The Warmth That Changed It All

by Raalm

Summary

Weiss has been under the rule of her father since her first memory but during a visit to a small coffee shop for lunch, she meets a blonde-haired beauty who may just help her change all that. (AU)

Notes

Greeting people of AO3. This is a story I have been uploading to FF for a couple of month but I have finally decided to bring it over here as it will offer me more feedback. (However I have never used this site before so I am just getting accustomed with it so please bare with me.)

I hope you all enjoy and all feedback is very welcome.
Chapter 1 – Meeting

**Weiss Schnee**

Weiss gently massaged her temples as rain hammered the window next to the chair she had taken occupancy of. She had been sat there for the past hour feeling the stupid rain gradually increase the headache she had woken up with. And to make matters worse, the chair was terribly uncomfortable. Clear plastic split into two indented balls, to her the chair was a clear indication of the companies dedication to style over substance. The only reason she could think of that her father would be interested in the company was that he had recently come under fire by the media for his questionable treatment of faunus employees. If only they knew...

"I'm incredibly sorry Miss Schnee," the receptionist politely interrupted her thoughts. "Mr Scarlatina has just asked me to inform you that he and your father may be another thirty minutes."

Weiss sighed internally.

"Thank you," Weiss smiled back with the mask she had been taught to use her whole life. "I don't suppose there is a café nearby, is there?"

"Oh yes, just turn left outside the main entrance and take the second right." the receptionist replied with a smile. "They have the most amazing little desserts."

Weiss stood and gave the woman a small nod of acknowledgement as she made her way towards the elevator. Fortunately, the elevator didn't take long to reach the main atrium and she strode across it quickly, eager to get some fresh air. Opening her umbrella, she stepped outside and took a deep breath. While she hated the chill that rain often brought with it, the smell of petrichor had always been calming to her. With a genuine smile on her face, she set off towards the café.

With her naturally brisk pace, it didn't take her long to reach the café and step inside. Warm, cinnamon scented air greeted her to remove the chill that had begun to settle in. She poked her umbrella outside and shook off as much of the rain as she could before turning to look at her new waiting area. They were not too busy, but her first impressions of the place were very good.

If Weiss was to guess, tea seemed to be the main theme for the place. Light brown, wood tile floor stretched across the whole café and led into cream walls that held paintings of forests. She recognised some of them as Forever Fall and some as the Emerald Forest, one was a beautifully hand-drawn picture of a copse of Atlas Pines but the others were unknown to her. She looked at each painting until her gaze fell upon the counter made of dark brown wood.

As she walked towards it, she took in the rest of the store. It seemed to be split into two parts. One side was comprised of circular tables of the same dark brown wood the counter was made of and to each table there were three comfortable looking plush chairs coloured dark green.

The other side of the store in contrast held a massive bookcase that matched the rest of the décor, filled with books. The same plush chairs were present here as well, but in this area each one had a small table next to them. Against one of the walls was one long, slightly scratched up couch that looked more like something that would be more at home in a family sitting room. Well, a normal
family's sitting room at least.

Over all the effect was rather pleasant. Feeling that this place would perfectly suit her needs, she walked up to the counter. No-one seemed to be present at the moment due to there being a lack of customers so she took the time to look over the food selection they had and saw that while they had a lot of pre-prepared sandwiches, they also made fresh ones for order too. She also took a moment to look at their cakes but seeing how she had never had much of a sweet tooth, most of them didn't appeal to her; however there was a lemon snow cake that didn't look too sweet that caught her eye. She had just finished deciding whether to indulge herself a little or not when she saw a door behind the counter open up, and a raven-haired girl that looked to be her age step out.

The girl was slightly taller than herself, though Weiss was wearing heeled shoes so they were more eye level than they usually would be. The girl's hair was pitch black and a pair of cat ears stuck out from the locks. Her uniform was a plain light brown button up shirt that held a name badge the read 'Blake' with black pants. The girl's eyes however were striking. Bright amber and rather unnerving, they seemed to be squinting at her as she made her way closer to the counter.

"Can I help you?" the girl asked, her tone tinged with hesitancy and suspicion.

"Yes," Weiss smiled pleasantly despite knowing exactly why the girl was looking at her that way. "Can I get a latte, a chicken salad sandwich and a slice of that snow cake please?"

"Sure thing," Blake nodded slowly and began to enter the order into the register, one eye constantly flicking in her direction. "Is that fresh or from the fridge?"

"Fresh please," Weiss replied.

"Of course, ma'am," the girl finished entering the order and reached over to hit her fist on the door she had just come through.

After a couple of seconds, the door opened and Weiss felt her breath catch as an incredibly beautiful girl with wild blonde hair and lilac eyes stuck her head out.

"Sup?" the blonde asked and looked around quickly. Her eyes widened as they fell on Weiss and her head snapped back to Blake. "Is that..."

"Chicken salad sandwich," Blake cut her off.

"But that's..."

"Yang not now," the girl said sternly, her cat ears flattening.

"Fine, fine," the blonde girl replied. "One chicken salad sandwich coming up, hackles."

Weiss heard Blake tut as she turned around.

"That will be 9.50 Lien please," The girl said. Weiss pulled her card from her purse and pressed it against the reader to pay. "Thank you."

"We'll bring it over for you." Blake replied and handed over the receipt.

With a small nod of her head, Weiss took it and made her way over to the side with the bookcase as it was less occupied. She ran her hand over the books, reading the titles on each of their spines until finally she found one that caught her interest. Bringing her hand up to the top end of the book she tipped it towards herself until she could get the book out of the overstuffed area of the shelf. With
her book in hand, she sat in one of the plush, green chairs and began to read while waiting for her lunch to arrive.

"Good read?" she heard from in front of her a few minutes later. "That's one of my friend's favourites."

Weiss looked up to see the blonde haired girl from earlier standing before her holding a tray. Up close and more than just a head, the girl was even more beautiful than she had earlier thought. Her wild blonde hair reached all the way down the girls back allowing the observer's eye to take in the girls body at the same time, which from what she could tell was near flawless; even Weiss, who was very happy with how she looked, couldn't help but be a little jealous. She was tall and every inch of the girl that she could see looked to be powerful, lean muscle. Her chest was generous enough that her work shirt seemed to be struggling to hold it, the open button that revealed some cleavage was enough for Weiss to assume the girl had chosen a shirt that was a size too small on purpose.

"Gotta admit, never thought I'd see a Schnee in here," The girl said as she placed the tray down on the small table beside her.

"I can leave if I am unwelcome," Weiss replied.

"Nah, its fine,"The girl replied with a chuckle. "Just unexpected is all, especially after everything with your father."

"I am not my father," Weiss replied shortly. In the two weeks since the new controversy had hit the news, she had become increasingly frustrated at being held responsible for his actions.

"Sorry," the girl replied, her face falling. "That was rude of me, I have a habit of putting my foot in my mouth."

"Clearly," Weiss replied. Though for some reason the sight of the girl downcast face abated her annoyance.

"Anyways," the girl shifted uncomfortably. "I'll leave you to your lunch."

Weiss watched as the girl began to walk away only for her to stop and turn back.

"Oh by the way, there's a 5 Lien fee if anything is spilt on the books, so please be careful," she said carefully. "Especially with that one, Blake will riot if anything happens to it."

"I will be sure to take the utmost care then," Weiss replied with a small smile.

"Great," the girl was walking slowly backwards now. "If there's any problems with anything just ask for Yang, uhh... that's me."

"I'll keep that in mind, thank you," Weiss felt her eyebrow raise and her lips form a smile as she watched the girl stumble due to her leg bumping into the side of one of the chairs.

"Great," Yang repeated and made her way back to the counter. Weiss could have sworn she saw Blake give the girl a small shake of her head.

