda still miss the silver.” Qrow threaded his fingers through the thin hair.

“I can change it back if you want. With my arms bare it’s only a matter of time before someone puts two and two together.” Oz sucked a in a breath as Qrow coated his erection in oil, it throbbed in his hands as Oz really liked where this was going.

“That would be nice.” Qrow said moving up and taking Oz’s lips in a sensual kiss. While reaching behind him and lining Oz up with him, then easing himself down. Ozpin moaned into the kiss, reaching up and weaving a hand into thick raven locks. Qrow drew out of the kiss and rocked slowly down into Oz, he had prepped before summoning Oz. “Oh fuck yes. Missed this.”

Oz peaked out from under lidded eyes, he had to admit Qrow looked pretty damn glorious. He reached up and played with a piercing. “Ohh!” Qrow was the one clenching up this time, shivering as Oz toyed with the thin piece of metal.

“So much to do with these, part of me wants to switch these out for shields. The fun I could have with those.”

Qrow rocked on Oz with a moan, he reached up to the one that Oz’s couldn’t touch and started to play with it as he rocked in small motions. “What else?”

Ozpin chuckled his chest shaking. “Someone is in a mood to hear me talk.”

“Well you’ve gone and hurt yourself again, you’ve got to make that up to me somehow.” Qrow said with a cocky tone.

Ozpin on the other hand could see the flush spreading through Qrow, how his cock was starting to drip. He noticed how Qrow was keeping is movements small and precise. “Someone’s got a goal.” He purred and twisted the barbell. “Though I won’t complain seeing you come all over us. Hmm if these were shields a nice light chain, to pull upon them with. Make you arch in my lap, torn between riding my cock and following the chain lightly looped around my finger.”

Qrow moaned and started to length his movements. “Fuck Oz~.”
Ozpin shifted his hand to pet down, Qrow’s side taking hold of the smaller man’s hip and pushed him down fully.

“Ah!” Qrow yelped in surprise, his nails digging into Oz’s chest.

“Maybe I’d tie your hands behind your back. Let Weiss or Ruby play with the chain, while you fight to stand as I take you slowly and leisurely from behind.” Oz started to press his hips upward smirking as Qrow’s cock twitched. “You’d like that, maybe one of the girls would suck you off. You’d be helpless between us.”

“Oz~.” Qrow moved in time with Oz, a hand moving to his member to stroke himself.

“So quickly Qrow? I thought you were content fucking, how long have you wanted to be _fucked_?” Ozpin drew his legs up, mindful to keep his weight centered off his shoulders. He started to buck and Qrow howled!

Oz enjoyed listening to Qrow as he pursued his pleasure and moved his hand back to play with the piercings. Qrow came biting down on his hand to muffle the sounds that yearned to escape him. “Glorious, you’re right we don’t do this often enough.” He continued to buck as Qrow painted Oz’s abs white.

Qrow fell forward and kissed Oz’s parting his lips and letting Oz dominate the kiss. He heard the soft groan and felt it as Oz finished with a deep press of his hips. Qrow rested his head on Oz’s good shoulder with a purr. “Hmm, not what I had planned but still good.”

“The room is a nice touch, I do miss having the time to set things up.” Ozpin said and started to pet up and down Qrow’s back.

“Yeah it sucks, all this time in Mistral and we’ve barely had a chance to pause and take it in.” Qrow sat up and raised himself off of Oz and laid down on beside him. “How’s the shoulder?”

“Fine, it’s usual dull ache.” He looked at the rose in Qrow’s hair then down at his ring. “Say… how do you think Ruby would react if we shared this?”

“I’m… not sure. She’s with Weiss right?” Qrow asked. “Is she healed enough?”

“She walking now but does still tire easily. But I think you’ve been giving her Aura through the bond, she’s healing far faster then if it was just her.” Ozpin said reaching for the rose in Qrow’s hair. “I’ll take this and give you this.” He removed the red ring that never left his hand anymore and slid it on Qrow’s thumb.

“It’s probably too soon Oz.” Qrow said looking at the red ring.

“Maybe, but I’ve always noticed that Ruby can be quick to learn when taught the right way for her. I’d like to try at the very least.” Ozpin said getting up with Qrow’s help. He leaned over and kissed Qrow deeply. “Start slow, I’ll call for you if she’s up for it.”

Ruby woke to a fluttering of sensation over her skin. Ghosts of hands teasing down her spine, echos of kisses over her neck. She rolled onto her back and gasped softly staring up to the ceiling. “Qrow?” She called out over the bond and was rewarded with kisses upon her breasts. Oz entered
the room, she saw her rose tucked behind his ear. “What are you two up too?”

Ozpin smiled and approached the bed. “Teaching you.”

Weiss woke up and could see little flickers of red Aura playing over Ruby’s body. It was very pretty, red fire upon her moonlight coloured skin. She reached out and traced over the curve of a breast, Ruby purring softly beside her.

“What have you thought about anal play more yet?” Ozpin asked watching as Qrow set Ruby’s skin alight.

“Yes and yes. I liked it that one time you did it to me at Beacon.” Ruby sighed softly as the fires licked lower and lower.

“Lovely.” Oz said and moved onto the bed. “This okay? Do you mind if Qrow comes and watches?”

“I miss him. Oh!” Ruby arched a little as Qrow played the memories of touching her sex, setting his tongue to it.

Weiss giggled and moved to kiss Ruby’s neck, peppering kisses while she traced over the areola of a nipple. She liked listening to Ruby, the small woman was so much more vocal then she was. She liked how soft she was, how full her breasts were. Her hand drifted down to cup Ruby’s sex, while Oz settled beside them sitting with his legs crossed.

Ozpin kept his hands to himself as lovely as Ruby was in the low light he wanted to watch. He heard the door creak and shut behind him. A wraith made it’s away across the room and sat in the chair in the corner, curling up to watch. The red fire upon Ruby licked back up to her breasts, teasing brushes, long sucks, trails of a phantom tongue upon her.

Weiss lightly played with Ruby, she shifted downwards moving to hover above Ruby as she kissed lower. The little bump of Ruby’s belly was something she hadn’t touched before. The skin was warm and drawn tighter though she could still make out the muscles of Ruby’s abdomen. She kissed the bump again and Ruby purred, relaxing as Weiss kissed over her bump. A contented feeling flowed through Ruby, though it didn’t stem from her.

The heiress kissed down and parted the lips of Ruby’s sex.

“Draw the clitoral hood back first, then your index and middle finger on either side pinch just hard enough to keep the hood from slipping forward again.” Ozpin said looking towards the corner were Qrow sat hidden in the shadows. He hated that Qrow did that, chose to take himself so far from them.

Meanwhile Weiss did as she was told, Ruby jumped and shivered. It was different then how she had been touched before, was this one of those things Oz saved for special occasions? “Gently Weiss, just with the tip of your tongue and slowly.” Weiss dipped down and did a little lick, then set her tongue to it. Little licks curling her tongue and experimenting mindful to make sure that Ruby didn’t strain her stomach.

When Ruby was well and truly distracted Ozpin reached out and stroked over her stomach, back and forth. Letting her feel all the callouses and flaws of his hand, the dryness of it. The Silver Eyed Warrior looked up to him, their eyes locking for a long moment before she turned away with a soft moan. Weiss was really getting into what she was doing, listening to Ruby was very arousing to her. Feeling the other woman’s body change in response to her actions.
Ozpin moved his hand to Ruby’s hips. “Turn her onto her side Weiss and continue.”

The two moved, Oz drawing Ruby’s upper leg back so that Weiss would be comfortable as she continued to play and experiment. He spread his hand encompassing the trace over her whole butt cheek. “You okay?”

Ruby nodded grabbing the bedding as the pleasure grew, red light flickering over her body, teasing her behind her ears. Fluttering brushes of touches upon her breasts. Ozpin traced down to her anus rubbing in tiny brushes letting her feel the sensation without pressing for more. She closed her eyes it all felt so good, though Weiss was lucky Ruby wasn’t strong enough yet to tighten her thighs around Weiss’s head.

Ozpin pet over Ruby’s hips and stomach return from time to time to stroke her anus. Weiss added her fingers and Ruby came with a high keen. Weiss withdrew as Ruby relaxed, Oz moved to lay on his good side and Ruby cuddled up to his chest to doze. She watched as the red fire faded and looked to the corner of the room, she could see the light catching Qrow’s skin. She got up and stepped towards him. “Are you gonna hide in the dark?”

“That was my plan.” Qrow said watching as Ruby turn to put her back to Oz and to see him.

“That doesn’t seem very fair.” Weiss got up the moonlight illuminating her skin. “I think you should join us.” She reached out and touched Qrow’s leg, at that he moved it out of the way.

Ruby could see him now, the moon had moved just enough. His hairless chest and scar free body, none of the ugly marks saying that Tyrian had touched him. Weiss reached up and stroked through her hair letting it fall in a long cascade, Ruby could see Qrow’s erection jump. Weiss moved straddling him and taking him in hand and lowering herself down.

Ruby could see Qrow’s eyes widen as he moaned. A hand moved into Weiss’s hair weaving it tight around it. “Weiss~.” Qrow groaned as the Atlassian lowered herself down more taking him slowly into her body, the stretch made her ache but it was worth it.

Weiss moaned as he filled her, she liked playing with Ruby but this just scratched a deep itch. “Touch me.” She moaned starting to rock in his lap.

“Ohhh.” Qrow reached out petting over her slight hips and back. “You are too good to us.” His red eyes caught the light as he kissed her neck. His hand moved down pressing down on her behind. He stroked through her hair he loved how long it was.

Weiss grabbed his shoulders and started to ride him in longer strokes. “Maybe, but it’s nice to be here with you all. Hmhm.” She bit her lip as she forced herself down harder forcing him deeper. “More Qrow, move.”

Qrow grabbed her butt and stood carrying her with ease onto the bed. Weiss’s eyes flew open in surprise as he thrust sharply. “Ah!” Weiss grabbed at him again and wrapped her legs around his hips pulling him to her.

Ruby watched as her friend grabbed at Qrow pulling him to her with each ever quicker thrust. Flush covered Weiss’s chest her petite breasts bounced as Qrow took her on the edge of the bed. She could see the sweat gather on Qrow, how his cross caught the light. However it was the pleasure that Weiss was in that Ruby couldn’t take her eyes off of. How her friend fell into ecstasy holding Qrow to her with all her might. Qrow kissed her deeply as he followed her.

Weiss and Qrow took several long moments to catch their breath. Ruby admired how Qrow’s
featured softened as he kissed Weiss long and slow. He withdrew from her. “Better?”

Weiss giggled. “Oh yes.” She leaned up and kissed him again. “My sister doesn’t have a clue as to what she is missing out on.”

Qrow rolled his eyes and picked up one of the cloths that was always on the bedside now. He returned and handed it to her. “Please, I don’t do Ice Queens.”

“Just Ice Princesses?” Weiss giggled as she sat up and cleaned herself.

“Something like that.” Qrow said moving to find something to wear so he could return to the other room.

The thought had only been in his head for a moment before he heard a soft voice. “Don’t go.”

Qrow looked up as Ruby patted the bed beside her. “You too Weiss.”

Weiss moved back to Ruby as the red haired woman snuggled backup to Oz. Qrow watched Weiss snuggle to Ruby’s back and took several slow steps back through the room. He grabbed the blankets and pulled them up as he slid in behind Weiss. Ruby turned and reached out petting through the beard along Qrow’s jaw. “I’ve missed this.” Qrow took her hand and kissed her palm. “And I you.” Ruby closed her eyes and sleep quickly took her. Qrow remained awake even after Oz had fallen into slumber, just admiring all of them together. Thankful that Ruby was at least opening back up to him. He had hoped and prayed since finding out what Tyrian had done that Ruby would come back to him. He smiled as he lay down and let sleep take him, firmly believing that this was the first step to getting reacquainted.

Chapter End Notes

Ardy: Only two left. About time if you ask me. That said must work out all the lovely ways to torment Ruby and Ozpin with Mab now. That will be fun.
Kry: A lot of stuff had to be changed since the nature of plot was different from the original but I think everyone will be happy with the finished result.
Ardy: I know it doesn’t make me cringe when I reread it anymore. Thank you too: Mysty_Sinclair, darkvampirekisses, Baker1762, threeguesses and Sportsfangirl815
Kry: Have a fab day everyone, and thank you for all the support!
Ozpin felt a weight on his chest, pressing harder and harder. He woke with a lurch upright and glanced around but nothing was there. He looked over to Qrow, snoring softly on his back, then his eyes went to Ruby, she was sleeping soundly beside him. Oz pursed his lips as he reached up and rubbed his shoulder, now healed if a bit stiff and sore. Ruby looked so lovely in her sleep, the duvet tucked up around her neck he couldn’t help but roll over and lay down beside her. His hand slid between them and cradled her stomach, their baby girl wasn’t giving Ruby any trouble yet. Something they were all grateful for.

As he watched Ruby suddenly started growing thinner, her skin turned grey and stretched over her cheeks, then began to peel away off her bones. “Ruby!” Ozpin screamed shoving the blankets away, her stomach was bleeding, three rings of teeth marks around her belly button stark on her lily white skin “No no no!” Ozpin pressed on her stomach but the blood welled up and covered his hand. She withered and died a minute later, all without waking. “Ruby~.” Ozpin reached up and cupped her face but she grew cold.

He didn’t understand, what had happened? Tears gathered in his eyes, what was going on? He drew away from her and did what everyone feared, he looked under the bed.

Oz’s eyes snapped open as he his chest heaved, sweat clung to his skin and soaked the sheets beneath him. It was just breaking dawn, he sat up and his shoulder twinged he reached up and rubbed it. The skin was soft and tender but now it would just be a matter of getting the muscles back into shape. His hair stuck to his scalp as he ran a hand through it. He looked over and Ruby was laying beside him, she looked lovely with the duvet pulled up around her chin. Ozpin reached out and gently pulled the duvet down. Her breasts were pushed against each other, mostly covered by an arm. Her belly was pale resting into the soft mattress, whole and the child within safe. The old soul reached out and cradled the small bump, no teeth marks, no blood. His lover was fine.

Ozpin pulled the duvet back over the young mother to be and tucked her back in. He tilted his head and reached out tracing lightly over the side of her face with a finger. Ruby did not wake, did not even stir. The tall man slipped silently from the bed and knelt, checking under the bed. Nothing, not even dust. Oz shook his head as he stood walking to the bathroom knowing there would be no more sleep tonight after that nightmare.

As the hot water wash down his worn body, Ozpin bowed his head. His hands hanging low, his nightmare burned into his mind as he stared vacantly down to a corner of the shower. The white grout gathering water then the tension became too great and it would sluff away. Then start all over again.

What had that nightmare been about? He wondered raising his hands taking in all the flaws, the strength of them… the roughness the blood upon them. It dripped down the drain.

Ozpin closed his eyes and shook his head, then opened those old brown eyes again. His hands were
not covered in blood, he had a tan, nicks and scars, calloused and dry even as drops of water
gathered on them. He hauled his gaze away and turned his face to the stream of water. His eyes
closed yet again, water and sweat mingled as it danced down the drain.

Ozpin heard the door open and close and was joined in the shower. The other man rested his head on
Oz’s back, the black tattoos were a sharp contrast to the tanned skin of his lover. “Are you alright?”
Qrow asked.

The veil shattered and Ozpin let out a long deep breath. “I’m fine, just had a nightmare.”

“Do you want to talk about it?” Qrow asked.

“No. It wasn’t anything new well maybe a little.” Ozpin said.

“Oh?” Qrow moved stepping to move around to stand before Ozpin.

“It was just about Ruby dying. Something attacked her in her sleep and she died right beside me
while I can’t do anything. I looked for the source under the bed and then woke up.” Ozpin reached
out and drew Qrow into his embrace.

Qrow happily went returning the hug, he was no stranger to that dream or variations of it. “She’s fine
though, we’ll keep her safe. It was just a nightmare.”

Ozpin forced himself to smile. “You’re right. Let’s get ready for the day. Ruby’s has her check up
with the doctor today.”

Ruby pet over her stomach as Doctor Rutile talked with Ozpin, her belly was completely healed. The
rate of her healing had floored the doctor but she could find nothing wrong. They had another
ultrasound, watching her baby still rendered her speechless.

“Well she can have sex again, just take it slow for a while yet. When Ruby learns where her limits
are in regards to the baby you are free to do as she wishes. Beyond that her muscles are perfectly
healed, the baby is perfectly healthy, just keep up with the diet. She can train again as well.” Doctor
Rutile said.

Ruby looked up from her petting. “Yay!” She bounced up from the chair and walked over to Oz.
“Your turn.”

Ozpin grumbled but took his shirt off. “I think it’s fine.”

Doctor Rutile studied his shoulder, taking it in hand and resting the range of it. “I think you are
correct, the scarring is even minimal. Have you had any issues with weight bearing?”

“No, I started exercising it shortly after removing the cast, it was driving me crazy with the itching.”
Ozpin lifted his arm out to the side, then rolled his shoulder showing the doctor. “It started to heal
more visibly quickly after that.”

“That’s one impressive Aura you have there.” Doctor Rutile said. “Alright you’re cleared, just keep
an eye on it, any signs of infection or swelling come back and we’ll take another look.”

“Thank you for all your help Doctor.” Ozpin said and stood putting his shirt back on. “Come on
Ruby, let’s go home I’m sure everyone will be happy to hear we are good to go.”

Ruby’s smile lost some of it’s radiance from seeing their baby. “Errr why don’t we stay out a little longer. It’s a nice day and some exercise would do me good, the fresh air and all that.” In truth Ruby didn’t want to go back just yet. While the last week everyone had been so supportive and basically bending over backwards to make sure Ruby was well cared for, she was starting to feel a little suffocated. Not being allowed to leave for any reason or walk further then the garden while the others trained had been alright in the beginning but now it was making her a little restless.

Even when she was in the garden the team and especially Oz were all focused on her instead of training and Ruby just wanted to get some normality back. She didn’t want them to feel like they had to drop everything just for her, she was feeling loads better physically. Nightmares were still fairly common but feeling Oz curl around her at night seemed to starve most of the panic off. He was just so big and it helped relax her, remind her that she was home and safe again.

Oz watched the emotions flicker over her face and sighed, maybe she was right and besides with him and Qrow there she would be safe enough for a day out. “How about we go speak with Lydia? She would love to have an update on how both of us are doing, maybe after we can get some lunch or something?”

Immediately Ruby’s face brightened. Lydia had become something of a rock for her, the gift she had given them was wonderful and the candles had been put to good use. Ruby hadn’t yet felt comfortable using the oil until they spoke with the doctor but now she was humming with happiness that it was going to be okay.

As they left the room Qrow who had been leaning against the wall outside jogged over to them. “How did it go?” He hadn’t wanted to overwhelm Ruby by being in the room for this appointment, they were still on rocky ground but slowly shortening the distance between them. The bond they had created had been instrumental in healing that bridge Tyrian had attacked. “All good, Ruby is back to full capacity and so long as we keep my shoulder clear of infection so am I.”

Qrow smiled and almost squealed when Ruby offered her hand to Qrow, letting him entwine their fingers, her other hand in Oz’s. This is what they were meant to be. Entwined together, Ruby and their baby in the center of their love. It almost brought him to tears, Qrow blinked furiously but his happiness and love bled through their bond. Ruby almost dropped her hand, she had been so happy she reached out automatically for Qrow, now feeling his hand in hers, it felt right. There was no dark memory of flash of pain, just contentment and love. Instead of letting her hand fall away she squeezed his hand once and sent her feelings to Qrow.

Oz looked at them, there were tears in Qrow’s eyes and he had that smile Oz so dearly loved on his face. If there was a pang of jealousy he quickly dismissed it, they had each other and there would be time for him and Ruby to one day create their own bond. For now he lifted the hand he held to his lips, brushing a kiss over her knuckles. “Let’s go see Lydia then.”

Lydia opened the door to her home before the trio had even stepped through the gate. At Oz’s questioning gaze she chuckled. “I could feel the three of you as you came up the street, it’s good to see you doing so well.” Her arms went around Ozpin first, careful of his shoulder and hugged him.
The came Qrow, though his hug was more of a friendly kind it was still warm. Ruby came last, Lydia almost squeezing the poor girl. “That is for both you and the baby. Come in and tell me how it went.”

“Good, we got another picture of the baby.” Ruby reached into her pocket and pulled out her Scroll, bringing up the picture and handing her Scroll to Lydia. As they headed into the living room and settled into the warm room.

Lydia took the Scroll and coed. “Oh she is beautiful. Have you felt any of her awareness yet?”

“Sorry what?” Qrow asked.

“The baby, as it’s brain develops you should get flutters over the bond. It is likely the same type of soul as you. From what I’ve read Vessel Souls can give birth to the same type of soul.” Lydia said closing the Scroll and giving it back to Ruby. “Though it is far from an exact science.”

Ruby made a little mousey with her lips as she thought. “Ohh yeah! I could feel a contented buzz but not much else.”

The other woman smiled and laid a hand over Ruby’s stomach, she could feel the faintest of emotions from the unborn child. Just a sense of peace and happiness, cradled soft, warm and comfortable. “That’s wonderful news Ruby. As the baby grows you should begin to feel more and so will those you’ve bonded with. It will make the last weeks of your pregnancy and the labour easier.”

Qrow’s jaw dropped to the floor, with his brain melting from his ears. “Uhh wow and cool. I don’t feel anything yet.”

“It is very early days yet, I wouldn’t expect to much till well into the third trimester.” Lydia said.

Ozpin on the other hand was frowning, he crossed his arms and was trying not to pout. He wanted to feel these things damn it all. Lydia’s eyes skirted over him with an amused smile. He could be so childish sometimes. “Oz, how is your shoulder?”

“Fine, I’ll start exercising it when we get home.” Ozpin said and bit his lip. “Hey Lydia, can I borrow my room at some point? And the bath?”

“Ozpin it is your room, you don’t need to ask to use it.” Lydia said with an amused smile.

Ozpin blushed and rubbed at the back of his head. “It’s just been a while…”

“Just make sure to make your girl nice and loud while using it.” Lydia said enjoying how Oz’s turned colours.

Ruby giggled. “Oh I like where this is going.”

Ozpin purred his brain already turning to ideas, his eyes painting Ruby with a veil of lust. “I think you’ll like it even more when you see it.”

Qrow chuckled and sat back in his chair feeling comfortable and happy to watch this play out. He and Ruby hadn’t reached that point again yet but she had been getting more and more relaxed in his company. He was happy to wait for her, Oz on the other hand… “Is this the same bath you once told me about, because I’m pretty sure I have yet to see it as well.”

Now that Oz thought about it, having them both. Oh the ideas that went swimming through his head
was almost enough to give Lydia a hot flush, as it was she cleared her throat and gave her student a look. Oz quickly shut down his fantasy and grinned. “Oh I’m sure you’ll both enjoy it. Not today mind you, I promised the others training this evening and for what I have planned, I’ll need more than just a few hours.”

That gave both his lovers cherry blushed cheeks, Oz and Lydia chuckling at them. Then came the rumble of Ruby’s stomach that echoed in the room. Qrow gave a full blown laugh. “Hungry are we Ruby?”

Lydia took pity on the poor girl. “Well she is eating for two now Qrow, a healthy appetite is normal.”

Oz helped Ruby to stand. “Perhaps we could find somewhere in the city for lunch. Then head home.”

Ruby was grateful for the offer to stay out a bit longer. “I could eat,” Another rumble from her tummy kept the red in her cheeks. “And I think the baby agrees with me.”

“If you’re looking for somewhere to have lunch,” Lydia said. “My friend Mauve runs a lovely little tea house in the next district, you remember Mauve right Oz?”

“Yes! She makes the best soups. You introduced us, she a very kind woman.” Ozpin remembered the tea house and the way there. It would be a nice treat but he gave a worried thought for Qrow, would he like it? Then internally shook his head.

“Well I’ll give her a call to expect you and have a table ready. It’s a popular place but we’ve known one another for years and she always reserves a table for me.”

Oz nodded. “That would be lovely Lydia, thank you.”

“I’ll call her now. You three have fun and I’ll restock the bathroom for when you are ready to use it.”

Ozpin walked over and gave his mentor a kiss on the cheek. “You are a gem Lydia.”

The older woman giggled and pushed him away playfully. “Oh off with you now and have fun, the day is wonderful. Best not to waste it.”

The teahouse otherwise known as The Lotus Veil was located in the more middling ranges of Mistral. Fine enough to be comfortable but not so much so that the it felt unapproachable for the less well off Huntsman. Ruby studied the door, the old wood had depictions of Grimm upon it. Ozpin lead the way in and they were greeted by a faunus with a kind smile.

“Welcome back Ozpin.” A small elderly cat faunus said warmly her voice also reflecting her age, her cat ears were white as was her hair. She wore a soft purple kimono with a floral print. She looked around the tall human to Ruby and Qrow. “Lydia mentioned you were coming but it’s not like you to come with company.”

Ozpin stepped to the side and gestured in turn. “This is Ruby Rose and Qrow Branwen. They are my partners.” He gestured back to the faunus. “This is Mauve, the owner and manager of the finest tea shop in Mistral.”
The shop was larger than the doors would have suggested and many tables were already full of patrons. Every table was round, as was every post, even the chairs from the ones in the centre of the room to the corner booths that had a light paper door that could close, giving the users complete privacy from eyes at least. Candles lit the shop and a soft sweet incense filled the air.

Ruby liked it instantly. Remembering her manners, she did a little curtsy. “A pleasure to meet you Mauve.”

Mauve smiled widely causing the wrinkles around her mouth to become more pronounced. “And to you as well my dear, might I say you have a lovely rose.” Her eyes cast downwards to the obviously swelling stomach but was too polite to say anything.

Ruby blushed slightly and touched the rose with a fingertip. “Thank you.”

Mauve looked over to Qrow and the scruffy man bowed his head in greeting, this caused the faunus to smile. She looked between the three of them and turned her attention back to Ozpin. “Lydia’s favourite?”

“To begin with yes thank you.” Ozpin said mirroring Qrow’s bow.

Mauve led them to a round corner booth, soft bells tinkling on her heels as they went. The booth’s table was low but the seats were wide with leather round benches, pillows and blankets lining the backs. The set up was more lounging or kneeling on than sitting. Under the table was a wide circular rug, the door to the booth was on a track. Ozpin toed off his shoes and set them beside the one side of the bench. Ruby and Qrow followed suit, Ruby taking more time as she had more laces to loosen. Ruby and Qrow set their weapons on the opposite side of the bench they chose to sit on.

Ozpin walked around the edge of the table to the far side off center and drew his legs up crossing them. Ruby followed him and sat on his left while Qrow on her right, they ended up fairly close together, easy to reach over and touch if they so wished. Ozpin reached under the table and pulled it up about ten centimeters, when he did this a little nob flicked up a few hands length in. Ozpin had to turn and the outermost ridge of the table extended covering where their legs would have gone normally. Finally in the middle of the stable were three small candles, a stick of incense burning softly and five sets of chopsticks, five spoons, forks and knives all made of wood.

“Cool.” Ruby said, watching as Ozpin folded the knob back down with a click and put his sword down beside him.

“Nice place.” Qrow said shifting back to lean against a fluffy pillow. “Reminds me of some of my haunts.”

“Something tells me your haunts aren’t quite the same.” Ozpin said leaning back into the comfy leather and closing his eyes.

Qrow raised an arm to rest of the back of the backrest. Ruby eyed the invitation to moved closer and snuggle up to him but only shifted her legs to the side so she was closer with a little distance between them. She missed the tiny look of hurt that crossed Qrow’s features and continued to look around. Something about this place made her want to remember all her manners and act like a ‘little lady’ that Tai had tried to train her and Yang to be. On most occasions it hadn’t worked, especially with her sister. “You’re right, it just has a nice vibe.”

Ozpin shifted to lean against the back as well. “Lydia used to bring me here all the time. There was a sister shop in Vale but we were also so busy I never got the chance to take you both there.” He closed his eyes and let his guard down, Ruby and Qrow would keep him safe.
The sound of bells was quiet but there as Mauve returned with a white clay teapot held lovingly between her hands. Besides her was a young adult male cat faunus, his ears and hair were also white but he wore black pants and a crisp white shirt. He set three cups on the extended part of the table and Mauve poured them a tea that smelled like peaches from across the table.

Ozpin opened his eyes as Mauve set the teapot on the same part of the table, sitting up he reached out and gently rotated the outer part of the table bringing the tea to them. “Thank you.”

The younger faunus handed Qrow two menus and smiled with bright white teeth at Ruby. She bit her lip and turned her attention to the menus and said, “Thank you.” when her Qrow remained oddly silent.

“You’re welcome, my name Liseran and I will be your waiter today.” He bowed. “I will return in a few minutes for your orders.”

Ozpin moved the teapot and cups by moving the rotating part of the table and took a sip of his tea, he already knew the menu by heart.

As Qrow looked over the menu Ruby took a sip of her tea and her eyes widened comically.

Ozpin chuckled at her and smiled. “Like it?”

Ruby had never tasted tea so nice before, it was sweet and she was sure it was honey rather then sugar with the tea, the honey added a little layer that raised the bouquet of sweet peach flavour and strawberries. She nodded and took another slightly longer sip. “My two favourite fruits.”

“Expensive place Oz.” Qrow said softly, looking through the menu.

“I’m buying.” Ozpin said with a shrug.

“Alright.” Qrow said setting the menu down, “You order then.” Qrow took a sip of his tea. He wasn’t really a sweets drink person most of the time, with a few exceptions but since he was removing himself away from the alcoholic beverages it would do.

“As you wish.” Ozpin sipped his tea and leaned back into the bench and smiled lazily.

Ruby looked out into the restaurant and noticed that many of the patrons were Huntsmen and Huntresses, more so than regular people. Lots of them had weapons much like theirs sat at the far side of their booths. “Oz, is there something special about this place? There are a lot of Huntsmen.”

Qrow looked out into the restaurant following Ruby’s gaze, she was right and he knew what kind of places hunters tended to gather and this was not what he would have thought that to be. “Huh, you’re right.”

“Did you notice the Grimm on the door?” Ozpin asked, his tone soft.

“I did.” Qrow said, sipping his tea.

“There is one place like this in every major city, while civilians are allowed in its only usually if they are friends or family of a Hunter. You will note that all the waiters have bells on their heels, the incense is lavender as this is Mauve’s place. The other ones will have a different scent, but it’s always a flower. You’ll should also note you can’t hear the kitchen and that alcohol is not served.” Ozpin laid out the pieces of the puzzle before them.

Qrow felt the colour drain from his face as he figured it out, that was the last thing he needed to be
reminded of right now. Immediately memories tainted by blood and screams took precedence in his head. His hand shook by his side and when he reached for the flask he normally kept he remembered giving it to Yang, to get it away from him. He hadn’t touched alcohol since that day, for Ruby’s sake, for their baby, for Oz and himself but it was too much. The low warm light closest to him flared brightly and gave a frighteningly loud pop. He wanted to numb the memories, the thoughts, the fears. He rubbed his chest with a hand and curled in on himself, he ached to reach over and wrap his arm down around Ruby, to pull her into his lap but he couldn’t. A few eyes glanced over in their direction from the sound, Qrow could feel them devouring him. A small chip appeared in the table, marring its smooth surface. Like a growling beast in the shadows his Semblance beat at the door it was trapped behind.

Ruby felt the instant Qrow got trapped in his memories, his fears and cries piercing his heart. She felt tears fill her eyes as she wept for him, their bond so strong she couldn’t help it sitting up and wrapping her arms around his neck. There was no fear in her as she raised herself so Qrow could tuck his face to her neck. She felt his arms come and tighten around her, his whole body shaking. Ruby petted his head, his shoulder and back, cooing to him in her thoughts, whispering shushed hums into his ears. The door, with its many chains and cracks suddenly calmed, feeling Ruby in his arms was like a balm, the coolest ice over a fire and his Semblance fell silent again. Qrow held onto this warmth his breathing deepened, his body slowly turning to putty in her arms.

Ruby felt his weight on her, there was a wetness on her neck and shoulder and those arms she loved held onto her so tightly. She was surprised it did not bother her but then Tyrian had not been the cuddling type. Maybe this was one more thing she could take back now, she dearly missed being able to hug and cuddle with Qrow, now she was taking back those sweet warm sensations, hugging her bird.

Ozpin could see how Qrow’s fingers dug into Ruby’s back, the shudder in his shoulders. He smiled sadly, he didn’t expect Qrow to react so strongly but then he hadn’t been drinking and was all too well acquainted with the reason places like this existed. What shocked him was Ruby’s reaction, where had the skittish jumping that came whenever Qrow got near gone? He was secretly pleased Ruby took the initiative to support Qrow. She was getting better if she could hold him so with only care and love in her. Then Ruby looked over to Oz the question on her lips.

Softly Ozpin spoke. “This is a place for Huntsmen to go after a bad mission, a place to go when they have nowhere else. Everything about this place is created to bring calm to the mind and soul, its is a place where a Huntsman can be treated for the mental scars that come from fighting Grimm.” He took a sip of his tea, letting the hot liquid linger on his tongue for a moment.

Ruby lowered her hands down over Qrow’s back and hugged him to her, she whispered softly. “It’s for the PTSD.” She could feel Qrow tense and his eyes squeeze shut tighter, he squeezed her with a shuddering breath.

Ozpin nodded. “Everyone that works in these establishments is trained in how to help a Hunter through their scars.

Liseran returned a few moments later and Ozpin picked up a menu and pointed at four different items, turning the menu so the faunus could see.

Liseran bowed his head with a nodded and closed the booth door softly.

Ozpin shifted himself so he was sitting beside them and ran a hand through Qrow’s hair, over and over. Qrow let out a shuddering breath, “Sorry.” his voice thick as he mumbled against Ruby’s neck. “I haven’t had anything to drink in a while and this hits closer to home then I like.”
There was a spot tap at the door and Liseran and Mauve appeared. Liseran set three dishes of food and three plates on the rotating part of the table and Mauve set two more. Ozpin raised brow at the small bean filled dish that he didn’t order, or for that matter, had ever seen before.

Mauve spoke softly as not to disturb the cuddling pair. “For the child.”

Ruby looked it over. “High protein?”

“And folate and iron. Everything you need to support a baby.” Mauve said.

“Thank you.” Ruby said warmly.

Once they left again Qrow lifted his head, his eyes sleepy and looked to Ruby. “I’m sorry, did I hurt you?” His voice was small and hesitate. Ruby shook her head and smiled. “No, I’m good, are you okay?” In truth she was feeling energized and ecstatic, her hands still holding Qrow and there was nothing … nothing that linked this feeling with Tyrian.

Qrow nodded and gave her a tiny smile. He could feel her humming through the bond and leaned his head against her shoulder. When she didn’t pull away but pet his hair instead he purred. Oh how he had missed this, her hands were so small but he knew them well and wanted to kiss them right now. He refrained, promising himself soon.

They stayed as they were for a few more minutes, until the sound of Qrow’s stomach had him lifting his head again, calmer and more settled then before. “We should probably eat before this gets too cold.”

Oz was quietly sipping his tea. “That's one of the best things about this place, even if the food cools its just as delicious, made to have hot or cold so I wouldn’t worry.”

Still remaining close to Ruby Qrow grabbed his chopsticks and tasted the bowl closest to him. It really was good! Then his eyes dropped to the single smaller bowl in front of Ruby. “What's that?”

“Something they brought for Ruby, suppose to be good for her and the baby.” Oz said picking up his own dish.

Ruby sipped the soup, it was creamy and sweet and still warm enough to have that warmth spreading through her, she hummed appreciatively and sipped more. The smooth broth tasted like so many things she couldn’t put the finger on its main ingredient.

Once the soup was finished she returned the bowl and lifted her head, drowning in confusion when she noticed Qrow and Oz staring at her. “What?”

Oz placed his dish back down, leaning across the table and stealing a kiss. Ruby felt the lust and heat as her mouth dueled with Oz’s. Qrow sat partly on his hands to keep from joining them, as much as he wanted.

Ruby felt the mouth above hers lift away and licked her lips, tasting the sweet tea he had been drinking. Her eyes were hazy as Oz sat back in his seat. “W-what was that?”

“My apologies Ruby but you looked so delicious there I couldn’t help myself and from the way our Qrow is sitting I think he had the same idea.”

Ruby noticed the way he was sat and the clear tent that sat in his crotch, licking her lips again she almost crawled into his lap, wanting to be done with everything and take back her Qrow. Unfortunately there was a limit to their privacy so she settle with leaning over to kiss her birds neck.
once. “Well maybe it's time to do something about that?”

Qrow watched Ruby, barely able to keep his hands from dragging her into his lap. There was a little hesitation in her eyes but it was clouded over by the desire he saw, her pupils blown wide. “Tonight perhaps.”

Their female lover scrunched her face pouting. “Okay.” and sat back in her seat. Taking the next dish they returned to their meal, eating in the quiet, just enjoying that the three of them were there together.

“Owwwww!” Jaune rubbed his head, his Aura breaking as he was thrown back ‘again’ by Qrow. Ren shortly joined him, landing with a little more grace but no more the better from getting his Aura broken.

The dark haired lad bent down on one knee and breathed deeply. “You take no prisoners, do you Qrow?”

They’d been doing some hand to hand sparring and getting their butts kicked by Qrow now for over and hour. The avian man shrugged grinning and rolled his shoulders. “It’s going to take more then the two of you brats to bring me down.”

A shadow passed overhead before Yang latched onto his back like a monkey, pinning his arms at his side. “And what if they’re not alone? Nora NOW!”