With a genuine smile on her face after the encounter, Weiss settled back into her chair with her book and slowly ate her lunch. She knew the coffee would only aggravate her headache later, but for the moment she very much needed the extra boost. The food was better than she expected it to be. The quantity of everything on the sandwich seemed to have the perfect ratio, and the quality
was great as well; it was also big enough that Weiss was barely able to finish it. The cake had a
nice texture to it as well and ended her meal nicely. Though she had no real experience to judge
from, it was moist and full of flavour without being overwhelming so Weiss was more than
satisfied.

It wasn't long after finishing everything that she received a message from her father, ordering her to
make her way back to Scarlatina Design. She groaned in frustration at being summoned but she
knew she couldn't keep the man waiting, as she didn't want to risk causing him any annoyance,
especially today.

She took note of her page in the book and cleared up her things to take them to the counter. Both
Blake and Yang were there this time talking about something that she couldn't quite make out but
the blonde girl was wearing a smile that could brighten up any room. Blake noticed her approach
and walked up to the counter to accept the tray.

"Was everything okay?" She asked cautiously.

"Perfect, thank you," Weiss replied. "What time do you open tomorrow? I may stop by for my
morning coffee too, if that's okay?"

Weiss made a point to meet the Faunus girl's eyes as she spoke so as to make it very clear that it
was a question she would respect the answer to.

"We open at 6AM," Blake smiled back with a slight nod after a moment.

"Thank you," Weiss smiled back and turned to leave but stopped. With a small smile on her face,
Weiss turned around and spoke mainly to Yang. "I'm Weiss, by the way. It was a pleasure to meet
you both."

The smile that spread across Yang's face was reward enough and with one last smile of her own,
Weiss turned and left the café.

Cold wind whipped across her face as she stepped on the street, her umbrella bending slightly from
the wind that seemed to be hammering down with renewed vigour. On her way back to Scarlatina
Design, the image of the blonde girl's smile forced its way back into her mind and refused to leave.
Wide and toothy, it had seemed to have made the girl's eyes shine intensely, and much like the
headlight of a truck in the dead of night, the image was now burned into her mind.

Lost in pleasant thoughts, she barely registered that she had arrived at her destination.

"You sure took your time," She heard her father say in his usual droning tone. Growing up hearing
it, she had become convinced that he did it on purpose in an attempt to make his client fall asleep,
and not know what they were signing. A thought backed by the knowledge that her father was not
beyond using such devious technique to get ahead.

"Sorry father," She replied with an incline of her head as she had been taught.

A white car with blue trim and the Schnee company logo plastered on the side pulled up to the
sidewalk and a driver stepped out to move quickly around the car to open the door for them.

"The embarrassment of having to ask the staff of such a business where my own daughter had
wandered off to when I had ordered you to remain in the waiting room," He sneered.

"I was hungry," Weiss replied. Even though it was the truth, she couldn't help but feel like a child
as those words left her mouth. She received a hard glare in return.
"Schnee's do not make excuses, Weiss," He growled as he leant forward. "You are my daughter and you will do as I say, do you understand?"

Weiss felt a shiver run through her body as her father's cold, blue eyes locked onto her. Eyes that she had unfortunately inherited.

"Yes father," Weiss nodded.

"Good," he squinted and moved back to a proper sitting position and addressed the driver. "Take us back to Schnee tower."

They spent the journey back to her father's office in silence as usual and Weiss mentally chastised herself for having once again buckled under her father's gaze.

It wasn't until she let out an imperceptible sigh and the scent of coffee hit her nose that she remembered the pleasant afternoon she had had. That memory somehow found its way back to the smile Yang had given her, it was also the thought that she may be able to see it again tomorrow that finally managed to pull her from her self-destructive thoughts.

For the first time in many years, Weiss had something to look forward too.
The gentle buzzing of the alarm clock on her bedside table woke Weiss from her peaceful sleep. She had been having the most wonderful dream but as she rubbed her eyes, the exact contents were quickly fading. She remembered her sister, Winter, was present and there was a faint memory of purple flashes; but even those where getting murkier with each passing second.

Reluctantly, Weiss pulled herself from the comfort of the warm bed and turned off the alarm. After stretching the sleep from her muscles she walked over to her full length mirror. She had begun to stand in front of it every morning two years ago and every time, her attention was drawn to the same feature. A scar that ran down over her left eye.

While it had faded rather well over the years, the sight of it was no less painful. The memory of the day she acquired it was one of her worst and was something she preferred not to think about outside of her darkest nightmares. Yet every morning she looked in the mirror, hoping that her eyes would find something else to focus on, but they never did.

With a sigh, she pulled her gaze from the scar to a pale blue card that was stuck to the side of the mirror, jammed between the glass and the white oak wood. On the front was a large number eighteen surrounded by white snowflakes, subtly glittered in such a way that they gave the illusion of falling even though they were stationary. With a sad smile to herself, she pulled the card from its place and opened it to read the message inside.

My dearest sister Weiss,

Unfortunately I was unable to secure leave from General Ironwood at this time to attend your birthday. However, he has assured me that he will organize to have my leave date brought forward as a reward for my service, so it will not be long before we see each other next. Nevertheless, 18 is a huge year for any young woman and I have enclosed a present. I am aware it is not much but I hope that you will find cause to wear it one day.

I would also like to use this as a chance to give you some advice for the coming year. I have been in the position you are about to find yourself in so I can say with certainty that it is not a pleasant place to be and was the main reason I left to find my own path. I would like to ask you to follow my example also and take some time to figure out who you are apart from our father and away from the family company.

Your loving sister, Winter

P.S. I have Addressed the parcel to Klein so as to know it will reach only your hands. I would rather not risk father giving you a headache on your birthday complaining about me as he usually does.

Weiss finished reading the card and placed it back in its position on her mirror. It had only been a week since her birthday yet the card was already one of her most treasured possessions because it was proof. Proof that she had at least some family that actually cared about her.

A soft knock on her bedroom door snapped Weiss from her thoughts so she turned away from the mirror to greet the knocker.
"You may enter," she said firmly. The door slowly creaked open and Weiss breathed a sigh of relief as a short, plump man with almost no hair and a thick moustache bowed his way into the room.

"My apologies for the interruption Miss Schnee," Klein spoke as he bowed his head. "The car you requested will be arriving in thirty minutes."

"Thank you Klein," Weiss smiled. "I will be down shortly."

With another bow of the head, he left the room and shut the door behind him. After taking one final look at the mirror, Weiss made her way to the bathroom to take a shower.

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Weiss stepped out of the vehicle and looked around. The day was once again quite windy but thankfully the wind had decided to leave the rain behind. She pulled the collar of her white, double-button jacket tighter around her neck and walked towards the coffee shop.

Ever since her father's scandal, reporters had been far more persistent, as if they weren't persistent enough already. Whereas before there were usually only one or two sniffing around, now they had taken to camping in their vans outside the Schnee mansion. That meant Weiss had to have been much more careful with planning her route. On any non-sandalous week, Weiss guessed the journey to the coffee shop would have only taken fifteen minutes but it had taken them thirty minutes just to lose the press and ten more for her driver to drop her off a block away.

She had looked up a map of the area last night and fortunately alleyways ran through all the blocks nearby so she was able to walk in relative privacy. Less than a minute later she stepped out of the alleyway and gave herself a once over in the reflection of a neighbouring store's window. Satisfied that she looked pretty good, despite her hair being rather windswept, she walked the remaining few feet and entered the coffee shop.

The smell of coffee greeted Weiss, different to yesterday's cinnamon but equally as pleasant to her. There was also a lot more noise. The shop was understandably quite a bit busier than she had encountered it yesterday; she immediately felt herself tense slightly at the crowd. Thankfully everybody was either too busy in conversation in enjoying their breakfast to pay her any attention.