Qrow tried to shake off his niece but Nora took the opportunity to leap across the yard, tackling Qrow’s feet and bringing the Huntsman down to the ground. “AHHH!”

The three of them landed rather heavily but it was enough for Ren and Jaune to catch their breath and jump on the fallen Huntsman. Soon there was a pile of limbs with Qrow somehow ending up at the bottom and crushed under the four other young adults. His head poked out from under Nora’s leg as he shouted across the yard. “Oz! Help me!”

Ozpin was currently doing one armed press ups by the stairs while Ruby and Weiss sat watching the taller man move his body up and down. Their hungry eyes following beads of sweat trail over his back. Lower they went until they disappeared under the dark trousers that sat low on his hips. Ozpin stopped mid push and looked over, chuckling. “Oh you are so on your own there Qrow, I am quite enjoying seeing you pinned down.”

Qrow squirmed some more, unable to dislodge the students off his back. “Now is not the time for your sexual innuendos, get me out of here!”

Nora’s red head poked out from under Ren’s arm and grinned wickedly. “Hey Qrow~ are you ticklish!” Immediately the pile began to wiggle as Qrow sucked in a breath, feeling fingers dig into his sides and back.

“What! Stop, no HAHAHAHA. Nora! Stopit!” Qrow chuckled and laughed unable to move as the others got in on the action making Qrow squirm in the pile. Oz looked over and smiled fondly, it appeared even Jaune was taking part in tormenting Qrow. Perhaps their hostility was finally drawing to a close and sat back up ending his pushups much to Weiss and Ruby’s displeasure. He winked at the pair of them before shouting over. “NORA! GO FOR THE BELLY, Its his weak spot!”
There was a thumbs up from the pile of limbs though he wasn’t sure who’s before Qrow started squealing and screaming in laughter. “OZPIN YOU TRAITOR!”

The trio watching couldn’t stop giggling as Qrow was decimated by tickling, then when it seemed like he lost a small black blur squeezed out of the pile and flew towards them, dive bombing onto Oz. Ruby and Weiss burst into laughter as Qrow knocked Oz down, his bird form shifted away to reveal a playful Qrow who the started attacking Oz with knowing hands. The older man grabbed Qrows hands and kissed him hard, Qrow melted into the kiss, his guard dropping for a moment. Then Oz pressed his own attack, hands jumping to his lovers belly, making Qrow screech again. He quickly shifted back into his bird shape and flew to Weiss, his beak moving the long hair aside to hide under.

Weiss felt the fluffy feathers and started giggling again as Qrow tickled the back of her neck. Beside her Ruby just laughed, holding her stomach when it started to hurt from all the laughter. The pile of students started separating and Nora jumped up racing over to them. “You hand over that crow Weiss, he must be tickled. TO DEATH!”

There was a loud squawk from the bird in her hair and Weiss struggled to keep a straight face. “Never!”

The redhead did a grabby hands gesture and grinned manically. “Then you too must be tickled to death.”

Weiss swallowed and stood up, holding the bird to her neck as if to protect him. “You’re have to catch me first!” Quickly freezing Nora’s feet with her Semblance Weiss made for the other side of the yard, just barely avoiding Ren as he tried to intercepted her. Ruby and Oz sat back and watched the teams spread out to catch Weiss who proved to be more agile but was eventually caught by Yang and the squealing pile was a joy to everyone’s ears.

Only when the cold rain started soaking them all did the group returned inside, each stealing time in the bathrooms to wash and warm up. Ruby showered by herself, now able to stand for longer. The shower was huge, big enough for more then one person and Ruby felt very small in there alone, without her lovers.

She washed her hair, missing the way it felt when someone else had their hands running through the shoulder length locks. It was growing longer but she wasn’t sure if she wanted to cut it just yet. If it were longer it would be easier for Qrow and Oz to knot their hands into it as they pounded into her … A hot flush suddenly coloured her, making her tremble at the thought of having her hair pulled, head bent back … Her hands trailed downwards, just stopping at the junction between her legs. Her heart beat a little louder but her wet hand carefully traced down to her lower lips. Ruby closed her eyes and imagined Oz and Qrow, their hands running up and down one another. Oz licking Qrow’s nipples, the piercings cold to his hot tongue, the way Qrow moaned and shivered as Oz played with the little bar, sucking at the nub and smiling when he would gasp loudly. All but jumping to be closer.

Steam billowed in the shower making the air hot and humid as Ruby spread her inner lips. Her fingers gliding over her sensitive spots, making her arch back and slip her finger inside. Images of Qrow on all fours as Oz spread his cheeks apart. One hand coming to stroke Qrow’s hard length even as he slowly sank inside his anus, spreading Qrow with each inch of thick hard cock. Ruby’s hand left the hot channel of her own sex, slowly driftng around her hips towards her ass. She felt the firmness of her cheeks and slipped her finger between them, rubbing the rose bud there.

Her other hand reached to squeeze her filling breasts, they were getting fuller since the pregnancy
and her nipples hardened as she sought out her release always thinking of Qrow and Oz. What they
did with each other, how hot and hard it must feel to have Oz spreading her open by her rear. Ruby
felt beads of sweat mix with the shower water and panted loudly, rubbing herself over and over until
she felt that bubble burst and she came with a whine.

Ruby finished washing and then dried herself, a hand skimmed over the mark that Tyrian had carved
into her skin. She shivered and headed outside, the emena kit Ozpin had gotten her some time ago
was left used on the counter behind her. Ozpin sat dressed nicely on the side of the bed, he even
wore a cowl shirt. Honestly it made him look more like himself then he had in a very long time. Lube
and a little anal plug sat awaiting her on the bedside table. She bit her lip and paused suddenly
feeling very coy.

“Come here love.” Ozpin said with a rumble that made Ruby’s heart warm. He had even stopped
adopting an accent of late, he sounded like his old self now too.

Ruby walked over and Ozpin reached out taking the towel from her. He traced the back of his
fingers over the scar under her breast and covered it with this palm. Ruby shrank back but he reached
up and pet over her cheek. “Shhh, should have done this ages ago.”

Ruby felt the warm of his Aura sink into the scar and when he moved his hand it was completely
gone, not even the tiniest hint she had ever been hurt at all. Her eyes widened as she touched the
spot. “Thank you.”

“You’re mine, for as long as you want to be.” Ozpin said reaching out and petting her baby bump.
“I’m really only waiting on Tai, once he’s around I have every intent of taking you for wife and
Qrow for husband.”

Ruby stepped into his embrace and kissed him. Their lips parted and mirrored each other, Ozpin slid
his tongue into her mouth and Ruby hummed happily playing hers over his. She drew away with
moist lips. “Qrow and I have talked about it. We have decided Branwen sounds best. Plus I like the
idea of taking a name that doesn’t have the best history attached to it and making it better.”

“Hmm Ozpin Branwen. It does have a nice ring to it.” Ozpin purred. “I can definitely see your
thinking there.”

“Careful, you say that around Qrow and you might fry his brain.” Ruby giggled.

Ozpin chuckled. “Now I have to do it just to see how fried it gets.”

That got his Silver Eyed Warrior to laugh, he loved seeing that. Ozpin shifted back on the bed and
patted his lap. “Come on, I want to give you plenty of time to get used to it before I go anywhere
near your ass with anything bigger.”

Ruby blushed as she laid down on her front over his lap, his hands went to her butt-cheeks and she
purred closing her eyes. As Ozpin and Qrow had been drilling into her brain for the last few days
while she had done some solo explorations. She focused on deep slow breaths and being relaxed.
Ozpin touched her anus with a dry finger and waited massaging little circles around her tail bone.

“That feels good.” Ruby said as he worked knots of tension out of her body.

“Have you been having any back or feet issues yet?” Ozpin asked feeling Ruby’s anus pucker up
and removed his hand to cover a few fingers in lube.

“Not yet, ohhh.” Ruby moaned as Oz returned to her anus and drew a little circle before again
waiting. “I like that.”
Ozpin chuckled. “I am well aware, you never fail to announce to the whole house when you like something.” He felt her anus pucker up again and asked. “Ready?”

“Yes please.” Ruby said and only just resisted wiggling her butt.

Oz very slowly pushed a finger in, he had even been smoothing his hands with cream and making sure his nails were immaculate in preparation for this. When he got to his second knuckle he paused and said. “Clench up.”

Ruby bore down with all her considerable muscle strength. Ozpin chuckled again. “I’m already feeling sorry for my cock.”

The red head giggled again. “Well I’ll just be nice to it and not do this when you eventually get around to involving it in play. Though are you sure I even can take it?”

“There is such a thing as anal fisting. The female anus is not as roomy as a males so it does take more time, but I don’t think we will have any issues. There is a reason after all we are doing this now and not later.” Ozpin said waiting for Ruby’s muscles to get tired.

They did a moment later and Ruby let out a long sigh. Then moaned when Oz eased his way deeper starting tiny massages with the tip of his finger. She purred and sighed as he explored carefully, then sucked in a breath when he withdrew partly and slid another finger in along with the first. “Still good?”

“Yes~.” Ruby moaned out.

Ozpin reached over to the butt plug he had put considerable thought into picking out. The base was flared out but still soft and malleable. It had a few slight curves, the tip turned upward and round like a finger and was of a soft black medical silicone. In short he had spent way too much time in sex toy stores browsing. He removed his fingers and coated the toy in lube. “Ready for the toy?”

Ruby took another deep breath and sagged into his lap. “Yup.”

Ozpin in the same manner as his fingers, gently guided the toy inside of her. Feeling her shiver, listening to the sweet moans. When all ten centimeters had found a home within her the toy bottomed out and Oz made sure the base would be comfortable for her. “That good?”

“If you touch my clit right now I promise to come.”

Ozpin chuckled deeply. “Well I can’t have that. Up you get, test it out.”

Ruby carefully stood up and instantly almost did a mix of a giggle and moan. “That feels so weird and so good!” She almost bounced on the spot.

“I’m glad you enjoy it, I spent days looking for that one.” Ozpin stood and washed his hands in the bathroom. When he returned he found Ruby with a hand braced on the bed while the other was furiously trying to rub one out upon her clit. Ozpin sneaked up behind her and grabbed her hand. “Now what did I say.”

“But I wanna come~., this feels so good and different.” Ruby whined.

“And you’ve the whole walk to Lydia’s to enjoy it.” Ozpin said smiling as the mere words made Ruby shake. “Now let’s get you dressed.”

Ruby pouted, she was much hotter and worked up now but stopped squirming as he let her go. Oz
walked over to the drawer of her clothes and pulled out a long form fitting emerald green dress. Soft satin that would cling to her curves with a low collar. “Uh bra?”

“Nope.” Ozpin said with a smile turning the dress so she could put her arms through the holes.

Ruby put the dress on and Ozpin returned to the drawer pulling out a thin stockings. “Uh panties?”

“Nope.” Ozpin gestures for her to sit and he put the stockings on her kissing the inside of her thigh as he withdrew.

“This is gonna be cold.” Ruby said.

Ozpin grabbed her cloak and set it around her shoulders. “Then you’ll just have to stay cuddled close to me.” He took her hands and they headed out of the room.

When they entered the living room they found Qrow dozing on the couch with Weiss half sprawled in his lap while Ren was massaging her feet. Ruby walked over and kissed Qrow on the cheek.

“We’re heading out now, stay out of trouble.”

“I don’t think Weiss would let me try. Though I am seriously considering taking her upstairs and buggering her.” Qrow said as he opened his eyes and admired her.

“I’m enjoying my foot massage.” Weiss said. “Plus your lap is comfy.”

“And when Nora comes to claim Ren?” Qrow asked.

“Hmm considering Oz got me a plug too and I’m already wearing it, you may bugger me.” Weiss said all without opening her eyes.

Qrow’s gaze snapped down to her. “Oooh.”

Ruby giggled and kissed his cheek again. “Have fun! Thank you taking care of my bird Weiss.”

“I think he’ll be taking care of me. Have fun Ruby. I want the blow for blow when you get back.” Weiss waved as Ruby returned to Ozpin. They put on their shoes and headed out.

Ruby turned out to be right, the walk was cold but she just couldn’t keep a straight face with the butt plug rubbing inside of her. Ozpin had placed it perfectly and it felt magnificent, she was sure by the time they got to Lydia’s house her juices were coating the junction of her hips.

Surprisingly Lydia did not open the door for them. Instead Ozpin fished a very worn key out for his pocket and let them in. Entering the house felt different without Lydia. Ruby walked in while Ozpin put the key in the dish by the door, she saw how his fingers lingered on it. She felt a fluttering in her heart and a overwhelming sense of coming home to this place. Ruby smiled understanding that it was not an emotion that stemmed from her. She reached out and took his hand. “Just think, our daughter will grow up here.”

Again she felt a warmth fill her as Ozpin said. “It’s a good place to.” He turned to her and gathered her up in his arms. “Come my love, I’ve a many plans to pamper you.”

Lydia had left several warm orange lights on, the dark wood of the house shone with the light. The stairs creaked as Ozpin climbed them, they walked down a long hall lined with beautiful paintings. The door to one room was just the tiniest bit ajar and Ozpin opened it with his heel.

The air within was warm and humid, Ruby’s eyes widened a the bath, it was at least as long as
Ozpin was tall and over half of her height. Around the room were red candles, rose petals were already in the water the light was low but very warm. “Oh my.” Ruby said as Ozpin set her down.

“Do you like it?” Ozpin asked closing the door.

“Yes, very much so.” Ruby turned to him and stepped to his embrace. “I can’t wait to get into it.”

“Hmm, I can tell.”

They undressed each other, Ozpin taking longer of the two. Their hands drifted and caressed over each other, when bare Ozpin took the steps up the bathtub and offered his hand. Ruby took it and let him guide her into the perfectly hot water. Ozpin sat with his back to the wall and drew her down into his lap, he pressed a kiss to her neck as she settled with a happy humm. Ruby closed her eyes and tried to reach for the bond, tried to relax and encourage it to open. She felt him pour some of the lavender oil into his palm, take a hand of hers within his and massage it, working the tension out of the muscles.

Ruby fell into a near trance state as Oz worked from one hand to the other. His hands were softened by the oil, they massaged her breasts in knowing strokes roamed down over her body to her belly. Held her baby bump then drifted lower to cleanse her sex again. Ruby shivered as his long masculine fingers pet through her folds and looked up to him. She found him watching her, she closed her eyes and let her head rest against his chest again.

It felt good to have him touch her like this again, with all the other sensations she didn’t fall into panic. They had been working on her relearning his touch for a long time now. Pleasure burned through her body and she could feel his arousal against her back. Gods she wanted him inside of her. “I… please can we?”

“You sure?” Ozpin could feel her lax in his arms but thought she would want to stay in the water a little while longer.

“Yes. I want you to have me. I miss it.” Ruby turned and kissed him deeply, feeling the rumbling purr that resonated from his chest.

“Alright.”

They exited the bath and Ozpin dried her, excitement stirring in his loins. Ruby returned the favour. Ozpin took her hand and guided her into a side room. The bed was low and a circular, silk red sheets covered it, heavy beautiful blankets and pillows all in that the same warm red light. “Onto the bed.” Oz said softly lust growing ever more as he watched her move gracefully onto the bed and settle on her front in the middle. He followed her straddling her but not touching her, he poured yet more oil into his palm and warmed it between them before setting his hands on her shoulders and starting to massage her whole body.

Ruby moaned softly as he worked from her shoulders down to the tips of her toes. The push and pull of his hands on her skin, her muscles turning so relaxed nothing would cause her to tense. Time trickled by as Oz moved over her, admiring her skin as it shined softly as he moved up and down her body again and again. He ached to be inside of her. “Are you ready, are you sure you want too?”

“Yes.” Ruby said and turned her head so she could see him.

Ozpin swallowed thickly and moved back to her behind, very gently he removed the toy and covered his fingers with more oil. Now he could easily slip a third in, he massaged the tight passage with one hand while the other lightly roamed over her clit. Ruby came swiftly and quietly, as she
relaxed from her orgasm Ozpin ease his last finger into her. He let them rest in her as he applied the oil to his very eager erection.

Ruby opened her eyes as Ozpin removed his fingers and set his member to her anus. He looked up to her and she nodded. “Just go slow.” He did and Ruby saw an expression she hadn’t before, his hands moved to brace himself above her as he carefully pushed in lowering his hips to her. His eyes close shut tight as he bit down on his bottom lip. “Moan.” She whispered.

Ozpin did a deep soft sound that Ruby loved, she had to close her own eyes and take deep breaths. Feeling him sink into her body was a feeling unlike any other, she moaned softly within a couple of inches her eyes flew open and she moaned louder. “Oh, oh oh, Oz.”

“Like that?” Ozpin asked breathless, she was so tight already it felt like heaven. He was far from sheathed within her. He drew back slightly and then gently pushed forward again. “Uooooo.” Ruby moaned high and soft, a very different sound then her normal.

“I’ll take that as a yes.” Ozpin said and did the small motion again. Again Ruby moaned that new moan though it was quicker as he picked a pace, not delving deeper focusing on her pleasure instead.

Instead of her reaching for the bonds, she felt them open. “Your Aura.” She moaned a high voice. “Send it into me.”

Oz had a hard time finding the brainpower to do as she asked but eventually managed it. As he let it flow, hers reached out called in him. That circle forming, red and green flowed upon their skins. Ozpin could start to feel what she did. His jaw fell open as he moaned.

“Come closer… deeper… please.” Ruby’s eyes started to shine silver.

Feeling her and feeling how it felt for her, Ozpin lowered his body pushing into her till her butt was pressed to his groin. He eased his whole body down so there was no space between them. They both moaned deeply, their skin glistening with the strain, it was so hot and tight but Ruby wanted to buck back, make him move more. She whined loudly when he dragged his length back until only the tip remained. Sucking in a big breath she all but screamed when he pushed in again slowly but not stopping until their hips met making Ruby’s eyes widen.

Oz felt the wetness and eased out again, his slow dragging thrusts gaining a little speed as his control was stretched to a fine point. Ruby’s Aura started to shimmer over him, drawing him deeper inside her until he could feel his own aching length inside her, throbbing hotly. He wouldn’t be able to last long like this, already he tried to slow down but Ruby’s clenching around his cock was undoing him. “Relax love please, I can barely move with you baring down.”

“Sorry.” Ozpin's eyes widened as he heard the word in his head. Ruby tried to control herself to make her body relax for him again. He couldn’t feel the bond, it wasn’t yet his to feel but he could feel her. He moved as she wished, their Aura bright upon them.

Ruby closed her eyes again even he moved so slowly it was so intense. She was starting to feel his pleasure, a low burn through the deepening bond. Unlike with Qrow Ruby didn’t see memories, she felt emotions. They were fluid and messy, jumbled and conflicting. Time was both horribly linear and twisted inside out within Oz. They started to flow, Ruby felt them and reached out through the bond begged it for form with Oz, though he had no soul name to help her.