Putting a smile on her face, Weiss approached the bent over figure she could just make out behind the counter. Two ears perked up as she reached the counter and a woman in her mid forties stood up, what looked to be a knowing grin spread across her face as her eyes fell on Weiss.

This woman was very clearly Blake's mother. While she was a little shorter and had larger ears, everything else looked exactly like the girl she had met yesterday. They both had the same sharp facial features and though this woman's hair was cut shorter, it was the same pitch black as her daughter's. Her eyes were the same striking amber as her daughters also, but the woman's seemed to lack some of the hardness she had seen in Blake's. Instead they were full of warmth and kindness.

"Sorry dear, please excuse me," she said with a smile and stuck her head through the open door behind her. "Yang dear, would you mind serving the counter for a moment?"

"Sure Kali."
Weiss heard the voice and tried her best to suppress the grin that was threatening to push its way onto her face. She was relatively successful until she saw the blonde-hair girl emerge from the doorway and stop at the sight of her, a smile quickly taking place on her face as she stepped towards the register.

"Sooo..." Yang dragged out. "You've actually come back then."

"I have," Weiss smiled. "The sandwich yesterday was really good and I wanted to see if it would be today as well."

She had totally not spent an hour last night in front of the mirror coming up with such a simple line. Fortunately, Yang let out a small chuckle.

"I dunno, you may have just caught me on a good day," She replied.

"Well I will just have to find out then," Weiss grinned. "Same as yesterday and an espresso please."

"No problem," Yang said as she typed everything into the register and Weiss paid. "I'll bring it over again. I made sure Blake didn't steal the book you were reading yesterday."

"Thank you."

Weiss nodded and made her way over to the seat she had taken up residence in the day before. To her surprise, she found that the book she had been reading had already been placed on the small table beside it. Smiling to herself once again, she picked it up and sat down to read while waiting for her food.

"You know," Weiss heard Yang say a couple of minutes later as she placed the tray on her table. "I've known Blake my whole life but I have never been able to understand how she can sit and read all day."

"I can't speak for your friend, but for me..." Weiss hesitated slightly before she finished that sentence for fear of sounding stupid. "Well they're the closest we will ever get to magic."

Yang seemed taken aback by the answer and Weiss could hear the intrigue in her next question.

"How so?"

"Well," Weiss began. "Inside these covers is a whole different world. With whole new people and rules. When I open them and begin to read, I am no longer Weiss Schnee, heiress to the world's leading developers in technology."

She tilted the book slightly to indicate it.

"I'm Orwell, a simple farmer who is trying his best to provide a life for his family while fighting another soul inhabiting his body that is trying to convince him it's his job to save the world," She paused once again and hope she was making sense. She had never really told anyone why she loved books but that was mainly because no-one had cared enough to ask. "If that's not magic, I don't know what is."

Yang seemed to have been stunned into a moment of silence but she quickly found her voice again and scratched the back of her head.

"I guess I never really thought of it like that," She replied softly. "Whenever I ask Blake she just glares at me and says its fun."
Weiss couldn't help but let out a little chuckle of her own at that one.

"It is that too," she grinned and took a sip of her espresso. "What do you find fun if not reading?"

"Boxing," the girl replied quickly, as if the word had been forced from her throat. "Well anything physical really. Anything that helps me get rid of some energy."

_That explain the muscles_, Weiss thought to herself.

"Sounds exhausting."

"Sometimes, but that's kinda the point," Yang laughed.

The sound of her laughter caused a wave of heat to flood Weiss's body. It wasn't fake, like the laughs she had become accustomed to at her family's gala's and balls; but a real one. It was a genuine laugh that seemed to light up the blonde as if she was made of sunlight.

"So you don't exercise at all?" she asked and sat down in a seat opposite her.

"I run a little and have the occasional fencing lesson," Weiss admitted. "Though the running has been rather sparse lately."

"Why?"

Weiss once again hesitated before answering. She wasn't used to people actually asking her questions about herself, usually it was about her father or the company; and even then she was often told what to say beforehand by her father.

"Well, lately it's been kind of hard to go anywhere with the press following me," Weiss sighed. "Having a camera shoved in your face and being asked about your father's newest controversy while you're sweaty isn't very stress relieving."

As soon as the words left her mouth, Weiss worried that Yang would dismiss them as rich girl problems.

"I get that."

"How?"

Weiss hadn't meant for the question to be so forceful and she prepared to apologise; but Yang, still smiling, didn't seem bothered.

"True, I may not understand it on your level, but I had a similar thing happen," Yang chuckled. "I wasn't too popular back in high-school, there were some things that happened, but I had these horrible braces and pretty bad acne up my right arm. But I was a good boxer, I won some tournaments and people began to act differently."

"They began to be nice and stuff, they invited me to parties and to hangout. I never really took them up on their offer but it was rather annoying to be treated like a trophy, especially by people that brushed me off like I was nothing before I won anything."

Weiss was stunned. Not only because she couldn't imagine the girl before her with braces and acne, but because she was actually understanding with her problems. She tried to find some words to say but she was at a loss.

"Well I should get back to work, I've taken up enough of your time already," Yang sighed. "I'll
have Kali bring over a slice of that cake, on the house."

"That not..." Weiss began to object but stopped upon seeing Yang shake her head. "Thank you."

Yang gave her one last smile and began to walk away.

"Yang," Weiss called after her. The girl stopped and turned to face her. "Thank you, for listening."

Yang replied with a simple smile and a nod of her head and walked back to the counter.

Weiss spent the next twenty minutes alone peacefully reading and eating the food that was just as good as yesterday's. However, while the book was interesting and enjoyable, she couldn't help but think over the conversation she had just had with Yang.

It had been quite some time since she had talked to someone like that. Usually it would be Winter but since her enrolment in the military seven years ago, those conversations had been fewer and far in between. She didn't hold it against Winter of course. Weiss understood that she was a busy woman after all, but there were times where she really needed someone to talk to.

Once she had finished her food and a good portion of her book, Weiss checked the time and was shocked to find that it was almost 8:30 and her father would be wanting her home so that he could drag her to yet another business meeting. With a sigh, she texted the driver that she was ready and picked up her plate to bring it back to the counter. She was about to leave when she heard Yang practically shout from behind her.

"Weiss, wait," she called while she walked hurriedly around the counter and held out a piece of paper.

"What is this?" she asked slightly confused as she took the paper.

"My number."

Weiss felt her mouth open slightly as she read the numbers scrawled hastily on the piece of paper.

"You know, in case you ever wanna talk," She smiled. The girl seemed nervous as she was shifting on the balls of her feet.

"Thank you," Weiss breathed, trying her very best to not let the huge smirk force its way onto her face. "I will keep it in mind, if I ever need to talk."

"Great," Yang grinned happily. "And for the record, I uhh... I really hope you use it, I enjoyed talking to you."

Weiss was just able to make out a small blush that had crept into Yang's cheeks, and was unable to formulate and adequate response; instead, she settled for a nod of the head. The girl seemed satisfied with this and quickly made her way back to the counter. It was with a happy grin of her own that Weiss exited the shop, clutching the slip of paper holding Yang's number; and got into the car knowing that no matter what her father had planned for her that day, at least something good had happened.
Worry

Weiss Schnee

'Tap. Tap. Tap.'

Twelve times. Twelve times she had typed out the message and every time she had deleted it in frustration. How hard can it be to write out a simple hello? Weiss thought to herself.

With a sigh, she once again threw her Scroll onto her bed and turned her back to it. It had been four days since Yang has given Weiss her number and everyday she wrote out messages only to delete them. She had never encountered this kind of nervousness before. Nervousness? Sure. Every time she was called to her father's study she was nervous. But this was something else.

Being called to her father's office was tiring to say the least but the knot that tightened in her stomach each time she tried to press send was nauseating. In the privacy of her room, she let out a frustrated groan as she checked the clock to see that it was almost time for dinner, she washed her hands and made her way to the dining room.

To some, a twenty-two rooms mansion would be considered far too much space; but to Jacques Schnee, it was necessary. The first floor rooms were almost entirely dedicated to different types of sitting rooms and entertainment. While Weiss had spent very little time downstairs in the past year, growing up she had memorized the layout.

To the left you would find the music area. Three rooms each dedicated to their own types of instrument. One for string, one for wind and one entirely dedicated to a piano. That room was both her favourite and most hated, each for the same reason. To the right was more general entertainment and staff areas. The kitchen, the dining room, small bar with a pool table that was rarely used, a library, a personal movie theatre, and even an indoor pool that matched their outside one. Between each of those rooms was a large sitting room with only one of them actually having a television. Her father's belief was that there should always be a place to discuss business nearby.

The upstairs was mainly bedrooms, with only a few sitting rooms as it was rarely ever frequented by visitors. Weiss and her siblings took the left side while their parents took the right with a few to spare for visitors.

In the very centre of it all was a massive atrium that held a pair of fifteen feet statues of heavily armoured knights. These were placed very specifically next to each side of the stairs because at the back of each side of the stairs was a door that lead to a small 'T' shaped hallway. At the end was her father's study. While it was connected to the main house, it had been built separately. The study was far colder than any other room in the house, which was an accomplishment in itself, and was something she felt her father had done on purpose. It was also not a coincidence that many of her nightmares were set in that room.

As she quickly approached the dining room, Weiss straightened her back and took a deep breath. Letting it out, she turned the corner and saw that her mother and brother were already sitting at the table.

"Evening mother," Weiss said politely as she sat down.

Her mother merely gave an acknowledging nod and began to pour herself a glass of white wine. Clearly not the first from how empty the bottle was.
"Hello sister," Her brother said politely.

"Whitley."

She was not in the mood to deal with him today. The boy was a miniature of their father in every way. Vile, cruel and uncaring; but to make it worse, he had even recently began to adopt the man's talent for feigning innocence as a way to endear himself to others.

"Is father running late again?" Weiss questioned her mother.

"Your father is working late and will not be joining us," Her mother said with no emotion.

Relief flooded Weiss and she allowed her posture to soften slightly. While not an uncommon occurrence, her father missing dinner always made her happy, as it was a night free of criticism and snide remarks, normally.

"It's such a shame that father must be forced to spend so many hours at the office correcting the mistakes of others," Whitley sighed. "However, it is good to see you out of your room for once sister."

"I have been busy," Weiss replied dismissively as she accepted a plate of food from one of the family's many butlers.

"Too busy to spend time with family?"

Weiss did not bother to reply and simply began to eat her food. It would not be a fun night if Whitley tattled to their father when he returned from the office.

"Whitley, be quiet and leave your sister alone," Her mother, Willow, interrupted as she poured herself yet another glass of wine.

Weiss was certain she saw Whitley's eyes narrowed into a glare for a moment but he corrected it immediately.

"Yes mother," He said in a low voice that gave away his annoyance.

"So how has college been Weiss?" Her mother started to Weiss' surprise. "Is your music teacher up to standard?"

Her surprise quickly faded however as the woman finished her question.

"I stopped the music course last year mother," Weiss sighed. "I have told you so multiple times."

"Oh, I must have missed it," the woman's face dropped slightly as she took another sip of her wine. "It's been very busy."

"I know mother."

Thankfully, dinner passed with very little conversation from that point on as her mother had clearly lost the desire to continue the conversation. Instead, Weiss spent the meal mentally chastising herself for once again getting her hopes up that her mother had remembered their earlier conversations.

"May I be excused?" Weiss asked even though she had only cleared half her plate. "I had a late lunch."
Her mother simply gave a wave of her hand and continued to sip her wine.

"Thank you."

Weiss stood from the table and walked from the room. No matter how much she wished it didn't, the state of her mother saddened her greatly. Even more so when she remembered all the treasured childhood memories she had with her. However tonight was not the night to deal with those again.

Sighing to herself, she returned to her room to grab her Scroll and coursework binder before making her way down to the library. Hopefully taking her mind off of things by studying would actually help her work up the courage to text Yang.

*

Yang Xiao Long

"YAAAAAAANG."

Yang rolled her eyes and smiled as she heard her sister whine at again.

"Sup rubes?"

"I'm bored, stop staring at your Scroll and play a game with me," the red-haired girl replied and poked her in the side with her foot. Yang quickly seized it and began to tickle the underneath.

The girl immediately began to laugh loudly and writhe around as she tried her best to pull her foot free.

"YA... YAAANG!" the girl breathed heavily between laughs. "STO... STOPPP."

"Are you gunna poke me with it again?" Yang asked as she stopped the tickling. Ruby shook her head and scurried back to the other side of the couch once yang released her foot and stuck out her tongue.

Yang couldn't help but feel her spirits lift. Her sister, Ruby, had a gift for cheering people up. It had been very helpful lately to Yang lately as she had hoped Weiss would have messaged already. Maybe I misread things? She thought to herself.

"Alright rubes, I can kick your butt for a bit," Yang replied and pulled up the controller application on her Scroll.

Ruby let out a small cheer as she jumped off the couch to turn on the television and load up the game. The two of them played a fighting game, the usual go to, for an hour as they waited for their father to come home; even though Yang easily won a majority of the fights, it was more than enough to distract her from her Scroll. In fact, she was so distracted by her sister's high pitched squeals and bouncing that she was surprised to see a new message when she looked at it next. However, for the first time in her life, she was disappointed to see it was from Blake.

'Sun had to work again. On my way over'

The time stamp showed that the message had come in seventeen minutes ago which meant Blake would be arriving shortly.

"Hey sis, Blake's on her way," Yang shouted to her sister who had gone to the kitchen to get a snack.
"Ooo, think she'll help me with my history homework?" Ruby mumbled with a cookie hanging out of her mouth.

"Isn't that what she normally does?" Yang replied "And don't eat too much, Dad's doing burgers tonight remember."

"I knoooow, but cookies," Ruby whined.

Yang responded by simply throwing one of the couch cushions at Ruby only for her to nimbly dodge it.

"You're the one who has been begging dad for burgers all week."

"Yeah, but cookies are better."

"Cookies are not food Ruby," Yang scolded her.

"Meanie," Ruby pouted and threw a cookie at Yang.

Yang prepared to launch off the couch and wrestle the girl to the floor but Ruby was spared by a loud knock on the door. A second later it opened and Blake walked in soaked with rain water.

"Hey Blake, raining..."

"Cats and dogs?" Blake interrupted and accepted the towel Ruby had quickly pulled from a nearby closet. "You need new material."

"Pssh!" Yang replied. "My material is fine, you're just a sour puss."


"Sup with you?"

"Well I was supposed to be spending the night at the movies with Sun but instead I'm here listening to dumb cat puns," Blake scowled with her cat ear flat against her head.

"Sorry," Yang genuinely apologised.

"It's fine," Blake sighed. "So what are you two doing?"

"Playing games after I got bored because Yang wouldn't stop looking at her Scroll," ruby replied offhandedly and held out a cookie to Blake.

The smile that spread across Blake's face made Yang shiver.

"Weiss still not text you huh?" Blake smirked.

"I'm sorry for the puns Blake," Yang quickly apologised again. "Please don't."