Ozpin bowed over her moving his arms to wrap around around her as the bond filled with pleasure. He moved them towards their pleasure, their bodies rubbed against each other. Ozpin felt the bond shift and then open to him, Ruby went completely boneless under him. Her Aura called him into
every pour he felt *everything*, he felt her submit. In a way deeper than anything Qrow would ever come close too. His Aura surged forth in response carrying his excitement, his love for submission the feeling that her very soul let him have it. That it submitted to him.

Ruby turned her head and Ozpin dipped down to kiss her deeply strengthening his thrusts making her cry out with each. The bond exchanged and heightened the pleasure. Ozpin reached out through it. “I love you.” He poured his love through the bond and was sent crashing into orgasm with Ruby, the bond finally snapping into place. The pleasure cycled over and over melting their brains till they were both to exhausted for it to continue.

Ruby snuggled down as they came down for the high. Ozpin felt wonderful against her back, she could feel him like Qrow now an awareness to his person. “I’m so happy to finally have this with you.”

The rush of love and joy near blindsided her in its intensity, Oz’s love *burned* Qrow’s was a quieter thing but Oz was very potent when he shared it. Ozpin withdrew from her and fell exhausted into the bedding. “I take back what I said at Beacon. That was the best orgasm of my life.”

Ruby giggled and rolled to snuggle his front. “Well I’m glad you like it, but I think they will get even better when we have Qrow in here too.”

Ozpin shivered in desire. “Sleep first, I’m too tired to even think about it right now. It feels like you gave my soul a workout.”

“Probably did. But now you’re properly bonded to me. Lydia will be happy and so will Qrow. Plus maybe you’ll start hearing the baby soon.” Ruby yawned.

“All good things. First nap, then either bath or bed. I’m already…” Ozpin voice in Ruby’s head got fuzzy and she looked up to find him sleeping. She snuggled up and decided to join him.

The next day when they locked Lydia’s front door and all the way home Ruby walked leaning heavily on Oz, she was both exhausted and practically spinning with excitement. She felt like she could be dancing the whole way home but her body was giving out the opposite signs, letting her feet drag and her eyes flutter with sleepiness. Ruby settled for being content, leaning on Oz’s good shoulder while he navigated them home sure and safe that he wouldn’t let her fall. He had thoroughly taken care of her and even after a second round in that beautiful tub she was feeling sore and achy.

Mostly she was excited to tell Qrow about her bond with Oz. When she opened it she could feel all that strength and love Oz had for them. His emotions hummed and purred like a large cat, safely tucking her to him. It was relaxing and warm, the way his green Aura whispered all around her, Ruby tucked herself closer and sighed happily.

The Mistral house came into view and already Ruby could see several windows open and hear the voices of her friends coming from inside. Snow started floating down just as they headed inside. The entryway was strangely quiet as they got in and Ruby bounded into the living room, crashing to a halt and smirking.

There was her Qrow, leaning back on the couch as Weiss who wore a robe and little else sat straddling his hips and dominated his mouth with loud, open mouth kisses. The sheer white robe was
partially open, revealing her friend’s pearly coloured skin and small swelling breasts. Ruby watched for a minute, seeing the way her hands curled through his dark hair, pressing her chest to his with a moan. She couldn’t see Qrow’s hands but he was clearly enjoying himself. Oz appeared behind him, a mischievous smile on his face as he peered down. “Well what are we going to do about this?”

Instead of answering him Ruby strode into the room, her hand cupping Weiss’s cheek. Her friend startled and released Qrow as Ruby swooped down and kissed her hard. Weiss not one to back down rose up and licked Ruby’s lip. She felt more then saw the grin spread over her face before she was given a gentle shove down, tumbling off Qrow’s lap.

Oz came around the other side, sitting Weiss back up while Ruby took her place on Qrow. “Hey there.” She smiled when he gazed up at her, singing softly through their bond. Ruby feeling the combined love between Oz and Qrow swooped down and captured his swollen lips in hers.

Qrow felt the shyness still there but her effort was rivaling it. He reached up to gently cradle Ruby’s head and return her kiss, pouring all his feelings into it. Qrow broke the kiss first, simply breathing Ruby in. “I love you.”

Tears swept down her cheeks, mingling with his own, ones he hadn’t realized he shed. “I know, I love you too, sorry it’s taking me so long to come back.”

“I’ll wait, for as long as you need.”

Smiling she held Qrow’s hand to her hot cheek. “I know.”

A soft grumble rose and had the four of them giggling. Qrow chuckled at the red in Ruby’s face. “Our baby sure does have an appetite, its early enough to make a snack before lunch. Want do you want?”

His lover scrunched up her face, then lit up. “Cookies!”

Qrow looked at her deadpanned which then had Oz smiling. “I think you walked into that one Qrow.”

“Sugar it is!” With a cheer Ruby leapt off his lap and Qrow heaved himself off the couch, heading into the kitchen.

Weiss whispered something about getting dressed while Qrow started pulling out the utensils. Ruby and Oz ended up hanging back as Qrow from memory started spreading the ingredients on the counter as he moved around with his crowish walk. Ruby leaned on Oz’s good side and closed her eyes, taking comfort in Oz’s new bond with her.

She swore she could smell pine, it was fresh and crisp and reminded her of home beyond Oz in a way. She could practically hear Zwei as he barked in the garden, begging for pets. She opened them again and forgot for several long minutes they were in Mistral. She watched Qrow measure and sift with practiced movements and as he put the wet and dry ingredients together while Ruby turned and grabbed Oz’s left hand pulling him further into the kitchen. They both washed their hands then Ruby pulled Oz over to the bowl.

Qrow backed off as Ruby pulled Oz over to the bowl and grabbed it with both hands, a childish smile blooming over her features. “I’ll hold, you stir.” She told Oz, no if ands or buts about how they were going to do this.

Oz chuckled and picked up the wooden spoon Qrow had pulled out for the task. “Yes Ma’am.” Setting himself to the long task of mixing and folding the ingredients together while, Ruby held the
Qrow ducked out of the kitchen for a moment and pulled out his Scroll, he plugged it into the stereo and turned it down so it would just be pleasant background noise. The sweet voice of Miriam Stockley resonated through the room as he played a ‘Perfect Day’, it had been one of his go to tunes when Ruby was having a bad day. When he returned to the kitchen he smiled at Ruby’s bowed head, he could see the little smile on those pale lips.

He pulled out two trays and put parchment paper on them, set the oven to preheat. Oz finished stirring the ingredients and leaned on the counter as Ruby took the bowl over to Qrow. He stepped away but she didn’t do more than glance at him out of the corner of her eye. She took a little handful of dough and rolled it between her hands. Slowly watching her closely Qrow did the same, together they squashed the sphere’s into a cookie shape and set them on the tray in unison.

Oz watched with a little smile as the two went through the practiced actions. The song changed to something a little more upbeat and cheery. He could see Ruby rocking back and forth on her heels to her toes as her smile widened, her fingers moving quicker. He would have to remember that she liked violins for future reference. In no time at all the two had all the dough rolled, shaped and on the tray. Their hands dancing with teasing brushes, never long but deliberate on both sides.

Ruby stepped away and opened the oven door while Qrow put the two trays in perfect time with her. “I’ll do the dishes.” Ruby said and started to gather up the measuring cups, spoons and whisk.

Oz raised a brow looking at Qrow, the red eyed man chuckled and smiled. “Whoever makes doesn’t have to clean.” The two men set about filling the dishwasher while Ruby washed the wood spoon and bowl by hand. Qrow stepped up to her side taking a drying towel in hand, he dried the dishes and pass them off to Oz. Together they had the kitchen cleaned in minutes, Oz wiping down the counters while the other two finished with the dishes.

Ruby dried her hands and peered at the cookies in the oven, they had just started to rise and get shiny. She sighed longingly, this was the worse part, the waiting.

“Don’t watch the paint dry pipsqueak.” Qrow smirked his wolfish grin and headed out into the living room flopping on the bigger red couch.

The silver eyed woman giggled and followed saying, “You haven’t called me pipsqueak in ages!”

Qrow leaned back so he was looking at her with his head upside down. “My bad, cause you are still a tiny rose.”

Oz walked around Ruby and sat beside Qrow stretching for a moment before relaxing. “She’s bigger than Summer ever was.” He leaned back copying Qrow.

Ruby giggled at the two mirrored men, a few memories of Beacon coming to mind. She remembered how much fun and trouble they had and it erased any lingering tension. She kinda missed those times when they were just starting out and why she liked them both. They could be such goof balls without being loud and brash about it. Then were time when they could be utterly sweet and kind, so much so she felt her heart was fit for bursting. “Well I think I take after Tai.” She walked past them confidently, their silliness easing her.

“Agreed.” Both men said in unison sitting up properly as Ruby walked over and sat on the other couch. She stretched out over it and flopped staring up at the ceiling with a little smile on her face. The music played on behind them, a purely instrumental piece, her hands went to either side of her growing belly, could her baby hear the music? Could she hear her voice, Qrow’s and Ozpin’s?
Oz looked over to Qrow, there were still dark circles under his partner’s eyes that did not go unnoticed. He reached out with his left hand and petted behind Qrow’s ear. He wanted to ask what he could do for him, what did he need but he also didn’t want to shatter this scene Qrow had created for them. Instead he took his chin and tilted Qrow’s head, he needed to kiss his bird and he wanted to show him the bond between Ruby and himself.

Oz’s lips moved over the smaller man’s, his Aura shimmering as his ring, the one they had made for him glowed. Qrow moved over and ran the backs of his fingers over Oz’s neck, then settled them over the back of Oz’s neck. Feeling the scars under the pads of his fingers, he bit his lip and moved leaning up as Oz felt what he wanted and met him halfway. For once the kiss was devoid of demand, Oz let Qrow lead as he felt Qrow’s fingers pressing his neck. *Just one small part of him.* Qrow thought shifting moving half into Oz’s lap, raising himself up making the kiss easier. *Just one more thing to love.* No guilt raised up in Qrow, they had both made their choices and were growing to be at peace with them.

Then he felt their fire over him, their Aura’s mixing. Oz opened his bond with Ruby at the same time Qrow did and it was like the ground beneath them shattered into a million pieces. Suddenly they were all there, in that space, entwined together. Ruby, Qrow and Ozpin. All were one and then all were none. Neither could tell where one started or the other ended. Hands not his own held him and there was too much to hold onto. Qrow took their kiss deeper, his hands, were they ‘his’ hands peeled away Oz’s shirt and trousers. Then his own fell away and in that mist of everything he felt himself lifting, his bare ass shivering as he was laid onto something cold.

Ruby’s eyes widened as she felt what had just happened and made a note to ask Lydia about it. She held a bond with Qrow and another separate one with Oz. What had just happened with frankly just as kiss, was a bond forming between Qrow and Ozpin. She could feel it as part of her collective, she hadn’t known that could even happen or so easily. Had the bonds just been waiting for her and Ozpin to connected before it was able to weave Oz to Qrow?

Ruby had rolled over onto her stomach when it started and now watched as Qrow and Oz devoured one another and nearly came on the spot. Their desire for one another shaping itself like blast of heat between her legs and she felt herself dripping hot wet juices all over the couch. She was reminded of how it felt to share this pleasure through her bonds but this, this was different. It was stronger and brighter and it buckled her knees with the sharp embrace of love and lust that enveloped her entire being.

Ruby felt all their emotions Oz was relaxed and enjoying the embrace, he had missed Qrow and that emotion bled over into her. She missed him too, she always had but the memories kept her from closing that last gap between them. Qrow she felt his insecurities, his need to hold her but not until she was ready. His heart ached with love for them both, Qrow knew her, her deepest self and kindness. He was accepting of every part of her, just as Oz was.

Nora bounced down the stairs eager to hunt down the smell of cookies and stopped in her tracks with a lurch, swinging her arms in the air to regain her balance. Her eyes blown wide at the sight of Ozpin and Qrow kissing on the counter. Both men were mostly naked and she could see their long lengths rub together as Oz pinned Qrow. Her cheeks flushed bright red as she said loudly. “Wow.” Their kiss broke with a wet sound, the sensation of their new open bond quieting as Qrow’s face snapped towards her, Oz peered over his shoulder to her. The red eyed man looked back at Oz and asked “W-what was that?” His voice stumbled over the words, his breathing haggard.

“Ruby and I bonded last night and I think,” Oz took a deep breath trying in vain to calm his pounding heart. “Maybe I think, we too bonded just now.” “Can you hear me Qrow?”
Qrow’s red eyes widened, hearing Oz’s voice in his head was incredible. “Yes!”

Another voice, one more familiar to his mind spoke up. “I wonder how this happened?”

Before any of them could come up with an idea there was another pair of feet treading into the kitchen. “What smells so good?” Yang walked up behind Nora and came to a lurching stop very alike the ginger woman beside her. “Ewww, uncle Qrow!! Get a room!”

Qrow flipped her the bird lazily, too busy trying to think of how they managed to bond with one another so easily. Then he threw it to the wind and slipped his tongue into Oz’s mouth stroking it over his tongue just to get a moan from the bigger man. Grinding further into Oz’s lap he nipped at the lower lip just to poke fun at Yang.

Yang stuck out her tongue and said, “Yuck.” she walked over to Ruby and leaned on the sofa, crossing her arms over the back and resting her chin on them before reaching down and playing with a lock of Ruby’s hair. “So I had a thought sis, if you keep that dusty old crow. Does that mean I have to call you auntie?”

Ruby’s brows shot up and rolled over batting Yang’s hand way. “NO! Nope, no, na da, NOPE!” She shook her head very vigorously her dark red locks fanning out around her head.

Yang giggled and reached down ticking Ruby’s belly. “See now that you’ve said nope I just HAVE to do it!”

“No~! Stop!” Ruby laughed and tried to bat her sister’s hands away. “Stop it you’re ruining my show!”

“I’m sure you can get private shows whenever you like.” Yang grinned tickling her sister.

“Don’t make me come over there Firecracker, you know how that ends.” Qrow broke the kiss with Oz and looked over to his niece with a little growl in his voice.

“IEP!” Yang yelped in a very Ruby like fashion and leaped away from her sister, covering her belly protectively.

Ruby took the moment of distraction and fled to the other couch curling up against the arm and cradling her stomach. Now that more eyes were burrowing into their backs Qrow and Oz started putting their clothes back on. Ruby could see the raging hard ons both men were sporting and knew she was no better in the worked up department. Oz and Qrow flopped onto the couch next to her and Ruby poked Qrow in the shoulder. “Hey my show stopped.” Her men chuckled at that and resumed their kiss. This reminded her of Beacon, Ruby drew her legs up and rested her chin between her knees. Their emotions kept swinging back and forth and she bathed in the love that hummed through the bonds.

Yang and Nora meanwhile started investigating the kitchen now that Qrow and Oz had removed themselves. “OOOO Cookies!” The words alerted Qrow to the impending DOOM of their baked goods. “OOHH THEIR DONE!” Qrow yanked his lips away from Oz and leaped off of him and the couch racing to the kitchen. “Don’t you dare Yang! You don’t even let them cool before they vanish!” Ruby giggled as she heard the shrieks and squeals from the kitchen and crawled into Oz lap with a happy purr listening to the age old whine of, “But Uncle Qrow~!” from her half sister.

As it turned out the cookies ended up being a little over done but there weren’t any complaints about the burnt edges as Ruby scoffed several down with a glass of milk. Everyone else had rejoined in the living room and were quietly talking among themselves. It was looking to be a calm and
normal day before Yang brought up the subject.

“Ozpin, you never really told us how the magic works, I mean is it just you or can anyone do magic?”

Memory was a funny thing and Oz frowned, despite his best effort some of the information he should have, should know just wasn’t coming to him. Probably thanks to a certain thief. Ruby felt his confliction and squeezed one of his hands, Oz looking at her like she hung the moon and smiled. “As to if there is anyone else who can wield magic as I do, I’ve certainly never come across them. Magic is rarer these days and while I did wield it more freely, it is by no mean infinite.”

The blonde frowned, thinking back to her conversations where her mother was present. “Raven kept going on about her magic not evolving, what did she mean?”

That made the elder man wince. “I must admit I did not think she would give up that secret so fast, though I suspect Hawk and Falcon knowing gave her little reason to hide it. You see whilst at Beacon I required some assistance in gathering information on Salem’s plans. Qrow and I were already in a relationship but I was convinced to bring Raven into the fold as well. I wanted them to be able to blend in with nature itself, to be free of their natural forms soooo I gave them the ability to turn into birds.” Oz stood from the sofa and walked around the room, his eyes flickering to each window in turn as though someone may be watching.

Nora’s mouth dropped open. “So that wasn’t part of his Semblance?”

Qrow smirked and said wishfully. “If only.”

“Of course things didn’t work out the way I hoped. Raven had only wanted to be stronger and used me to gain that advantage and Qrow, well we soon realised that turning into a bird wasn’t the only thing my magic had done. See as much I am may appear to know and understand all this I had only done such magic one time in my collective lives- that I remember. When I sacrificed a significant amount of magic and gifted four young women with the power to control nature itself.”

“You created the Maidens!” Yang shouted with disbelief.

Oz nodded and continued. “Yes, though it turned out to be one of my greatest regrets. I didn’t realise that by gifting them as I’d done my magic wouldn’t die with them. Instead it found a new host on every passing. At first I debated taking it back, finding the Maidens and reversing what I had done. Then I decided to leave it be, thinking that those chosen would use my gift for good. I didn’t count on Salem finding out and attempting to use it against me. Perhaps if I had Cinder would not have become the Fall Maiden and so many innocent lives wouldn’t have been lost.”

The room was deadly quiet as the students sat and waited, only Jaune clenched his fist at his sides, his old anger still not resolved but remained silent. Oz felt the sorrow over those lost lives. “My magic is being used against me now but if I can get close enough to the Maidens I can take back their power. It would be the best way to keep it out of Salem’s hands but I need to be able to find them first.”

“How do you propose to do that? Cinder was the one to bake your ass and you didn’t take it back then when you had the chance.” Yang crossed her arms. Ruby and Qrow looked terribly uncomfortable with the direction of this conversation but she and the others wanted some answers.

Oz stilled, flashes of fire and the smell of smoke rose, threatening to choke him, those fears bled into his bond and immediately Qrow and Ruby jumped him, holding and stroking him through the memory. Yang took one look at the defeat in Ozpin's eyes and backed down, what was she thinking.
Turning her head she watched the sky grow orange through the glass, another day down. “I’m sorry, I shouldn’t have brought that up.” She remembered her own fire, searching for Blake and finding Adam.

The cooing from Qrow and Ruby seemed to settle Oz more than anything and he looked over at his former students. “No, you’re right. I made a mistake, I should have ripped the Maiden powers from Cinder the moment she attacked Amber but I froze…”

Everyone in turn looked to their headmaster. Oz only grimaced. “Even life long Huntsmen have moments of weakness, I was distracted by the thoughts of my students but mostly of Qrow and Ruby. That hesitation cost me and it costs everyone she kills now. That’s on me but-,” Oz’s face hardened. “the next time I see Cinder I ‘will’ take that magic back. No more hesitation, no more mercy, she has killed enough and I won’t stand by and let her take any more lives.”