"Weiss?"Ruby asked in a confused voice.

Yang launched off the sofa at Blake but she easily sidestepped the tackle.

"Your sister's crush."

"GODDAMIT BLAKE."
Yang stood and looked at Blake to see a very smug look on the girls face. Unfortunately she barely had time to throw the girl a dirty look before Ruby began her onslaught of questions.

"Oh my god, who's Weiss? Does she go to your college? Does she box too? Is she pretty? Of course she's pretty if you like her, duh Ruby. Wait, why does Blake know but I don't?"

Ruby finished her questions with a pout and a sad look.

"You are so in for all the cat puns tomorrow," Yang said to Blake only to receive a shrug in response as the raven-haired girl took a seat on the couch.

"Worth it," Blake snickered.

Yang shook her head and turned back to her sister who had seemed to have moved past her brief sadness and was grinning and rocking on the balls of her feet.

"Look rubes, I don't even know if she likes me yet so please don't make a big deal of it," Yang sighed and sat down in her father's recliner.

The girl nodded but didn't lose her excitement.

"So does this mean you're finally over Blake?"

Yang's eyes shot wide open as Ruby's hand flew up to cover her mouth, her own eyes wide at the realisation of what she had just said. However, before she could yell at Ruby, Blake let out a loud laugh and gave Yang a wink.

"Yeah Yang," Blake said while putting on her best sultry look, a look that even Blake didn't know was extremely convincing. "Are you over me yet?"

"Y-You kn-knew?" Yang stuttered and felt her face flush.

"Of course I knew,"Blake shook her head and smiled. "You were about as subtle as Pyrrha was around Jaune."

"Why didn't you say anything?"

"You know I'm straight," Blake said matter-of-factly. "There was no need to bring up things you were obviously trying to move past."

"Oh,"Yang replied a little disheartened. Any way someone looked at it, that was clearly a rejection. "Well yes, I have moved on."

It was true, Blake had been a very huge crush for three of her high school years, but she had always known it was one-sided and even though she had moved on since then, the rejection still stung a little.

Blake merely shrugged and dug to television remote out from under the couch and began to flip through channels. It never ceased to confuse Yang as to how Blake could find something that her, Ruby and their father had been unable to find for nearly two days.

"Yang," she heard Ruby say softly as the girl tugged on the arm of her shirt to get her attention. She turned to see that Ruby's eyes were filled with sadness. "I'm sorry."
Yang gave the girl a small smile and pulled her onto her lap to wrap her in a hug. Despite the girl being almost sixteen, she was still very childish in a lot of regards.

"It's fine rubes," Yang sighed and turned to Blake. "So you wanna stay tonight? Dads doing burgers."

"Sure," Blake replied and finally settle on a show about ninjas.

The show was actually rather enjoyable, despite being far too cheesy for Yang's taste, but just as it reached the halfway point she heard her Scroll ping. Thinking it may have been her dad, she pulled it close to look only to see an unknown number scrawled across her screen.

Heat quickly began to spread across her body and her face must have shown that she was nervous to open it as Blake raised an eyebrow and gave her a simple nod of encouragement. With a sweaty hand, she unlocked her phone and opened the message.

'Hello Yang, my apologise if I am interrupting you but I was curious as to if that offer to talk was still available. Weiss.'

Yang didn't even bother trying to hide the smile that spread across her face as she got up to walk to her room and typed a short message. After a couple of attempts, she finally sent one she was happy with.

'Absolutely, and its never a bother.'
Weiss Schnee

Weiss had been knelt in front of the toilet for the past thirty minutes, vomit stung her throat as her body emptied its stomach of the very little that she had eaten the previous day. The smell of blood and smoke still lingered in her mind from the nightmare she had woken from and she knew that her face would be streaked with tears.

Once the vomiting finally stopped, Weiss flushed the toilet and looked in the mirror to find that she was right in her earlier assumption; red puffy eyes stared back at her and dried tears stained her pale skin. With the memory of her nightmare still fresh, she glanced at the scar over her left eye and had to suppress the gag that tried to force its way out of her. With a sigh, she reached a shaky hand out to turn on the shower before removing her nightgown and stepping in.

* 

College had seemed to drag on much longer than usual and Weiss was glad to finally be out of there, a rather new feeling on her part. Usually she enjoyed the lectures and the coursework but lately she had been unable to focus on what the professors were saying. And she knew why. A quick look at her Scroll as she exited the building revealed a message waiting for her and with a smile, she opened it.

'Im pretty sure blakes about to snap'

It had been a week since she had first messaged Yang, and while she had been nervous at first, the conversation had quickly begun to feel natural. The reply she typed out felt like the most effortless thing she had done all week.

'I am surprised she has stuck with you this long.'

'psshh, she loves me too much. you coming by after college?'

Weiss felt her heart rate increase slightly at the knowledge that Yang wanted to see her again.

'I just finished. I should be there soon."

'Awesome, I'll get ur food ready'

Weiss smiled to herself as she entered the car that was waiting for her and asked the driver to take her to Blake's store. It had been two days since she had been there and if she was honest with herself, she had missed Yang slightly more than she expected.

The girl was just so easy to be around. She never judged, a rarity in the social circles Weiss had become accustomed to. She was also always happy and never failed to crack a dumb joke that somehow managed to drag smile from her. Thankfully, the coffee shop wasn't too far from her college so it didn't take long for them to arrive and for Weiss to step in to the warm store.

It was once again quite empty aside from a tall, red-headed girl that looked familiar, who was sitting holding hands with a rather scrawny, nervous looking blonde boy. With them sat Blake and she actually seemed happy. She had talked to her occasionally during her visits over the week and
Blake always came across as very cynical, though Yang had assured her that was only an act; so to see her laughing was rather surprising, but she had to admit that the happier look suited the girl.

As Weiss approached the counter, Blake noticed her and gave a small wave as she stood up.

"Hello, Weiss," she smiled as she walked behind the counter. "The usual?"

"Yes please," Weiss smiled back and gave a glance toward the red-haired girl now that she had a better angle. "Is that Pyrrha Nikos?"

"Oh yeah, she's a friend from college," Blake replied.

Weiss was stunned. Pyrrha had been the most talked about sporting personality in all of Vale for the past year. The girl was the same age as her yet she had already broken all kinds of records, and was rumoured to be participating in the Remnant Olympics making her the youngest person to do so in fifty years.

"I can introduce you if you want?" Blake offered.

"Oh no, I wouldn't want to intrude," Weiss shook her head.

"Intrude on what?" Weiss heard a voice say from the back room as the door was pushed open to reveal Yang carrying a sandwich. She threw Weiss a wide smile as she came into view.

"Weiss was asking about Pyrrha."

"Oh, yeah," Yang shrugged. "Don't worry about intruding, Pyrrha's cool, Jaune takes a little getting used to though."

"Are you sure?"

"Of course," Yang smiled as she placed the plate down and walked out from behind the counter. "Keep hanging around me and you'll meet her eventually anyway."

"I only come here for the coffee," Weiss joked with a smile which earned a raised eyebrow and a false look of hurt from the girl.

Yang grabbed a table near Pyrrha's and easily picked it up. As she held it, the muscles in her arms became more pronounced and Weiss had to turn her head to keep her mind from wandering. Unfortunately, her eyes found Blake who smirked at her and caused Weiss to blush.

"Hey guys, mind if a friend joins us?" Yang said as she placed the table next to the one the couple was sitting at.

"Sure," The boy replied with a quick glance up from a piece of paper he was writing on.

"Great, this is Weiss," Yang said and positioned some chairs to sit down.

"Nice to meet you Weiss," Pyrrha said as Weiss picked up her sandwich and made her way over to the table.

"Same to you," She replied.

"You're the Weiss Schnee right?" the boy said in an awed voice.

A loud thump echoed as the table bumped up slightly and the boy let out a yell of pain.
"Forgive Jaune," Yang said and motioned for her to sit down next to her. "He's a little dense sometimes."

"Hey."

"It's fine," Weiss smiled at the boy who was leaning down to rub his leg. "But yes, that would be me."

"Jaune Arc," he replied and turned to Yang. "And I ain't dense, right Pyrrha?"

"Of course not," the redhead replied quickly and gave Jaune's hand an affectionate tap.

Weiss did her best to suppress a smile as she recognised a white lie when she saw one. Jaune however did not and gave Yang a smug look.

"Pyrrha Nikos," Pyrrha said and held out her free hand for Weiss to shake.

"I know, you are pretty famous," Weiss said as she shook the girl hand with a smile.

"So are you lately," Pyrrha laughed and motioned to a magazine on a nearby table. A picture of herself stared back at her with a bright red headline that she couldn't quite make out from this distance.

"All lies I'm sure," Weiss scowled at the magazine.

"Aren't they always," Pyrrha nodded. "Apparently I'm going to the Olympics this year."

"I take that to mean you're not then?"

"I was approached but I want to focus on my studies right now."

Weiss felt her respect for the girl grow enormously. Its was all too common for people to jump into things head first, especially when given such an amazing opportunity, so to meet a girl who chose education was a delight.

"I still think she was dumb for turning it down," Yang said mournfully. "If I'd been approached for boxing, I would've said yes in a heartbeat."

"Of course you would," Blake scorned her friend as she approached with Weiss' coffee and sat down. "Aren't you currently failing two of your classes?"

"Ehh, I'm passing the important ones," Yang replied with a shrug.

"You never actually told me what it is you are studying?" Weiss said as she realised just how little she actually knew about Yang.

"I didn't?" Yang tilted her head thoughtfully. "Well, cooking but mainly art."

Yang pointed to the drawing of the Atlas pines that Weiss had noticed the first time she had entered the shop.

"That's yours?"

"Yup, drew it about two years ago and Blake insisted on putting it up," Yang sighed sadly. "I can do so much better but she wont let me take it down."
"It matches the décor," Blake said flatly.

"Well I like it," Weiss smiled at Yang. "It reminds me of home."

"How so?" Pyrrha asked as she looked at a piece of paper Jaune was writing on.

"I used to live in Atlas before Vale and we had a lot of those pines behind our house," She replied. "Me and my sister used to love getting lost in them as a kids."

"Sounds like fun," Jaune remarked while crossing out things Pyrrha pointed at. "My sisters are a nightmare."

"He's got seven," Yang whispered in her ear, the girl's breath enough to send a shiver through Weiss and almost make her completely miss what had been said.

"Speaking of sisters, how is Ruby?" Pyrrha asked. "I've been meaning to stop by and say hello."

Weiss recognised the name. Yang had mentioned her sister frequently and Weiss had noted that she seemed to love her sister quite a lot.

"She's fine, still very..." Yang seemed to be searching for a word that could accurately describe her sister. "...Ruby."

Pyrrha seemed to understand completely as she chuckled and gave a nod.

Weiss was about to ask what Yang meant by that but Blake let out a small groan that surprised everyone at the table and made them turn around. Stood behind her was another blonde hair boy wearing an open shirt and a pair of blue jeans cut off around the shins. A yellow tail reached out from behind him and the tip of it was tapping against the top of Blake's head.

"Hey Sun," Yang laughed. "Careful, she's got a bit more cat-itude today."

Blake scowled at Yang and reach up to grab the boy's tail, eliciting a small yell from him.

"I will pull if off if you continue."

He merely laughed and pulled his tail free.

"I'm gonna make myself a drink, want one?"

Weiss watched as Blake rolled her eyes and clearly tried to hold of the smile that was making the side of her lip quiver.

"Sure, does anyone else want another since Sun is making drinks?" she smirked at him.

"We've actually got to get going," Pyrrha said and nudged Jaune. "Practise starts soon."

"Oh right, see you guys later," he replied. He hurriedly packed away his papers and stood up. "Sun, you and Neptune still on for Saturday?"

Sun simply gave him a thumbs up as he went about making his drink.

"See you tomorrow."

"See ya."
"Nice meeting you Weiss," Pyrrha said as she passed by. "We should get together sometime and share our tabloid horror stories."

"Absolutely," Weiss smiled. That idea actually sounded fun to her.

The two of them gave their final goodbyes to Blake and Yang before they left the shop. As they left, a loud noise came from behind the counter and Weiss turned to see Sun holding some paper towels.

"Don't worry, it wasn't much," he said with a small chuckle that quickly faded into a worried look as he ducked out of sight.

Yang shook with suppressed giggles as Blake let out a sigh and got up to help the boy.

"Are those two together?" Weiss asked once the raven-haired girl had left the table. "They seem rather incompatible."

"Six months now," Yang smiled. "And I thought so too at first but Sun makes her smile so… yeah."

Weiss watched as Blake motioned for Sun to get out of the way only for him to try and refuse with a lot of pointing, his tail mimicking almost every movement his hand did. With a squint of her eyes, the girl pulled a cloth from a nearby cupboard and threw it in at his face with a shake of her head and one of the aforementioned smiles.

Amused by what she saw, Weiss looked away to see that Yang was looking at her. It suddenly dawned on her that she and Yang were now alone at the table. While the nerves had subsided a little over the last week, they were still present and for a couple of minutes, the two of them simply sat there in silence until finally Yang broke it.

"So how were your classes?"

"Surprisingly dull," Weiss sighed. "Though admittedly I was distracted."

"Sorry," Yang said guiltily. "My bad I'm guessing."

"Not at all," Weiss smiled. "You actually kept me awake."

"Oh, well I guess you're welcome," Yang grinned from relief. "You having trouble sleeping or something?"

"A little," Weiss admitted. "Nothing I'm not used to though."

"Well I'm usually up at really weird hours, you ever need some company you can just text me," Yang offered.

Thoughts of Yang climbing through her window in the dead of night sprang into Weiss' mind and she spluttered on the coffee that she had just taken a sip of. Yang immediately held out a hand to grab the cup and set it on the table as Weiss cleared her windpipe.

"I-I w-will," Weiss said once she had succeeded.

"So I didn't know you had a sister?" Yang said as she leant back on her seat. "What does she do?"

"Winter's in the Atlesian military," Weiss said proudly.
"Really?" Yang said in disbelief. "Doesn't seem very Schnee."

"Well she isn't very Schnee," Weiss mused. "Sure, she can be a little cold and harsh but she always means well. She's always encouraged me to do my best and find my own way in life."

"Do you see her much?" Yang asked.

"Not as much as I would like to, but she does her best to make sure to set aside some time when she is in Vale," Weiss answered sadly.

"She sounds like a good sister," Yang replied. "I couldn't imagine being separated from Ruby."

"Pyrrha mentioned her earlier," Weiss said, remembering her earlier curiosity. "The way you two spoke, it sounded like she was ill or something?"

"Nothing like that," Yang replied quickly and gave a small smile. "Ruby's autistic, she has trouble connecting with people but when she does, she gets rather attached. Pyrrha's one of the people she loves."

Not knowing what else to say, Weiss said the first thing that came to mind.

"Sounds like it's rough on her?"

"Sometimes," Yang nodded. "But she rarely lets it bother her, she likes to spend most of her time working on cars with dad. She's a total gearhead"

"Well at least you are all close," Weiss said mournfully.

"We are now, but we weren't always," Yang smiled, however there was a finality to her voice that indicated she didn't want to deliberate on what she had just said. "I'm guessing yours aren't?"