“HERE HERE!” Nora cheered, glad to have any reason to bring the light back into the room.

There was a buzz from the scroll on the table, Qrow picked it up and looked up the message he had been sent. “Looks like Leo might finally have some answers about the council for us. Says he wants to meet tomorrow.”

Oz looked down at his hands, the skin so scared he hardly recognised them himself since Cinder had burnt them so horrifically. Something like a cold twinge hit his shoulder but was quickly shoved aside as he addressed the room. “Then we should rest up today everyone, who knows what tomorrow will bring.”

With that Ozpin headed out of the room and up the stairs. Qrow and Ruby shared a look and followed. “We’ll be back for dinner.” Ruby said as they followed Ozpin. They found him in their bedroom looking out the window as the snow fell, he had an arm braced against the frame and was leaning on it. “I’ve got a bad feeling about this.”

“Me too.” Qrow said walking over, his gaze flitted over the brand on Oz’s face. Ruby had told him what it was but he had yet to hear a word about it from Oz.

Ruby sat on the bed nibbling her bottom lip, she pulled her dress off and undressed. She picked up the rose and set a flicker of lust over the bonds as she reclined back on the bed.

Ozpin and Qrow’s gaze snapped over to her, she looked lovely in the moonlight her growing belly just begged for kisses. However it was the red and green playing over her throat that grew both of their attentions. “Undress.” Ruby ordered. “If we go to battle tomorrow I want to feel you both deep inside of me tonight.”

Qrow groaned at the implication of that statement. His hands all but ripping his clothes off as he moved to her, letting them fall carelessly to the ground. “You sure?” He stopped before her reaching out with the back of his right hand letting the cool rings trail over her skin.

Ruby tapped her neck with the rose. “Yes. Ozpin showed me a few very new and pleasurable sensations last night.” She trailed the rose down her body sending just enough Aura through it so both men could feel her skin through it. She traced it over her sex and said. “I think you here and Ozpin,” She blushed. “Where he had far too much fun last night. How does that sound?”

Ruby didn’t even see Oz undress, suddenly he was nude with his teeth grazing her neck. “Brilliant, but I’ve a thought first.” He took the rose from her. “We made this for a teenager, I dare say you’ve grown a great deal since then.” He brushed it over her neck. “It think as a woman now grown and flowered you need something a bit different from your lovers. Hmm husbands. Something to let
everyone know just who you belong too.”

“Ohh I get your thinking Oz, that would look lovely.” Qrow moved onto her other side so they were framing her. “I’m thinking vine work, keeping the rose in the hollow of her throat.”

“Boys?” Ruby asked as the two all but purred, she could feel the bond between them open and them swapping ideas but couldn’t actually see what they were thinking.

“A collar love. You don’t have to worry about catching a ring on Crescent Rose that way.” Ozpin said setting the rose against her throat while Qrow reached up and set his fingers over the side of it.

Ruby’s eyes dilated at the mere thought of it. “Ohhh yes please.”

The two cradled her between them, Qrow’s lips found their way to her neck. While a hand of Oz’s drifted down to stroke her baby bump. She could feel their bond purring as the rose around her neck lost all substance and returned to energy weaving around her neck. Green and red vines flowed in orange thin patterns over the slender column. Later she’d recognize it as the design that used to be on Oz’s cane. They curled down to hollow of her throat a new very small rose forming there to sit warm upon her skin.

They withdrew their arms coming around to hold her. “Beautiful.” Ozpin purred very happy with their work, with a bond between them it had been easy to morph the rose into its new design.

The Silver Eyed Warrior reached up and touched the soft rose. “I love it, thank you.” She tilted her head up and kissed Qrow, she missed the feeling of his lips. Thin against hers, moister than they had been while he was drinking. She drew away and spoke so softly their lips brushing each other. “Go lay on your back.”

“Hmm I like where this is going.” Qrow moved away from her and arranged the pillows to his liking before doing as instructed. He put his hands behind his head and smirked that wolfish smirk that never failed to make Ruby flush.

She followed him with Oz moving behind her, she stopped just out of Qrow’s reach kneeling while Ozpin wrapped his arms around her. Nipping at her shoulder while locking gazes with Qrow. The red eyed man sucked in a breath as Ozpin started to stroke over Ruby, his hands playing in long gestures over her. Over the last two weeks Ruby’s body had stopped showing the muscles they were so fond of in favour of the smooth roundness needed for the baby. Qrow thought she glowed, that being pregnant definitely suited her.

Qrow grew aroused just watching them, watching Ozpin nip and kiss at Ruby’s neck. Watched the flush grow over Ruby’s skin, he resisted reaching down and stroking himself when Ozpin slid his hands down and grew the lips of her sex apart slowly. Even in this light Qrow could see the shine on them, how she already dripped for them. Ruby watched Qrow as she took one of Oz’s hands and guided his fingers inside of her. They could all instantly hear the wetness, she turned her head and nuzzled Oz’s neck with a soft moan as he stretched her. He moved a hand to cup a breast drawing lightly over a nipple.

Qrow’s member throbbed watching in no time at all, Ruby’s juices were sliding down Oz’s fingers. Ruby felt the oragasm building in her and whispered. “Enough Oz.”

“As you wish.” Ozpin withdrew his fingers and admired her behind as she crawled to Qrow straddling him.

Ruby put a hand on his chest and took hold of his erection by the base. Fear fluttered in her heart,
she looked up to those red eyes. Qrow reached out and pet over her stomach while opening the bond to her, letting her feel him in a different way. Ruby took a deep breath and lowered herself slowly down. Her whole body twisted as she moaned her eyes closing, she didn’t remember it feeling this good.

Qrow’s eyes went wide, now he understood why Ozpin was enjoying the sex during her pregnancy so much. “Oh…” His hands twitched as he ached to take hold of her hips as her swollen velvet walls surrounded him. Ruby went very slowly rocking now and again, Ozpin’s hands returned to her petting over her back and sides. His lips on her neck, a steady stream of sensation he slid a hand down and rested a finger over her anus. His heart was pounding with excitement, he had wanted this for them for so very long.

Ruby seated herself on Qrow her sopping wet walls clenched around him and Qrow could only groan. “Gods Ruby your killing me.” She looked up to him, they weren’t even moving and he looked debatched. His jaw already slack and skin taking on a slight red tint.

“Mmm, missed you.” She said, it was easy to keep the memories away with the bonds humming. Ozpin prepping her behind with gentle motions. With Qrow under her, it was something Tyrian had never done… gods she missed this. Ruby leaned forward and kissed him in a small brush of lips. “Touch me.”

Qrow moaned and reached up weaving a hand into her hair, he had so missed how it felt around his fingers. He pulled her gently forward and they kissed deeply, Qrow sliding his tongue into her mouth for her to stuck upon. Ruby moaned long and loud as Ozpin worked his fingers into her bit by bit. Qrow’s eyes snapped open when he felt Oz seek out that place within her, he could feel it on his cock and Ruby yelped moving to sit up again but Qrow stroked his hands down her back. “Gods don’t move.” He said as he watched Oz lube up his member and shifted over them to kneel behind Ruby his legs on either side of Qrows.

Ozpin kissed Ruby’s shoulder again. “Don’t, just remember yellow and red. Relax for me please.”

Ruby tried to stay relaxed, she could feel the blood pounding through her sex, could tell by the way Qrow’s member twitched that he could feel it too. The petite woman shifted and set her head down on Qrow’s chest and closed her eyes, taking slow deep breaths of his clean scent. Her red eyed lover pet up and down her back just how she liked it. She opened the last bond between her and Ozpin and let him gauge when she was relaxed enough.

Ozpin really enjoyed having that kind of access to her mind. It helped him understand just how Lydia felt when she was doing a scene, how she always knew how far to push and where to stop. Oz took hold of her behind and slowly started to guide himself into her very slowly.

Ruby moaned softly and focused on her breathing deep and slow. It only took two inches before she grabbed at Qrow with a deep moan, she could feel his own fingernails dig into her moon light coloured skin.

“How are you both doing?” Ozpin asked he could feel it but asking never hurt.

“Full.” Ruby said though she knew she could take more.

“Trying not to come like a green boy.” Qrow said and looked to Ruby again. “How’s the baby?”

Ruby sat up a little bit and put a hand to her belly trying to feel out just what she was feeling. “Seems fine, nothing hurts.”
“Alright.” Ozpin shifted his grip to rest over a hip and started to ease slowly inward again. He watched them both moan and writhe, Qrow’s hands had found their way to her back and were holding on for dear life. Ruby was trying to stay still, she felt so full already her insides throbbed and ached for Qrow to thrust to move! He didn’t though, he could feel Oz’s member rub against his own through the thin membrane and muscle separating them. He could feel through the bond that Ruby’s g-spot was already trapped between the two being rubbed from both sides. All he had to do was rock his hips and she’d probably come. He looked up to Oz and raised a brow in question.

Oz stopped moving and leaned back grabbing Ruby’s hips with both hands. Qrow reached up and brushed Ruby’s hair back so she could see him. “You okay if I move?” Ruby nodded the pleasure already making it hard to think. Qrow tested a little press of his hips, the keening wail was instantaneous. “Qrow!” He could feel her sex clench and release around him and started to rock, moving his feet for a bit more leverage. He moved with short deep pressing thrusts. *Ninety two bottles of beer on the wall! Ninety one bottles of beer on the wall!* He had to sing in his head to keep from coming right then and there. He had to bite down hard on his lip as she screamed out her first climax, one of many that night.

Their dom waited for her body to go slack before taking advantage of it and pressing forward a little quicker than before. His hands moved to either side of Qrow’s head as he sheathed himself. Ruby’s eyes were blown so wide Qrow could barely see the silver. Ozpin kissed her shoulder again. “You still okay?”

“Yeah~.” Ruby’s voice shook even not moving they were making her brain melt with pleasure. Now she understood why Ozpin wanted to do this so badly.

“Alright then, you just stay still. Shall we do what we do best Qrow?” Oz said his lips quirking up. Qrow couldn’t help the smirk. “Hells yes. You lead.”

Ruby didn’t understand just how much trouble she was in as Ozpin set a slow pace at first withdrawing and pushing back in. When he drew away from her and took her hips lifting her up off of Qrow slightly it should have been a hint. Only when Qrow took full advantage of the new space did it hit Ruby.

They weren’t just boasting. She SCREAMED as Qrow fell into a quicker pace filling her twice to each stroke from Oz. She arched between them and wailed in ecstasy so loud the whole house heard her. Qrow took hold of her breasts and held her up by them, rolling her nipples between his fingers. She could feel them both against each other inside of her, they trapped her most pleasurable spots between them and worked upon them without mercy. She came within thirty seconds her sex gushing juices and Ozpin groaned, pausing to let the contractions pass before resuming.

Qrow was in love with her expressions, she screamed and pulled at her hair. Her eyes squeezed shut as her world was reduced to them inside of her. He felt Ozpin shift to short deep thrusts that added the slap of her butt against his hips to the sounds of the room. Qrow followed suit, it seemed she liked short and deep the best in all things. “FUCK~!” Ruby wailed it was all to much, Oz’s fingers dug into her hips as he sped his pace confident they would not harm her now. The sight below him made him ache to come, he loved feeling Qrow inside of her as well.

“Qrow how are you? I need ta..” Ozpin could barely form the words as he kept going the pressure building in his balls.

“I got a handle on it.” Qrow bit his lip so hard it near bled as Oz slammed his hips to Ruby’s ass groaned so loud it reverabted in the room.
Their woman’s eyes snapped open as she felt Oz fire his seed into her, she could feel his whole member pulse with the force of it. He didn’t even hint at withdrawing as he rocked his hips in tiny motions pressing as deep as he could go. Qrow on the other hand did not stop, through all of it he kept his pace. Still singing in his head to help him keep control.

Ozpin started to move again his erection remaining hard as he kept the stimulus up. Qrow brought Ruby back down to lay on his chest, his hands stroking down over her back to grab her butt. Qrow felt Oz slowly resume his thrusts with a longer stroke this time. Only when Ozpin had his control back did Qrow buck up harder and faster into her. Ruby bit down on his chest with a cry as he sent orgasm crashing through her again and followed her over filling her with his seed. All the while Ozpin kept his pace watching them come together.

Ruby panted against Qrow’s chest as the two men started to move in sink together again. Filling her, playing upon her centres of pleasure. It took a long time for her pleasure addled brain to understand they were timing each other’s orgasms to ensure she always had a hard member inside of her. That they worked together to get each other through their albeit short refractory periods so they could keep going without pausing. By her forth orgasm her body was slick with sweat and she could do little more then remember to breathe as they fucked her. She didn’t even know how many they had shared, she could only moan with each impact of their hips and shiver with pleasure when either came filling her with yet more seed.

“Getting hot Oz.” Qrow said he had forgotten how good it felt to have a woman like this.

“Need to move?” Ozpin asked leaning forward and pressing his hips tight to her while Qrow did the same. Sweat dripped down his back and he needed to catch his own breath.

“Yeah, kneeling?” Qrow asked shifting his legs again.

“Sure, Ruby how are you doing?” Ozpin asked as he wrapped his arms around her and lifted her off of Qrow’s chest.

“Mmm good, tired…” Ruby leaned back against Oz. “Don’t think I can come again.”

Qrow loved how doe eyed she’d gotten, he had felt her go through at least seven by now. He shifted his legs and held Oz’s hips to anchor himself as he sat up and moved to sandwich her between them all without parting for her dripping core. “Oh I’m sure you can. Ozpin and I haven’t even hit our record yet.”

“Huh?” Ruby asked as Qrow started slow rolling rocks of his hips, she shivered and moaned as he now pushed against different parts of her sex.

“Our nickname in the houses was Dee-dee.” Qrow purred as she reached out to him, putting her arms over his shoulders.

“Why?” Ruby moaned the word out softly.

Ozpin shifted behind her pushing straight up into her. “Double digits.”

“Ohhhhh.” Their woman sagged against them.

“We are going to need to work on your stamina love.” Ozpin pet through her sweaty hair, he dipped his head and kissed her cheek. “One more, we’ll take mercy on you.”

“Okay~.” Ruby leaned forward and kissed Qrow though it was slow as she was exhausted.
Qrow slid a hand down and played upon her clit with made her bite down on his lip as he and Oz chased their finish. Deeper, harder, faster, no worries now. Their hips pounded her as hands roamed over her, petting, teasing. Their thick members rubbing so deeply inside of her. Qrow’s nimble fingers on her clit, it was all too much for her. Ruby could feel the pleasure burning in her belly, she arched her head pressing against Oz’s chest and just as she felt it start to come. Qrow stopped moving his fingers reaching up to tease a breast instead.

Oz slid a hand up and squeezed her other breast tight. “Maybe we should make you come on our cocks alone.” His voice purred in deep rumble.

“Oz~.” Ruby whined and yelped as Qrow roughly hilted his member in and ground his hips tight as Oz shift to deep quick thrusts.

“You can do it.” Qrow murmured against her neck kissing it and biting down on it. “Just think how full you are right now, how many times we’ve come inside of you. I know you like that. I’ve seen the dreams that you try so hard to hide from us.”

Embarrassment made Ruby’s cheeks burn. “Qrow~.” Ruby’s exhaustion faded as her mortification grew.

Qrow moved to catch an earlobe between his teeth. “I’ve seen you dream about us tying you down and fucking you till there is no more room inside of you. Still your so full of our seed it spills out of you, sadly such a thing is impossible cause well biology. But just think about it, maybe a whole day or two in this bed. You tied down while Oz and I take turns, maybe we’d put a plug in you so we can have a reprieve without having to start all over.”

Ozpin’s erection returned to raging heights at Qrow’s raspy honeyed words. He hadn’t known Ruby had fantasies like that. He let the urges of his body take over, making both his lovers moan. As his pace picked up, moans tumbling from his lips and his breathing started to grow faster.

“Qrow please~.” Ruby’s blush was magnifed her tired muscles started to contract.

“Or maybe the one that includes James. Shall I tell Oz about that one?” Qrow chuckled. “You’ve been having it since our match at Beacon.”

Ozpin moved his hands to hold her hips steady again. “This I have to hear.”

“Our woman wants to know how the General is in bed. She dreams about us together, him pounding her sex you up her ass and me down her throat. She wants to be a plaything between three doms, wants to be fucked to the point she can’t remember her own name. Wants to be used and adored.” Qrow followed Oz’s example his breath starting to get fast again.

“Oh we can totally arrange the last one.” Ozpin said.

At the mere thought of it Ruby came with a silent shiver, her body tightening around them and she felt them come together inside of her. They slumped against each other for several long minutes, till the sweat cooling on their bodies started to chill them. Ozpin was the first to stir and he groaned. “This is gonna make a mess.”

“You first grab a cloth and be fast?” Qrow suggested his arms weaving around Ruby who was already dozing on his chest.

“I don’t think I have fast in me right now.” Ozpin said and looked over to the cloth trying to plan his actions to get it with as little effort and as much speed as possible.
“Then suck it up and clean the bedding.” Qrow said shifting his weight to get ready to lean back and take her with him.

Ozpin snorted. “Yeah I’ll admit my brain went for the gutter when you said that but ahh no way.” He shifted back and slowly started to withdraw from Ruby, her whimper was adorable. Just as he fell from her Qrow leaned back and took her with him as gravity did have it’s uses. He snagged the cloth and folded it lengthwise before returning to Ruby and pressing it over her anus.

Qrow lifted her pulling out and Oz quickly covered her sex with the rest of the cloth. It was cool and damp, soothing the hot flushed flesh. The two men worked together to arrange her as Ozpin stood and wobbled abit. “Definitely out of practice.”

“If that’s out of practice I don’t want to know what in practice is like.” Ruby mumbled as Ozpin gathered her up into his embrace cradling her to him with ease.

“Just think Ruby’s we can do that standing.” Qrow lead the way into the bathroom.

Ruby just let out a tired whimper and snuggled into Oz’s chest as Qrow got the shower going. She dozed in and out of awareness as they cleaned her. Ozpin checked her thoroughly for any tearing or other injuries, even going so far as to extend his Aura into her to make absolutely sure they hadn’t upset anything.

Ozpin carried her back to bed again settling in her the middle. Ruby snuggle down with a happy humm, Qrow pressed up to her front and when Ozpin settled behind her. A very purposeful well time and placed kick made her stomach vibrate. “Ow!” Ruby’s hand flew to her stomach as she was very suddenly, very awake. Both of her men’s brows flew up before grins split over their faces.

Qrow chuckled and pushed the duvet back as Ozpin moved a hand to cradle Ruby’s lower stomach. Qrow kissed her right below her belly button. “Well I’m sorry little one, but she’s ours too you’re just going to have to put up with it. Your mama enjoyed it very much.” He pressed his cheek against her stomach and felt another small kick. “None of that, if you keep her up all night we’ll just have to do it again tomorrow.” There was another kick.