"My father made sure of that." Weiss shook her head.

"He sounds like a prick."

Weiss couldn't stop the small laugh that forced its way from her throat. She actually rather enjoyed Yang's occasional bluntness.

"That's one word for him," Weiss nodded. "But he is my father."

"I guess family is different for everyone," Yang replied.

Weiss gave another nod and took a sip of her coffee.

"So do your family support you doing art?"

"For the most part," Yang smiled and turned her head to acknowledge a customer who had walked in. "Dad was critical at first and told me to make sure I had a fall back."

"And you chose cooking?" Weiss joked.

"Hey, people always need chefs," Yang laughed. "Besides, my dad's family is from Mistral, he would probably disown me if I couldn't cook."

"So I'm guessing you can do more than just sandwiches then?" Weiss teased.
"Absolutely," Yang said as she stood up and Blake waved for her. "I'll be right back."

Weiss gave the girl a nod and took a bite from her sandwich. As usual it was fantastic and she couldn't help but wonder what other food the girl could cook. While is wasn't served in the Schnee manor, Mistralian food was her favourite due to their spices giving it such amazing flavours. She was in thought about all the amazing food she had tried during her last visit to Mistral and wondered if the girl would be able to make any of that when Yang sat back down.

"Sorry," Yang smiled as she sat down. "What were we talking about?"

"You were telling me what you could cook."

"Well Mistralian food, obviously," Yang replied. "Most Vale stuff is pretty easy."

"Atlesian?" Weiss asked out of curiosity.

"Not my favourite to cook but I can do some Atlesian dishes," Yang said after a few seconds of thought. "You guys eat a lot of fish."

Weiss had to laugh at that.

"That is true," She replied. "Solitas isn't really a place that very livestock friendly though, too much snow."

"Yeah, I can see that," Yang said quietly. "But you study business and finance right? What's that like?"

"Honestly, more fun than it sounds," Weiss nodded, surprised that Yang had remembered. "It is to me at least."

"You enjoy lectures?"

"For the most part," Weiss laughed. "You don't?"

"I do," Yang grinned. "They're better than hot milk at making you fall asleep."

"You're terrible." Weiss smiled and shook her head.

"I agree."

Weiss let out a small chuckle as she finished her coffee and looked at Yang out of the corner of her eye to find that the girl was watching her with a radiant grin that threatened to make her blush. She was about to ask Yang more questions but her Scroll began to buzz in her pocket. Her good mood instantly fell as she saw her fathers name on the screen.

"Excuse me a moment," Weiss groaned to Yang as she stood up and walked to an empty part of the shop.

With a final look at Yang, she sighed and answered the call.

"Hello father."

"Your driver has informed me that you are still not on your way to my office," He said in a low drawl. "What have a told you about punctuality, Weiss?"

"My apologise, father," Weiss replied. "I am leaving now."
"We will speak more on this matter once you arrive."

"Yes father," she replied.

The cut-off tone sounded and she let out a sigh. How could she have forgotten about her meeting? Had she really been enjoying herself that much?

Reluctantly, she made her way back to Yang and picked up her bag.

"I'm sorry, I must be going now," Weiss apologised to the girl. "I forgot I had a meeting at my father's office and I am running late."

"Oh," Yang's face fell slightly. "That's fine, I should get back to work anyway."

"I enjoyed meeting your friends," Weiss smiled at the girl, hoping the grin she liked so much would spread itself back across the blonde's face. "And talking to you."

"Same here," Yang replied. "I can give Pyrrha your number if you want?"

Weiss pulled her bag over her shoulder and made for the door.

"Yes please," She replied. "I will try and stop by tomorrow if I can."

"Awesome," The girl nodded and began to walk backwards to the counter.

With a final smile at the girl, Weiss turned and pushed the door open.

"Hey, Weiss."

Weiss halted straight away and turned to see that Yang had stop moving backwards. Instead she was wringing her hands in front of her like she was nervous about what she was about to say.

"Are you uhh..." The girl paused briefly to think before finishing. "Are you free on Friday?"

Weiss was taken aback. She had definitely noticed Yang looking at her, but to hear Yang actually try and ask her out succeeded in making her heart beat much faster. Nevertheless, Weiss tried to keep her calm appearance.

"I believe so?"

"G-Great," She nodded and Weiss saw the girl throat bulge slightly as she swallowed nervously. "W-Would you like to maybe do something? I could cook."

Weiss took a moment to think before she replied. She wanted to say yes straight away, but she knew that accepting could create problems in the future. However, as she tried to think of all the things that could go wrong, she looked at the blonde-haired and found that she just didn't have it in her to say no.

"I would love to Yang," She replied with a smile that she couldn't suppress.

The grin she liked immediately spread itself across Yang face and the wringing of her hands stopped.

"Great," Yang said, her voice filled with relief as she tucked a strand of her hair behind her ear. "Sorry, you were in a rush."
"Oh. Yes," Weiss shook her head as she remembered what awaited her. "I will text you later."

She saw Yang nod as she turned and hurriedly left the shop. Her excitement for the coming date forced a smile on her face that lasted until she approached the car and the driver opened it for her to enter. As she did, she looked the driver in the eye.

"What is your name again?"

"Dudley ma'am," he replied.

With a nod, she made a mental note to make sure he was not her driver on Friday.
Their First Date

Weiss Schnee

A loud knock interrupted Weiss as she stood in her closet and broke her train of thought. She had spent the whole night trying to decide what she could wear for her date with Yang; and even though she had a closet the size of an ordinary living room full of clothes, she had yet to come up with anything. With a sigh, she turned and left the closet so as to not make the person who knocked wait.

"Come in," Weiss said as she flattened out her dress and sat on the bed. The door opened and Klein entered the room carrying a tray.

"Your evening tea, Miss Schnee," He said with a small bow of his head before he placed it on her bedside table.

"Thank you, Klein."

Weiss gave the man a small smile. Klein had been the family butler since before she had even been born and she couldn't remember a single day which he hadn't been present in some manner. The man probably her most trusted confidant inside the Schnee manor as he had always been kind and taken the time to cheer her up when she was upset.

"Forgive me, Miss Schnee," Klein said as he stood there with his hands behind his back. "But you have been rather quiet lately. Is everything okay?"

Weiss sighed and stood up. The man had kept many of her secrets before so there was no reason he wouldn't now.

"I'm just worried," Weiss groaned. "I have a date tomorrow but it is not exactly someone father would approve of."

"I find there is a lot Mr Schnee does not approve of," he replied with a frown. "But if you feel this girl is good enough for you, then his opinion should not matter."

"How did you know it was a girl?" Weiss questioned. She had never once talked to Klein about any of her romantic interests so she was confused as to how he knew.

The man let out a chuckle that made his Walrus moustache quiver.

"Miss Schnee," The man said as he shook his head. "You, your sister and your brother are the closest thing to children I have. I have made sure to pay attention over the years."

Weiss felt herself smile at the man's admission.

"That is very kind of you Klein," Weiss replied. "And thank you for the advice."

"It's my pleasure Miss Schnee," Klein bowed and began to make his way towards the door. "If you need any more assistance, please call."

"Actually," Weiss called. "I am in need of a driver I can trust tomorrow, I don't suppose you know of one?"
"I do believe there I know of one," he said after a moment of thought. "His name is Hazel Rainart. I will ensure that he is free tomorrow, just call for him when you are ready."

"Thank you Klein," Weiss breathed a sigh of relief now she no longer had to worry about that.

"Of course," The man said and left the room.

After Klein left, Weiss stood and returned back to her closet. She looked at the mass of blue, red and white that lined the walled and let out another sigh.