Ozpin laughed. “Maybe we are misinterpreting it. For all we know the endorphins in Ruby feel good to our little girl too.”

There was no kick in response to that and Qrow said. “I don’t know about that.” Que kick.

“Would you stop taunting her please~! My insides aren’t used to this yet!” Ruby rubbed over her belly.

Qrow reached for the bonds and opened his end as wide as he could, trying to find this connection to the baby that Lydia said they would be able to feel. “You know little one there are better ways to communicate your preferences.” He probed out along the bonds trying to figure out where their child was in them.

For a long minute there was nothing, then a happy sensation mixed with a tired one flitted to them from someplace they couldn’t really find within the bonds. Ozpin was the first to figure out what their child was cross about. He laughed a deep echoing thing. “She’s pissed off that we kept her awake!” The tall man laughed so hard the mattress moved.

Ruby giggled and pet her stomach. “Oh I’m sorry. How about a nap then dinner.” The feeling of contentment continued.

Qrow chuckled and moved back up the bed, drawing the duvet backup offering up his chest for
Ruby to snuggle again. She happily did and the three settled for a nice long nap till Nora called for them to help with dinner.

Chapter End Notes

Kry: Ardy come out of there please.
Ardy: Who me? Na!
Kry: Just because Emerald Rose is at it’s finale doesn’t mean the story is finished
Ardy: One more ladies and gentlemen, we’ll try and post it on Saturday with the new episode of RWBY.
Kry: It’s been such a long and fun haul and this chapter was especially long *looks at Ardy* wasn’t it.
Ardy: *shrugs* I did most of it. I’m all for going out with a bang.
Kry: Hahaha, alright. Well a big thank you for all those comments out there: Baker1762, darkvampirekisses, Tamara, Sportsfangirl815, threeguesses and XxShadowWolf13xX
Ardy: See you all on Saturday fokes.
When Ruby woke the next morning she had to stifle the groan from the soreness she felt, her entire body was aching from hours of love making. Ruby turned onto her side, her body squished in Qrow’s arms. Her back was oddly cold until she saw on the other side of her body was Ozpin and he was smiling softly at her as he held Qrow to him.

“Morning.” His voice was barely a whisper, sunlight passed through a tiny part in the curtains to fall over his dark hair, had it been his regular silver it should have shined. She missed it, Ruby thought stretching over the sleeping bird to twist a long lock between her fingers. “Morning.”

Oz let her explore, her finger brushing the hair away, it revealed his returned brand but at this moment Oz couldn’t care less. He had Ruby and Qrow back where they belonged, that was all that mattered to him right now.

“Oz?” Ruby leaned out of Qrow’s arms as much as possible to reach over to Oz. “Would- would you help me make something for Qrow. I want him to have something of me and something of you with him, always.”

The older soul took her hand in his, bringing her small fingers to his mouth to kiss. “Of course.” Shifting slightly so as to not wake their sleeping partner Oz grew as close to Ruby as possible, until their heads could touch over Qrow’s. “Do you remember how I taught you to make your Aura visible?”

“Yes.” Ruby touched heads with Oz and closed her eyes to the world, focusing on her Aura.

“Alright, I want you to feel your Aura, bring it up to the surface.” Oz watched as the practiced breathing from Ruby made her red fire flare over her skin, her Aura glowed strongly as Oz held their hands together. “Now focus it into your hands, let it glide over our joined flesh.” Oz brought his own Aura, its green shimmer down to join with hers.

Ruby felt their Aura’s mixing, it wasn’t like when she did this with Qrow. It was so much more controlled, Oz guiding her with ease. Red and green merged in their hands, gathered in Ruby’s palm in dancing flames.

Ozpin smiled at the confusion he felt through his bond with Ruby. It’s okay Ruby, just keep following me, feel our Aura’s shape together. Like our Aura’s you and I are as different as Night and Day, male to female and yet we are drawn together and bonded through our very souls. Feel my strength and be its kindness, feel my emotions and be it’s balm.

Ruby breathed it in, her lips closing on Ozpin’s as their combined Auras blended together. She felt a tightening of her Aura before it was split off and kissed her lover deeply. Oz responded to her body’s demand, giving her mouth a plundering, her moans soft and breathless reaching his ears.
When finally Ruby pulled away, her lips swollen and warm she looked down at their still bound hands. Her hand seemed to be swallowed up by Oz’s much larger one but she could feel something, something hot laying on her skin. Oz smiled at her and released their hands, a small thick band of what appeared to be roots or vines twisted together. One red and the other green, they twisted round and round to make the band, melding together at points and splitting off to twist again. It sparkled with red and green particles, like dust and reflected a world of light.

Ruby grinned and leaned down kissing their bird. At first he didn’t wake but with more peppered kisses Qrow suddenly shifted and started kissing her back. Ruby felt his whole body wake with a start and nearly whimpered when she felt every part of him press close. Oz lay back chuckling at them as Qrow’s wandering mouth went to her neck, only when she moaned from her sensitive skin did he lean back far enough to open sleepy eyes. “Well good morning to you.”

Ruby giggled as Qrow with a mischievous smile ducked down again to nibble on her neck, Ruby all but whining at his touch. She felt him pressing more long kisses to her throat and wanted nothing more then to wrap her legs around his hips and pull him back into her heat. Before she could do anything more she felt his weight being lifted and drawn back to her side as Oz attacked the back of his neck and shoulders.

Oz stilled and brought his head over Qrow’s shoulder, kissing his cheek. “Ruby and I have something for you.”

Qrow felt the breath over his ear and shuddered. “Hmm?” Feeling his hands being touched he looked down at Ruby as she kissed his finger tip and eased something warm over his ring finger. His hand uncurled and his heart softened as he took in the simple but elegant design. “It’s beautiful. Did you two…”

“We made it, for you.” Ruby kissed the warm metal snuggling into Qrow’s chest.

“And while they may not have come from any store I think our rings symbolize something stronger.” Oz purred into his back, he also wore his ring, the one made from Ruby and Qrow on the same finger.

Qrow’s heart nearly ripped itself from his chest at the love he felt. He fed those feelings through his new ring and with the bonds between them open he felt what that did to both Ruby and Oz. His two lovers came alive with those feelings, hands touching, bodies crushing together. He felt them pull him closer in, sharing in those pure emotions, wanting nothing more then to be closer. Qrow had never felt as happy in all his life as he did in that moment. He only hoped that the future would be kind to them.

The full cracked moon illuminated the sky as the two teams plus Qrow and Ozpin walked across the grounds of Haven Academy. Qrow led hunched over in his crowish walk with Ruby flanking him, the rest of team RWBY on one side of them and remains of team JNPR on the other. Ozpin pulled his hood up and shifted the black heavy cloak given to him by Naga over his arms. Something wasn’t right, the night too calm and quiet for his tastes. He had a bad feeling about this and had elected to strip down to a t-shirt and vest. His weapons seemed to increase in weight on his hips as his sense of dread grew with each step.

He drew the cloak closed when Qrow pushed open the doors to the academy’s main hall. The
copper eyed man snuck a look at the statue, he had a plan if Leonardo didn’t wish to return to his side. Peering upward from the shadow of his hood Oz watched Leonardo enter the main hall, his tail low. The former headmaster looked up to his grey haired friend then away again before their eyes could meet and he gave himself away. His armour felt colder than usual, it was a nice sensation but he wondered why.

Lionheart looked down at the group and nearly had a heart attack, there were more than before. While students shouldn’t be that much of a threat with Cinder, Raven and Hazel coming, the man walking slightly behind the opposing group worried Leo, though he wasn't sure why. “Why hello. Thank you for… coming.” He run his hands and looked over the party again, almost catching the eye of the cloaked man. “There… seems to be more of you then last time.”

Qrow looked over at Ozpin who shrugged his shoulders in response, then back up at Leo. “Eh, you know what they say, ‘The more the merrier.’ So what’s going with the council?”

Lionheart adjusted the straps of his gauntlet, his eyes shifting from the many bodies to their signature weapons. “Why… did you bring your weapons?” He looked over to the window where a black bird sat watching him.

The bird was deathly silent and still, red eyes taking in the scene. Leo forced his gaze away from the bird, his eyes drifted to the red headed student and grew at the sight of her swollen belly. No no this couldn’t be happening! A pregnant woman, this was a new low for him and for a split second he wanted to cry out for them all to run. Then Qrow’s eyebrows rose and he said with more than a little bit of disbelief in his voice. “What? Leo, we’re Huntsmen. You okay?”

“Oh course! Of course, sorry. Just haven’t had my evening coffee.” He curled in on himself and dabbed at his head with a handkerchief. He really wasn’t very good at this lying thing.

“Look, it’s nice to see you, but we got work to do. Are we getting support from the council or not?” Qrow was running out of patience, he poked the bond and felt Ruby open it up in a three way between them. He could feel her curiosity and Ozpin’s feeling of impending doom. “Everything okay Oz?” He asked over the bond. “He’s stalling us.” Came Ozpin’s quick reply. “We aren’t alone here I think the raven is Raven but I don’t dare look around. If I can get out of here without showing my hand that would be preferred.”

“Boys focus, I’m trying to hold two conversations right now and it’s not easy.” Ruby brought them back to focus just as Yang looked around and spotted the black bird perched on the balcony railing. “Mom?” She looked over it.

Thanks to Ozpin already giving him the exact location, Qrow was able to whip out his sword and shoot at Raven before Yang had even finished talking. Unfortunately he ended up blowing out the balcony railing instead of hitting his sister but kept his weapon trained on her. He had a bone to pick with her and he wanted to do it in person.

Raven flew over behind Leonardo and transformed then took off her mask saying. “If you’re going to shoot me, shoot me. That was insulting.”

“There really is magic.” Nora whispered, her jaw dropping to the floor in awe.

Qrow grit his teeth, so this was a trap. “You and I have lots to talk about, if I wanted to hit you I would have done so.” His Semblance twisted and focused on the source of so much pain in his life.

Ruby felt it as it crept through the bonds between the three of them, she hadn’t yet learned how to control what passed through. The silver eyed woman walked over and grabbed his forearm.
“Control Qrow please, I can’t control where it goes.”

Raven laughed, “Control what? His Semblance? He’s never been able to do anything about that. But do try little brother, listen to your young lover.” her laughter died when Qrow’s eyes turned black with only a ring of red, she still hadn’t seen what he could do now and though she would never admit it, something about him right now frightened her.

“What happened to the tribe Raven, surly Hawk and Falcon didn’t sanction this.” Qrow was confused about that, his parents were killers sure but something didn’t feel right.

“Ah yes you wouldn’t have heard. Well brother, you’re looking at the Branwen tribes new leader.”

“Qrow.” Ruby slid her hand down and wove their fingers together. “You can rip her a new one later, we need to know what’s going on now.” She felt Ozpin push a calm emotion through the bonds.

“Where are Hawk and Falcon, what are you doing here?” Qrow growled under his breath, his Semblance leaking out around him but he had more allies than enemies here, not to mention Ruby and the baby. He needed to keep a lid on it for their sake.

Raven walked down the stairs studying her brother, to her it looked like Ruby was the only thing keep him in check. The advancement of Ruby’s pregnancy was not lost on the female twin. That was her niece or nephew growing inside. Raven expected to feel a spike of emotion for the unborn child, instead she felt nothing, just a sense of impatience to get things over with. “I could ask you the same thing. You’ve been scheming, little brother. Planning to attack your own sister.”

“Oh I’ll do better than that.” Qrow growled, he looked up at Leonardo the black coming and going out of his eyes in fluid fog like waves. He had Ozpin and Ruby helping through the bonds but he was angry and had no doubt what this really was it was just a matter of who the rest of the party was going to be. What he wouldn’t give for another crack at Tyrian. “Leo… what have you done?”

Lionheart stepped away, he had seen Qrow let it out just a little once, but he could practically feel the storm begging to get out. “I…”

“Leo did what any sane person would in his position - he looked at all the information he had in front of him, assessed the situation and made a choice.” Raven stopped at the bottom of the stairs. “And it seems you have too.”

“This is your last chance Raven, you have the Spring Maiden.” He reached behind him and pulled out his sword, his Aura manifesting red edged in black. “Hand her over and let’s work together! We can beat Salem!”

“All that time spent spying for Ozpin and you still have no idea what you’re dealing with. There is no beating Salem!” Raven shouted as fear pricked at the back of her mind and Qrow let his Aura flow free over his weapon, it looked wrong to her like it had changed from the last time she saw it and she’d be damned to admit that it frightened her a little.

Ruby stepped away from Qrow and addressed Raven, she was trying hard but it was difficult not to hate the woman on the principle of the thing. What she had done to Qrow, for so very long. “You’re wrong. Together we can do the impossible, we are taught to form teams for a reason. It’s only when we stand alone are we weak.”

“Well said Ruby.” Ozpin’s voice was full of pride in her mind, it made her smile.
Raven clenched her fist and finally glanced over at the cloaked man, her teeth bared. “You sound just like Ozpin, let’s see if those words mean anything!” She whipped out her sword creating a portal with her Semblance in the same action.

Ozpin already burst into motion as a fireball launched through the portal straight for Ruby. He yanked her down and took the hit, as it washed over his cold cloak he swore he felt the cold twist and turn over his back. “You okay?” He asked setting her down then helping her to her feet. Ruby smiled up at him and let him stand between her and the portal. “Nice catch.”

Oz shrugged and rubbed his left forearm, it was picking a really inconvenient time to start aching. “I’ve been waiting for her to do that since she appeared.” Together they looked up when they heard the humm that signaled people walking through it. Though who came through it was a shock.

“Hello boys and girls.” Cinder purred walking through followed by Vernal, Emerald and Mercury, they then fanned out to flank her.

Oz’s world tilted and he acutely felt his back crawl and burn as fear raced through him, his left forearm throbbed and he hissed. Pain started to bloom across his chest and deeper in his soul. Ruby pulled out Crescent Rose and extended it, pain thrummed through the bond and she could feel Qrow focus on Oz. He tried to offer how his own body felt, overwrite the signals that Ozpin’s was falling back into. “Cinder.” The Silver eyed woman growled her power growing behind her eyes, Ozpin’s pain made it easy to call on them, though with no Grimm they wouldn’t be of any use here.

Cinder and her group lined up alongside Raven, she immediately noticed the difference in the young woman who had stopped her at Beacon and smirked. “Well well well, look at you Ruby. Such a difference from the last time we met right.” Ruby felt the need to cradle her baby, to protect her but she had her weapon out and needed to stay focused. Cinder frowned at the lack of reaction and looked up to hooded man. Though she didn’t know that was who it was she stared at, she thought he looked weak. Then again, there was something familiar …

Mercury who stood beside Cinder smirked at the group, he was looking forward to this, “C’mon guys, is that any way to greet your old friends?” He had been so terribly bored of late and wanted to get his own back on a certain blonde brawler.

Ozpin’s growing agony flipped a switch in Qrow, he calmed all at once focusing internally on helping Oz. “Everybody, stay calm.” He knew a fight was unavoidable but he need time to make sure Oz was okay. If something was wrong with him, he didn’t want to go up against two Maidens alone.

The doors boomed behind them and they turned to look as Hazel Rainart, entered from behind them and effectively surrounding them. “Oh no…” Dread filled Oz as he stared at the man, the pain in his arm wracked up several levels and he hissed. He felt the desperate need to relieve some of the growing pressure but his hands fumbled with the buckles. Hazel looked around the room and said. “The White Fang is prepping demolition and securing the school grounds. No one’s getting in, and no one’s getting out.”

“This was all just a trap?” Weiss said what everyone was thinking, suddenly she was very glad she had been training with everyone. Ren nodded to her raising his weapons. “It appears so…”

“Raven, tell me… how long have you been with them?” Qrow was more worried that she had told them that Ozpin was alive.

Cinder smiled with a mocking tone. “Aww, don’t take it personally, little bird. Your sister was a recent addition. The lion on the other hand… Entrance into the Vytal Festival was a real treat.
Leonardo’s been sending Salem all sorts of information for a very, very long time. Isn’t that right, professor?”

Lionheart looked away from all of them. “Stop it.”

It all clicked in Qrow’s mind, Cinder could practically see him putting the pieces together. “It was you… you sit on the Mistral Council. You had information on every Huntsman and Huntress in the Kingdom and you gave it all to her?” The rage was building again, the door he used to keep his Semblance from spilling out straining with his anger.

“I-.” Lionheart stepped away from the rail, he could hear the rage burning in Qrow’s voice.

“I couldn’t find any of them, because you let her kill them!” Qrow yelled, all his friends dead because of this coward, he’d rip that traitor into very small pieces when he got his hands on him. Lionheart didn’t even say anything, only looked away again his sorrow and guilt evident.

“Aw now, don’t beat yourself up about it, Lionheart, I’m sure Tyrian and Hazel would have found them on their own eventually.” Cinder said smugly, this was so much fun stirring the pot winding Qrow up.

Jaune finally burst he couldn’t take it anymore, this woman had killed Pyrrha and she just stood there gloating. “What is wrong with you? How can you be so broken inside… to take so many lives and then come here and rub it in our faces like it’s something to be proud of??”

“Jaune…” Nora tried to stop him with a soft word, it didn’t work. “All with that damn smile on your face!!” Tears streamed down his face as he yelled at her.

Cinder glared at Jaune, she didn’t remember who he was. Jaune just kept going. “I’m gonna make you pay for what you did!! Do you hear me??”

Qrow looked back to Ozpin when he heard the gauntlet clatter to the ground. Oz was gripping his arm his glaze glued on Cinder, Qrow could practically smell Oz burning. The memories leaking over the open bonds, Ruby stood beside him trying to get him to move his hand so she could look at the arm. “Kid!” He yelled at Jaune, this was not a good time to fight they need to figure out a plan.

“Well?! SAY SOMETHING!!” Jaune roared, panting as he glared Cinder down, Cinder cocked her head and asked. “Who are you again?”

Jaune leaped forward transforming Crocea Mors into it’s two handed form and raced forward only to have Ruby swing forward and catch him by the waist with Crescent Rose. “Don’t be stupid!” She yelled at him and Cinder laughed.

Cinder laughed as Jaune tumbled back and Ruby stepped forward. “Oh you are the smart one to be afraid.” Ruby smiled and swung Crescent Rose around turning it into it’s war form. “Nah, I just want you for myself.”

No, no, no. This was not the plan! Pain ripped through his arm and Oz fell to a knee. Ruby couldn’t fight Cinder, not in her condition! The flesh under his hand twisting and turning, What the hell? Ozpin looked at his arm as the flesh turned black and rose out from between his fingers, in a sudden rush of understanding he remembered Gaunter O’Dimm’s words.

The bald man approached with a casual walk threading his fingers together, where his spoon had disappeared to Oz didn’t know. “See I don’t believe you. I visited that man you had researching me, tisk tisk tisk Ozpin, did you think I wouldn’t find out?”
Oz blinked surprised. “What did you do to Professor Shakeslock?”

“You’ll find out soon enough.” Master Mirror waved a hand dismissively. “I’m trying to decide how to punish you for falling into dear old Naga’s service. She’s marked you, you know on your soul and body. I shall have to pay her a visit for that, I don’t like people marking my things.” Gaunter O’Dimm turned back to him a slight smile on his lips. “Did you like it? Jumping bodies, a fresh new young one each time your old one died. You asked for the power to defeat Salem, to be immortal. I granted your wish yet I see so little in return.”

Body and soul, Naga had marked him body and soul, enough so that O’Dimm took notice. Ozpin blinked a few times and looked at his arm, then remembered another conversation.

“Those bones are holding your arm together and they are from the Greater Dead, I think Lizzy has named it Nito. She likes to banter with Will when fighting, when this is over we’ll celebrate it as your first Greater Dead kill. As for the bones, always take something from what almost kills you, you never know when it might be handy. Now get back up there, Naga will give you Aura and hold you together.” Harkness said, leading the way out of the little room.

The armour … The cloak …. They had been a gift from Naga, made from Nito. Ozpin’s heart dropped as it clicked. He hadn’t killed Nito not truely at least, no they had used the Greater Dead to patch him together again… and now it wanted out. “Qrow with me!” He yelled as it all clicked this was going to be very messy. “Ruby time!”

Ruby barely nodded blasting forth with a boom, Jaune flanking her. Emerald attempted to lash out at Ruby with her daggers but Jaune got ahead of her forcing Emerald back so Ruby could trade blows with her in a rapid clash of red and green. Jaune leaped around the pair and gunned for Cinder. The Fall Maiden lazily batted him away forcing him onto the defensive and away from his friends.

Mercury couldn’t resist baiting Yang. “Hey there, blondie. I’m think you owe me an apology for my leg, don’t ya think?” With a growl Yang launched forward and started to pounded into Mercury.

Raven spoke to Vernal as Qrow helped Oz away from the fighting. “Take out the heiress. Don’t bother wasting your power, she’s not worth it.” She turned her attention to the cloaked man, she could see the pain wracking his body. Was this Ozpin? What was happening to him?

As Ren and Nora engaged Hazel and Qrow got Ozpin to the side of the room. “What is it?” The pain was growing, why now of all times when they needed him at a hundred percent. He wasn’t prepared with the memories that were shoved through the bond. On the other hand they sure explained it fast, he heard Raven approaching him and ripped out his sword as she launched herself at him. Their swords clashing with a metallic shriek, he twisted his blade and swung out forcing his sister to jump back out of the way. “Running away was one thing, but this … You’ve crossed the line!”

Raven was surprised when he didn’t push the attack instead standing guard over his companion. “Sorry, brother. Sometimes family disappoints you like that.”

“We’re not family anymore.” Qrow growled, his family was fighting by his side.

“Were we ever?” Raven asked looking behind Qrow, from Oz’s elbow to about five centimeters above his wrist had turned back.

“I thought so, but I guess I was wrong.” He reached out behind him and Ozpin put his sword in Qrow’s hand, he extended it with a click and smirked. “Bring it sister, this has been a long time coming.”
Ruby and Emerald danced around each other, Emerald swinging her daggers out on their chains trying to wrap them around Ruby. The Silver eyed woman batted them away with ease, keeping the green haired thief from harming her or her baby but it was difficult. If she didn’t drop Emerald soon then she was risking more then her life. Their weapons met with a BOOM, she parried a blade and but it was clear to anyone watching that her reflexes were slower and more cautious then before. Ruby shot straight into Emerald guts, the older woman staggered back with a pained yell that drew Mercury’s attention. “Emerald!” He broke away from Yang and lept into the air bringing his foot down over Ruby’s head.

Ruby blocked the kick and let it slid down over her blade, while moving her scythe to blast him in the head. Yang raced up behind Mercury and landed a hit to his side sending him tumbling towards Emerald. The two sisters formed up just in time to hear Weiss scream as Vernal stood above her firing clean through her Aura. Vernal stepped away and kicked Weiss back, the heiress tumbled away and pushed herself up. Only for Cinder to take a break from turning Jaune into paste and with a flick of her wrist impaled Weiss with a spear made from fire and magic.

“Weiss!!” Ozpin shouted as everyone in the room stopped to stare, even Qrow and Raven. The former rushing to Oz as fast as he could. Raven took the distraction and flew at her brother, her sword catching Qrow’s arm as his Aura rose to protect him. It wasn’t enough to stop him from colliding with the wall, his breath escaping with a pained cry.

That did it, Naga had programed Nito to respond to fear and desperation. The flesh in Oz’s arm turned glowed black and oozed out of him, his cloak lost all shape and pushed through him, yanking the piece of soul that Naga had planted in him out. Ozpin gave a blood curdling scream while Nito used his body as a gate. Huge skeletal claws ripped out through his chest grabbing the ground and hauling itself out of him. The black goo coated Oz as the monster came forth with a wet sloppy squelch. The collection of skulls rolled over hulking shoulders and locked it’s gaze on the group fighting. It roared as it’s white central skull ripped out of Oz’s body.

The stench of a hundred rotting corpses filled the room as it pulled the rest of itself out of the huntsman, the black cloak disappearing to expose Oz to everyone’s eyes. It crawled forth hundreds of human arms pulling itself forward. The additional edge Naga had given Oz’s sword shattered as pieces flew towards the monster becoming part of the conglomerate.

Nito roared reforming its massive blade, the black ooze pulling in to reveal a body made of hundreds of other human remains. Skulls, rib cages, bits of arm and leg, all making up its immense body as it broke from Ozpin the man’s eyes rolled back into his head he collapsed.

Ruby was the first to move, “Jaune get Weiss! Everyone else form up on OZPIN!” she raced for Oz. With his face clear for all to see the game broke. At Ruby’s order her teams moved in, Nito walked forward in its crawling twisted way. Cinder’s brain reset barely in time to avoid the giant bone sword and rolled to the right away from the others.

Hazel who had been fighting Nora and Ren heard the name of his hated enemy and turned to where the man he had been wanting to kill lay, on the ground and unconscious, Like a cloud of red clouding his vision all his anger and rage rose in one fell roar. “OZPIN!!”

Ruby had her lover’s head in her lap looked up at the horrifying roar to see Hazel and his giant form barreling towards them. Yang stood only to be swatted away by beefy hands, slamming into the
wall. Ren and Nora was his next victims as they rounded on him and attacked he sent them stumbling away.

Oz was feeling something in his pain riddled mind, a edge of something like a warning going off and squinted his eyes open. Ruby stood, her body blocking Hazel from Oz, her pregnant belly profound. She held onto Oz’s hand like a life line while her other reached for her weapon. “You will not touch him!”

Hazel stopped, the red black hair on this woman in front of him shimmered once in silver, then again. There was something … he knew her. This was the woman from the bathhouse! No longer were her eyes a red silver, no more was the shoulder length silver hair gleaming. Now she stood against him as she truly appeared and Hazel … was furious. She had been Ozpin’s spy, the entire time! The hulking giant stopped in his tracks, taking in the tiny female form. This was the Huntress Cinder had been defeated by, Tyrian had lost her on his hunting, and he and Watts … She had been in their hands that day and neither of them had known.

Momentarily distracted he didn’t notice a clear difference in this woman until his brown eyes landed on her middle. The clear bump of new life growing, mostly hidden by clothes. it was small but it was there and distinct. It couldn’t be …

Distracted by this reveal Hazel didn’t even feel the effect of Yang’s punch until he was twenty feet across the room, the blonde woman defending her sister and niece. “Ruby! You okay?”

“I’m fine!” Ruby confirmed and looked around, her eyes landing on the gauntlet Oz had been wearing. When had it come off? Quickly she scooped it up and ran back to Ozpin, all but shoving it back on and cupping his face with her hands. “Oz, come on please wake up. We need you.”

Jaune raced to Weiss pressing his hands to her wounds, tears leaking from his eyes as he bent over her desperately trying to stop the bleeding. Nora and Ren formed back up. They flanked Qrow as Raven took one look at the greater Undead and fell back to stand by Vernal, they shared a look and started tag teaming the monster.

Qrow broke off and came to a skidding halt beside Ozpin and looked at Ruby. “We need him Ruby. Can you wake him up?”

“Doesn’t need to.” Oz groaned as he slowly sat up, his body screaming at him. “Sorry.”

Qrow was about to smirk when the sound of a weapon went off and the three scattered. Leo was still at the top of the stairs, pointing his weapon at them with a shaking hand. “Ozpin? I-I am so sorry.” Shutting his eyes tight he attempted to fire at his old friend again when Ruby shot at him and broke his weapon. Leo shrieked and ran off in fear.

Oz had dearly hoped Leo hadn’t betrayed him, that perhaps he had been misled but that unprovoked attack at him and his lovers proved his guilt. Shaky he got to his feet, using Qrow as support until his body felt strong enough to stand alone. “Nito needs taking down, Qrow help them stop that monster. Ruby I need you to come with me.”

“OH NO YOU DON’T! OZPIN!” Hazel bellowed and charged at them, his fists coming up with Dust crystals embedded into his skin.

Oz grabbed Ruby, jumping out of the way of the raging man. “Sorry Hazel.” With something akin to frustration and regret he pushed down, his momentum carrying him towards Hazel’s back and striking him at the base of his skull.
Ruby heard the resounding thud as the larger man went down but the relief was short lived as he reared up and kicked Oz in the chest, pushing him back and away from Ruby. “Ozpin!” Ruby shouted and took a step towards him when massive hands gripped her shoulders. “Get off me!”

Hazel held the small woman in front of him, easily holding her down, nearly crushing her shoulders with his hands. “I want answers, right now. Your baby, who’s is it?”

Ruby felt her bones being crushed and gasped, summoning her Semblance and nearly sighed in relief when she could no longer feel his crushing weight. Her petal form swirled around Oz, nearly taking him into her like a typhoon of red. Oz felt Ruby around him and raced for Hazel, slowing down time to a crawl. Just as he reached his tanned man, his voice whispered in his ear. “You will NEVER get to touch her again!” Forgoing his sword Oz lashed out with his gauntlet, wanting to feel Hazel break under his own hands, punching out in quick succession over his face, neck and torso.

Ruby couldn’t keep up and could only watch as Oz literally beat Hazel to a pulp. The giant man fell away from Oz, dazed but not out when the fight with Nito started getting out of hand. No one sure who to attack when the Greater Undead kept coming after them. Ozpin took it in and turned back to the statue, more importantly the elevator beneath it. “Ruby, with me!”

The young woman nodded and raced after him, barely stopping when Oz jumped towards the ceiling, using it as a springboard to add momentum and break the statue before them. Together they jumped through the hole, Oz springing like a cat onto his feet once he reached the bottom and Ruby gently floating down by her Semblance. Oz watched the petals and held out his arms, smiling when Ruby let him catch her and cradle her.

Ruby looked around and gasped. “What is this place?”

“This is the chamber for the Relic of Knowledge.” Ozpin raced out the emblems upon the floor lighting up gold at his presence. The great tree was massive as Ruby looked up at it, Oz set her down by the door and slammed his hands on it. “Come come hurry up!” The golden metal fans opened in a smooth flowing movements flowing into the wall.

The scene beyond had Ruby eyes widening the desert looked distorted behind the gate. Ozpin stepped through into the space as particles flowed up into the air. “What is this?” Ruby asked, as Ozpin reached the Relic, a lantern of gold holding a blue sphere. “Just a little pocket dimension I made, a few extra folds of reality to hide the Relic.”

Ruby could feel how warm it was through the gate, she could see how the Relic pulsed like a heart. Ozpin spoke as he thought. “All the Relics are energy, I just picked a shape for them to hold. A lantern to light the way in darkness, for what greater light is there then Knowledge to guide us? However, I now have a better idea. Take off your corset.”

“What?” Ruby asked as Ozpin turned to her and started unlacing her corset. “Ruby we need to hide it from Salem, Cinder and the Grimm. I honestly can’t think of a better place it then under your skin. Safety in obscurity.” He tossed Ruby’s corset onto the stone floor. “Plus can you think of a better place? You can toast any Grimm that come after you with just your eyes.”

“Fine, but if this hurts you are SO making it up to me.” Ruby groused as Ozpin smiled with her mouth. “I’m sure I can arrange something.” She pulled off her shirt, skirt and panties but left the rest.

Ozpin put his hands on the ‘heart’ of the Relic again and was glad he had enough magic left to do this. With an extension of his will and focus the physical form of the Relic shattered leaving in it’s place a orb of glowing blue. It started to leak thin tendrils of golden magic almost like they were radiating off of it, reminding him somewhat of a pulsing heart.
Ozpin constructed an image in his mind, given what he planned to do, it seemed the right thing to do. Then he told the Relic what to do through his magic. “Brace yourself, having this much ink shoved under your skin WILL hurt.”

“Okay~.” Ruby said fear colouring her voice as the magic of the Relic pulsed in the air and then it changed. Energy turned into ink and it swirled around her for a long moment then… Ruby screamed! She tried not to tense up too much for the sake of her baby as the ink stabbed its way under her skin, becoming the image Ozpin had given it in her body. The great oaken tree formed on her back, its roots growing long wooden limbs that twisted over to have its body focused on her left side, its roots slowly fading away as they spread over her butt. While its leaves covered her upper back, green and gold and hanging from one branch was the lantern, swaying as if a breeze flew across her back. The entire tattoo beat with a pulse of its own for several long moments as the magic settled. The pulse continued twice more before the magic faded and it appeared to be an almost impossibly perfect tattoo.

Ruby hugged herself and let out a whimper, “Ow.” she said as Ozpin caught her lowering her to the ground and helping her dress again. As her back thrummed and throbbed in pain. “Just think, that was much quicker than the normal way and you get a lovely tattoo out of it.” Ozpin said trying to lighten the mood.

Ruby pulled on her corset and did up the lacing. “Still hurts.”

“Well you can nurse your injury all you like later, we need to hurry I’m a little surprised Cinder hasn’t already arrived. Now hide stay out of the way. Don’t forget it’s not just you that you are protecting.”

“Right right.” Ruby raced for the tree and used her Semblance to hide up in its branches.

Ozpin waved his hand and just like that the vault closed again. A moment later Raven, Vernal and Cinder dropped into the cavern, each more furious then the last. Ozpin smiled at them and walked back to the door touching it once more only this time it did not open.

The leaves from the great oak tree all turned gold at once and a great wind filled the chamber. Ozpin stepped forward to the centre of the closest floor emblem and levitated the magic he had woven into this place, recalling it into him again. The wind grew stronger and the three invaders had to grab the ground to keep from getting blown away. The leaves of the tree all blew off at once becoming a great cyclone, whipping through the air and coming to a fine point no larger than a petal. With another massive gust of wind the point of the cyclone turned and the petals slammed straight into Oz’s heart.

His eyes glowed a brilliant gold, light arching out of them. Though there was no pain, no it was more like a great rush of energy, renewing strength. Behind him the once great and beautiful oak tree withered, and it’s door grew dull and cold. In mere seconds later the door went dark and cracked through all four fans. The tree began to shrivel up and its thinner branches crumbled away becoming the last petals, leaving just the pire and the remains of a dead tree. The entire vault started going dark as even the magic in the floor was reclaimed. The magic let Ozpin back down onto the ground the vault behind him ‘died’ and Ozpin reclaimed some of the magic he had given up over the centuries.

“What did you do?!” Cinder screamed her one good eye lit up with the Fall Maiden’s power.

Ozpin smiled at her. “I’m sure you’ll figure it out eventually.”

Cinder glared at him, her eye then flitted around the room. “Where’s Ruby?”
“Like I’d let you anywhere near her.” Ozpin said clenching his metal fist. “What about you Raven?” He gestured to the vault. “You can turn away right now. Take your Spring Maiden and leave, I have the Relic and if you give me back my magic and I’ll let you live. You can go back to your home and be done with this whole mess.”

“Where is the Relic?” Raven asked removing her sword from its scabbard.

Ozpin just shook his head. “Don’t do this Raven.”

Raven set her other hand on her blade and Ozpin sighed. “I don’t have time for this bull crap.”

Raven blasted across the walkway swinging out for Oz’s head, he caught the blade with an almost lazy gesture. “Raven, you don’t stand a snowball’s chance in hell of beating me, just stop!”

“LIKE HELL!” Raven’s eyes burst with red fire, surprise had Oz’s widening before he twisted out of the way just in time to avoid getting impaled on a sword of ice.

“A ice sword?! You’ve got my magic and that’s the best you can come up with.” Ozpin danced out of the way just in time for a blast of fire to head his way. He activated the fire Dust in his legs and Cinder’s blast harmlessly fell away from him.

Raven bared her teeth lashing out in a fury of strikes, Ozpin smiled side stepping and bending like a reed under her blade. His hand snapped out and he grabbed Raven’s wrist. “You know even with a scythe Qrow is faster than you.”

The Branwen twin growled and kicked Oz in the chest, he used all of his gravity Dust upon his face it glowed as he spun in the air and landed on the vault doors. The last of his impact Dust glowed on his back and he blasted forward barreling forward and punching Raven sending her flying. Oz turned to the young woman in the chamber with them. “Go home, there is nothing for you here.”

Vernal shot at Oz who moved in blurr avoiding the shots. He was about to go for the throat when a blast of ice hit his back, Raven glowering at him with burning eyes of Spring.

“Pathetic.”

Vernal screamed then looked down, causing both Raven and Oz to turn back. A black Grimm hand burst out of the young woman’s insides. “You’re worthless to me.” Cinder ripped her hand out and turned to Raven. “You were Spring … very good job in hiding it from me but it's over now. I’ll be taking what is mine!”

“Vernal!” Raven snarled and lunged for the Fall Maiden. Ozpin on the other hand took this chance to retreat, he jumped up and found Ruby hiding behind in tree. “Let’s get out of here.” The vault shook as the two Maiden’s did battle. Ozpin covered Ruby as rocks fell from the ceiling. “On the other hand…”

Spring and Fall did battle, Ozpin rolling his eyes at their lack of creativity. It ended with Cinder plummeting off the edge of the walk away, her body freezing as it disappeared into the abyss. Ozpin activated his Semblance and moved.

Raven didn’t feel the hand around her neck till she was slammed to the ground without Aura. Oz’s bare hand rested on her chest and he called out. Raven shrieked in defiance as the red power of Spring was taken from her. Ozpin stood and took a step back and closed his fist the magic fading from sight. “One down, three to go.” He walked over to the end of the walkway and looked down.

Ruby appeared out of her Semblance beside him. “Do you want me to check?”
A crash echoed down from the school above, the pain in Oz’s arm flared anew. He shook his head. “Later, we’ve still got Nito to deal with.”

As they walked past Raven Ozpin spared her a look. “Be thankful I don’t kill you. I never want to see your face again.”

With that they raced forward only to merge in Ruby’s Semblance turning into a storm of red and green rose petals and blasting up the tunnel. They exploded out into the main hall to see Hazel pound into Nito’s head with fire and lightning enhanced strokes finally shattering the monster. Weiss was being healed by Jaune and the teams were having an easy time of keeping Emerald and Mercury away from Weiss and wearing them down.

“OZPIN!” Hazel having finally reduced Nito to goo turned his attention back to Oz and Ruby. He was distracted by the young woman again. “You never answered my question girl.”

Qrow handed Oz’s his sword and formed up with the other two. Ruby took the chance and threw their bonds wide open. Qrow, Ozpin and Ruby all together let their Aura flow through their Aura objects, together their Aura’s manifest as one whole a deep dark mix of red and green.

Hazel stopped and stared, he was unable to comprehend what he was seeing. He saw no tell between them, suddenly Oz was in his face faster then even he should have been able to move, a barrage of blows being unleashed into his stomach as Ozpin slipped under his guard. Each struck hit with such force that Hazel was lifted off the ground. Before Oz finished his attack, Ruby was sweeping in from one side while Qrow came in from the other, his weapon also in scythe form. Together they hooked Hazel, Ruby from his front and his right side, Qrow from the back and his left. All together they sliced into Hazel trapping him between their blades.

He let out a bellow as they cut through his Aura and Ozpin grabbed his shoulder, the stroke of his sword clustering his strikes on Hazel’s sternum. The great bear of a man punched out at Oz while spinning trying to catch the staff’s of the scythe wielders but they were already gone. Ruby ducked under Hazel’s swing stepping out before him and cleaving from his crotch to to his chin. While she did this Qrow ducked down and caught Hazel’s legs on the blade of his scythe and pulled them out from under Hazel.

As the huge man fell Ozpin brought his fists together and slammed them with a thunderous BOOM down between Hazel’s shoulders while bringing his knee up to SMASH into Hazel’s chin. The three backed off the as Hazel hit the ground with a THUD. It only took a instant for the man to recover and he unleashed his Dust in a wave of fire and lightning. Ozpin through the object and bond shielded Qrow and Ruby, moving their Aura to protect them more effectively.

They blasted forward again, three pairs of eyes all seeing different angles and tells, the information flowing over the bonds. Ruby switched her scythe to halburd form and tossing it up into the air and jumping to spin over a punch of Hazel’s she could see his eyes following her as she spun grabbing Crescent Rose out of the air. The blade of Qrow’s scythe manifested under her feet as he swung her around persevering her momentum, changing her direction and whipping her back at Hazel. She flew forward unleashed a wave of shots and stabbing out into Hazel’s back. While this occurred Oz dropped low ducking under another punch rolling to the side and blitzing Hazel’s knee.

_Not enough._ Ozpin said as they attacked, _Together Ruby I think we can do it._ Ruby’s confirmation came in the form of a excited emotion. He reached out as Ruby grabbed Hazel’s shoulder from behind over him, his hand snagged Ruby’s ankle while she bent over, Qrow grabbed Oz’s awaiting hand.

They exploded into rose petals the Aura objects thrumming with power. As one they created Ruby’s
storm so powerful they lifted Hazel up in a second, higher and higher. They exploded out of the roof of the school and up into the night sky. Everyone outside stopped at the sight of the storm, far far more powerful than anything Ruby had done before. Hazel hung in the air floundering as storm swirled up above him and condensed. Like a bullet out of a gun the storm slammed into Hazel’s chest with shock-wave so strong it blew the ships from the Mistral police away.

The storm plummeted down forcing Hazel downward with greater speed every second. BOOOOM the huge man hit the ground with another shockwave blowing out the walls of Haven, creating a huge crater in the school. The storm formed around him as one force, one almost human figure before it split into three, with another breeze of red petals.

Ozpin stood to the side his sword tip pressed on Hazel’s windpipe. Ruby stood on the man, Crescent Rose embedded in his shoulder while Qrow stood beside her, Harbinger lodged in the man’s stomach. Both men flanked Ruby and in that instant there was no doubt in Hazel’s mind that it was the little woman, the physically weakest of the three that made this all possible.

Everyone else was picking themselves up from the various places that the impact had plastered them too. Emerald and Mercury’s eyes widening as Hazel lay bleeding out before them. Then Raven flew up out of the Vault and landed seeing the scene, she raced over to Yang’s side.

“We have to go.” Mercury growled at his companion, “But Cinder! She’ll come!” Emerald said.

“Cinder is dead! Vernal was never the Spring Maiden, I was! And I killed her.” Raven shouted she’d get this one last blow to Salem.

Stumbling from shock Emerald pressed her hands to her head, her breath coming in panicked pants. Her face lost all colour as she knelt on the ground. No Cinder couldn’t be dead but the silence from the vault said it all. Searching around for a way out she realized how defeated their group was, they were surrounded and there only one way out. With a scream she projected a vision of Salem into everyone’s minds, making her as she was, monstrous horrifying. The projection grew to fill the room, stealing all light and distracting the huntsmen for the moment they needed to escape.

The minute later when everyone came too, Hazel was gone along with Emerald and Mercury. Ozpin, Ruby and Qrow were laid out on the floor, someone had taken a few cheap shots at them and got Hazel away, strangely enough Ruby was unharmed from this, having been placed on the ground where Hazel had been rather then flung away like Qrow and Oz. Ruby’s hands immediately went to her stomach, there was no pain and her baby appeared to be safe so she let out a huge sigh of relief.

Unfortunately just as everyone was coming to the school started to creak around them, they could hear the wood beams giving out.

Oz was the first one up, feeling the rumblings of the structure giving out. “EVERYONE GET OUT!” Ozpin roared leaping to his feet picking Ruby up as he ran, his yell got everyone else moving and they all made it out of the shattered doorway just as the academy came crashing down behind them.

Once outside they could see hundreds of Faunus surrounding the school, all bearing a white and blue flag, standing against the remains of the White Fang. Among them was Blake who after seeing them emerge came and stood before them as teams RWBY and JRN caught their breaths.

Ruby let out a exhausted sigh and closed down the bonds, the exchange of Aura fading in the same action. She let her hands rest over her stomach, feeling all the energy leave her but pleased everyone was okay. All Qrow and Ozpin could feel was exhaustion as they sat on the ground. Ruby let her head rest on Ozpin’s chest as Weiss and Yang came over to flop down leaning on each other beside
Blake smiled a little bit and said slightly shaken. “I was about to ask you the same thing.” Then she took in the change in her leaders body and asked. “Ruby, are you pregnant?!”

Ruby let out a exhausted laugh, weakly hugging Oz. “Yes but it's a LONG story.”

“Well I’m not going anywhere.” Blake smiled and let out a yelp as Yang reached up, grabbed her hand and pulled her into a hug with her and Weiss.

Qrow walked over and sat with his back to Oz so they could lean on each other. He looked back at the school, it was as if all the main support beams all gave out at once and it fell straight down. “I think we made a mess Oz.”

Ozpin laughed and reached back putting a hand over one of Qrow’s. “Just like old times.” That got a chuckled from the red eyed man as he looked over his shoulder at them. “We can’t have anything nice can we?” Oz tilted his head to look at Ruby. “I don’t know, we have two nice things that I plan to treasure forever. Maybe make it official, yeh?”

Qrow turned his head as Ozpin rubbed the ring he and Ruby had made for him. “Hmm, have to ask Tai first. He’s gonna be mad enough with both of us as it is, I don’t think eloping on him would be wise.” Oz snapped his fingers as his form of admitting defeat on that front. “On that note, can we go home? My arm is killing me, maybe even literally.”

Qrow groaned and got to his feet, walked around and offered Oz a hand, the large man took it and together they managed to get Oz vertical again, Ruby and all. “Come on girls and boys, I think we all need good nights rest.” Qrow said as he helped Oz steady as he staggered, the pain was creeping up on him now as the adrenaline faded.

“Up Ruby, I am in need of my medic.” Oz let Ruby slide from his hold, his left arm hanging limply, he couldn’t decide what position hurt less.

Kali, Ghira and Sun came over as the teams picked themselves up. “You must be Ozpin, I’ve heard much about you.” Ghira nodded to the shorter man, he hadn’t met Ozpin before and offered his right hand for the man to shake.

“Pleased to meet you.” Ozpin clasped arms with the faunus and they held a moment before releasing. “You must be Miss Belladonna’s father.”

“Ghira and this is my wife Kali.” He gestured to Kali, as the cat faunus smiled up at him. “Are you alright?”

Ozpin huffed, “No,” he looked over the teens mostly were up on their feet. “I’m sorry to cut this short but I think my armour is the only thing holding my arm together right now.” He addressed the teams, “Homeward you lot! To food and soft beds!” he turned away from the cheering students behind him as they picked themselves up to follow.

When Oz turned back to the Belladonna’s he asked. “Could you give your statements to the police? Just say what happened in there was a fight with White Fang and Huntsmen, the rest of your people can probably find rooms to stay in the school. We only trashed the main hall.”

“That will work, get some rest you look dead on your feet.” Ghira nodded and turned away to set about organizing everyone.

Oz whispered to Qrow to help him turn around. “Oh Mister Belladonna.” When the Faunus leader
turned to him he added. “Thank you for coming, I’m not sure of the reason for this visit but it’s clear to me that your people have done a splendid job in stopping the White Fang. I hope to talk with you soon.”

Ghira nodded, pleased. “It would be my pleasure.”

Qrow and Ruby helped Oz to walk while their family plus Sun and Blake who were welcomed back with many hugs began the trek away from Haven and back towards their home. Oz grunted most of the way but every time his eyes landed on his lovers and knowing their child was safe he smiled through the pain. It was a good day to be alive, if it meant he was facing it with them.

The teams all were sitting either around the table slowly munching on food or trading stories on the sofa. Even Kali and Ghira were present now after organizing their people. They were especially happy to meet the other members of team RWBY. Though they were missing one and the reason for that was yowled out into the night sky. “OWWWW SON’A HALF GROWN BLUDDERING TROLL!!” Ozpin’s screams were more than enough to keep everyone from sleeping.

“Quit squirming!” Ruby said having to put her knife down AGAIN to pin Oz’s arm down. “Jaune!” Jaune with his newly awakened Semblance would forever be on medic duty, he came over and pinned Oz’s arm down. They were in the study, Oz on the lounge and a table under his arm. Ruby picked up her knife and tweezers again and started cutting at the rotten flesh Oz had been packing around for much too long.

“GORRAM MOONBRAINED WOMAN!” Oz screamed as she pulled another piece of skin off. He needed to vent this pain, he didn’t think even cracking out a really stiff drink would help with this pain.

“You keep swearing like that and I’m telling Qrow.” Ruby didn’t really mind, it was kinda funny trying to guess how he would curse next. She started to cut again, it would be easier on all of them to just regrow with new flesh then try and coax life into long dead muscle.

“Yao nu! (Demon Woman)” Oz snapped at her kicking out with his legs, gods damn it this hurt. The loungers creaked under his grip, he had to forcibly remind himself to let it go before it broke.

“Do you know what he said?” Jaune asked, he had to stand and lean on Ozpin’s arm with all his weight.

“Nope. But I am sure he means nothing by it.” Ruby cut again wrinkling her nose and Oz shouted to the heavens. “Ni ta ma de, tian xia suo you de ren dou gai si!” (Fuck you! Damn everyone in the verse)

Qrow appeared in the door frame with a smirk on his face and an arm behind his back. “Having fun Oz?” He wasn’t worried about the taller man, if he had strength enough to curse then he’d be fine.

“CHIU SE!” (Go to hell) Ozpin spat at Qrow as Ruby worked he clenched his fist of the free hand.

“Lao peng you, ni kan chi lai hen you jing shen.” (Old friend, you’re looking lively.) Qrow was having a bit too much fun with this, at least if Oz was going to throw insults, he could spare Ruby’s
poor ears and not say them in their native tongue, not to mention the unborn child’s.

“Chwee ni duh~! (Screw you!)” Oz yelped as Ruby pulled and cut as he spoke. “Ugh! Rung tse song di ching dai wuo tzo. (Merciful Gods please take me away)”

“Sadly not, I don’t think you want to be explaining that one to the doctors.” Qrow said and pulled out a bottle of rum from behind his back. “Think you can stop screaming for me?”

Ruby cut, Oz screamed. “Ta ma de hun dan!” (Mother-humping son of a bitch)

“I'll take that as a no!” Qrow popped the cork of the booze and had a sip. “All for me then.” The he looked over at Ruby and re-corked it. “Maybe not.”

“Shun sheng duh gao wahn.” (Holy testicle Tuesday) Ozpin shouted then let out a whine as Ruby worked uttering out. Qrow coughed and sputtered, leaning over as he laughed. “Okay that one is new.”

Ruby cut again and Oz exclaimed. “Ai yah tien ah! (Merciless hell)” Qrow walked over watching as Oz’s eyes very obviously followed the bottle. “You done yet?” He held the bottle out and Oz lunged for it, Qrow was faster leaping back.

“You- Grrr, yī dà tuó dà biàn!” (Big pile of shit) Oz sworn, and Ruby said. “If you keep moving you can wait for this to heal naturally.”

“Ni Men dou shi sha gau! (Idiots. All of you.)” Ozpin groused, Ren walked by having heard more than enough with his hands covering his ears. “My ears are bleeding.” Oz couldn’t help it, he laughed only to hiss as Ruby cut again. “Sorry! I didn’t know anyone still spoke that tongue.”

Ren just shook his head and kept walking, Qrow finally took pity on Ozpin and offered the rum. Oz wasted no time grabbing it and taking several long pulls. He grit his teeth as Ruby finished with his arm and took several more drinks to distract himself. Qrow sat down on the edge of the lounge and took Oz’s free hand in his.

Ruby put the knife down and said. “Okay I’m done, Jaune you do your thing and I’ll do mine.” Jaune let Ozpin’s arm go and sat beside Ruby hovering his hands over Ozpin’s arm. His Semblance amping Oz’s Aura and letting the man heal finally. While he did this Ruby opened the bonds she shared with Ozpin and Qrow, then focused all their Aura on the wounded arm.

Ozpin groaned softly and looked away, he could feel his skin crawling but looked over at Ruby and Qrow. Now that she wasn’t cutting dead skin away from him he could appreciate the lamp enveloping her in a warm glow. Qrow sat next to her, holding his hand tightly as they both smiled at him. With their bonds wide open he could feel everything from their shared Aura to the feelings of relief and happiness draping over him like a blanket of comfort.

“I love you both, you know that right?”

“Of course.” Qrow grinned while Ruby leaned into Qrows side, letting his warmth wash over her.

“We love you too Oz, always will.” Ruby said and placed her free hand on her stomach, stilling when she felt the first jump of her baby under her skin.

Qrow and Oz felt it too as their bond was open, then a tingling smile swept over their faces as the baby moved in response to their love.

“Our baby.” Ruby started.
“Our baby.” Qrow kissed Ruby’s knuckles.

“It’s all going to be okay.” Oz said, smiling as he felt the baby jump to his voice. “We’re rebuild Haven, protect the Relic, fix the council and we will beat Salem. This is the first step to securing victory, I feel it.”

“Well I don’t know about you but my first step is to get some sleep, preferably with my two lovers in bed besides me.” Ruby smirked and stood, sashaying out of the room.

Qrow side eyed Ozpin. “Well that’s not an offer I’m turning down.”

“Me neither.” Thankfully Jaune chose that moment to finish his healing, giving Oz the opportunity to race from the room, chasing their pregnant lover, Qrow on his heels.

Things were going to be okay.

The snow that had been promised fell, blanketing the world in a fuzzy white cold as two figures walked hand in hand through the forests of Mistral. They each wore black and red clothing, a dark brown cloak and a weapon on their backs. The shorter figure stepped close to her husband and smiled up at him. “You know, I honestly didn’t think she had it in her. Raven was always a stickler for following the rules, always sucking up and doing as she was told. It’s what made her inadequate to be a leader.”

Falcon let his wife snuggle into his side as they walked away from what had been their home for so long. The tribe was under new leadership now and he and Hawk were free to do as they pleased. “And here I thought you wanted Qrow to be leader.”

“Oh don’t be silly. While Qrow would have been an excellent leader Raven was right about him. Our son would sooner burn the tribe to the ground then lead them. I just wanted to give my daughter some … ‘motivation’.”

Hawk looked down at his wife, the love of his life was as cruel as she was loving. Sometimes he couldn’t see the difference, he loved every side of her and always would. “Well what’s done is done, no going back now.”

Everyone always believed Hawk was too unstable to be leader, always letting Falcon talk her into reason. What most didn’t know was that Hawk cared about one thing and one thing only. Family and the tribe had been hers, meaning she would do ‘anything’ for them.

“So where are we heading oh wife of mine?” Falcon asked.

The red eyed woman stopped them and leaned up for a kiss. “Anywhere we want but first I’d like to see if we are grandparents again, maybe this time actually get to see our grandchild grow.”

“So to Mistral?”

“Hmm.” Hawk kissed her husband, showing him that little flickering flame of desire just below her surface. “I think we have a few months before we need to be there, why don’t we find something fun to do in the meantime.”
With the smirk that Qrow inherited Falcon began removing his cloak. “It would be my pleasure.”

Chapter End Notes

Kry: And there we have it!
Ardy: It’s done! Emerald Rose is officially over
Kry: But the story isn’t over yet.
Ardy: We have the Omakes to write.
Kry: And a sequel to start
Ardy: Oz, Ruby, Qrow and the gang will return, so if you have some ideas we will taking prompts very seriously. There will be a month between the ending here and the start of the sequel, this will cover the ending of November and a good part of December in the text. I also feel the need to mention I will take down any omakes/prompts if I find a place in the full text. So if one disappears that is why and you will see it again.
Kry: Just take in mind that Ruby will remain pregnant in this period between stories.
Thank you too: DPLxBeAsTxsIpE, darkvampirekisses, Stormflower, threeguesses, Sportsfangirl815, Baker1762, ZoeyTheWeeb, Londie and everyone who has commented over the course of the story. We hope to hear what ideas you have, these can be focused on any character too.
Ardy: Also, because I find it so funny. Have a little scene that will very likely make it into the sequel.
Ozpin growled at the little women blocking their way to the base, bending over to speak into her face. "Listen here you little pipsqueak, you will go to that relay tower you will get James on the line and you will say these words. 'Ozpin needs a ship to come and pick him up and if he doesn't get one soon when we do meet again Oz will bugger that metallic arse of his slowly and deeply till he howls to the moon.' " Ozpin raised a brow and smiled. "That clear little patriot?"
Qrow snorted. "You know that might just be incentive to not send a ship. You know Jimmy loves his games.
Kry & Ardy: BYE EVERYONE!

P.S Ardy: I almost ended this story with everyone resting out side Haven but in the words of my favorite author ever. "That is a nice dramatic ending but life doesn't work like that and there are other things that have to happen." - Terry Pratchett

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!