Thirty minutes later, she had inspected a majority of the outfits she liked the best and was beginning to lose hope when she remembered that there was one outfit she hadn't yet worn. She moved to the back of her closet and pulled apart the hangers the held her old school clothes to reveal a small shelf.

The shelf had been a good hiding place for the past couple of years since that part was rarely ventured to since she had finished school. However the only thing that remained on there was a single white box emblazoned with a picture of Atlas' Symbol, a spear on two gears. She took it down and pulled off the top to reveal a letter sitting on top of white fabric. She picked up the letter and gave it a quick re-read.

'I know black is not usually a colour you wear but I believe this is to your taste. Winter'

Weiss put the letter aside with a smile. Since Klein had given it to her she had been too busy to actually look at the outfit properly, so with eager hands, she pulled the first article of clothing from the box and held it out before her.

It was a white, double breasted, high collar jacket made of a material Weiss didn't recognise. It felt as smooth as silk but it was thick enough that it was clearly very warm. Black lace trim was placed around the cuffs and collar. Winter was correct, the jacket was very much to her taste. She placed the jacket carefully to the side and eagerly pulled out the next item.

The next piece was just as perfect. A white, pleated skirt that flared out, much like a ballerina's tutu, due to thick frills of black lace on the inside. Underneath the skirt was a pair of white knee-high boots with black heels and a pair of black stockings with more lace at the top.

Satisfied with everything she saw, Weiss quickly jumped to her feet and began to change into the outfit. Fortunately, it was very easy to get on and it wasn't long before she moved in front of the closet mirror to examine how it looked.

It was perfect.

The white fabric gave her pale skin some much needed colour and the black trims were just subtle enough to stand out but not enough to pull too much attention. She turned around slowly the check it out from all angles and with each one she loved what she saw more and more.

The skirt and boots worked beautifully together to show off her long legs while only showing a small amount of her thighs. In fact the was pretty much the only part of skin the outfit showed. The jacked itself was long sleeved and it had a V-shaped neckline that stop just above her cleavage.

Weiss could have stood in the mirror inspecting it for longer but it was already getting late and she knew she would have to get the outfit downstairs for it to be ready in time for her date tomorrow. With a reluctant sigh, she changed into her nightgown and placed the outfit back in its box.
Yang Xiao Long

Yang was greeted to the sounds of playful shouting as she entered the house, along with a smell she recognised as cookies that emanated from the kitchen and made the whole house smell like a bakery.

"Smells good rubes," Yang called out as she removed her shoes from her aching feet and threw them into a small cupboard by the door. "I hope you made me some."

Yang picked up the bag of groceries that she had just purchased and made her way to the kitchen to unload it all. She entered the room to find her father, Taiyang, leaning up against one of the kitchen counters eating a cookie. He was wearing his usual brown, sleeveless shirt with a vest and orange cargo pants.

"Hey spitfire, how was college?" He asked as she placed the bags on the kitchen table.

"Boring, as usual," She replied and began to sort through her items. "How was work?"

"Same old, same old," he said as he pushed himself off the counter and pulled an item from the bag with a raised eyebrow. "Shion pork? This couldn't have been cheap."

"It wasn't," Yang replied and pulled the meat from his hand. "But good ingredients never are."

Her father dug his hand back into the bag and pulled out some more items, giving each of them a similar look as he did the pork.

"Mistral noodles, Kuchinashi mushrooms," He listed off. "Yang, you can't afford these ingredients."

"Yes I can," She argued stubbornly despite being fully aware that her father knew how much she earned. "I have some saved up."

"I thought that was fo..."

"Dad, will you just stop," Yang interrupted angrily and looked at him pointedly. "I know what I'm doing."

The hurt that filled Taiyang's eyes briefly as he understood her meaning instantly made her feel guilty. She took a deep breath and lowered her head slightly as she felt the stubbornness ebb away.

"Sorry," She mumbled. "I just want things to be perfect."

"I know," he replied and put a hand on her shoulder. "And it will be, but you don't need to break the bank to make it so."

"This girl could probably taste if I used cheap things," Yang turned and continued to unpack.

"Yang, a good chef can take the most mundane of ingredients and turn it into something spectacular," Taiyang said and began to help putting things away. "And you haven't served me anything I wouldn't expect from a fancy restaurant since you were fourteen."

"I guess."

"I know," He said firmly. "So stop worrying. Now, how long till she gets here?"

Yang craned her neck to see the clock in the living room.
"An hour and a half," She replied.

"Alright," he nodded and put the last of the food away. "When your sister gets back, we will head out. Until then I will be in my chair, smelling the food I will never get to try."

He finished the sentence with a fake pout in her direction as he moved towards then living room and she couldn't help but smile despite her nerves.

The next hour passed relatively quickly as Yang was busy preparing the food and with twenty minutes left to go, she finally decided to wash her hair and get ready. She was halfway dressed when she heard the doorbell ring.

"Fuck," Yang swore to herself as she heard her father answer the door.

Determined to get there before he father did too much to embarrass her, Yang quickly pulled on her jeans and socks and rushed out the door.

* 

Weiss Schnee

Weiss stepped out of the car and looked around her. Yang's neighbourhood was a modest one. It wasn't fancy like the neighbourhoods she was used to but the houses were nice. The street was mainly bungalows with the occasional two-floor house but they all gave off a warm glow in the darkening light of the late hour.

"Enjoy your time at the library, Miss Schnee," Her driver, Hazel, called from the front seat in an exceptionally deep voice. "Message me when you are ready to be picked up."

"Thank you Hazel," She replied.

She stepped away from the car as it drove away and made her way to the house number Yang had sent her. A quick look at her watch told her she was a little early and she let out a reluctant sigh. The fog of her breath rose in front of her and a small shiver began to settle in. While the new outfit was warm, she had chosen to neglect a scarf or gloves. Deciding she didn't want to risk getting ill, she reached out a hand and knocked on the door.

The door opened to reveal a tall, attractive man with bright blonde hair and scraggily facial hair. His eyes looked kind and a warm smile similar to Yang's was painted across his face. For some reason, she hadn't given a single thought to potentially meeting Yang's family.

"You must be my daughter's date?" The man said in a friendly voice.

"Yes sir," Weiss replied as she straightened out her posture, an action that had been imposed on her since she was a child. "Weiss Schnee."

One of the man eyebrows raised slightly, but other than that he made no further indication at the name.

"Taiyang Xiao Long," He held out his hand and she cautiously reached out to shake it. "Call me Tai, sir makes me feel old."

Before Weiss was able to reply, a breathless Yang emerged by her father and gave him a swift elbow to get him out of the way.
"Hey Weiss," She panted slightly and finished pulling on a flannel shirt over her black t-shirt. "Please, come in."

Weiss nodded and stepped inside. The smell of herbs permeated the warm air that greeted her. The living room was actually rather large, larger than any in the Schnee mansion; but it was also much more alive. Whereas the mansion's were cold and barely furnished, Yang's gave of an almost welcoming feel.

The walls were painted a light brown and were littered with family photographs and drawings that she guessed were done by Yang. The floor was made of beautiful dark wood and a large green mat was spread across a majority of it. A dark green couch sat in the middle of the room facing a flat screen television accompanied by a few other smaller chairs, even a recliner that Yang's father was now sat in. Shelves were fixed all around the room that held an odd assortment of things from books to ornaments and even more family photos.

"What d'ya think?" Yang asked in a hopeful voice.

"It feels like a home," Weiss smiled at her.

"Thanks," the girl smiled back, her lavender eyes glinting with happiness. "You look amazing by the way."

"Oh, thank you," Weiss felt herself blush as she looked down at her clothes and back up at Yang.

Yang clothes were, admittedly, far more simple than her own but that seemed to work in the girls favour. The red, open, flannel shirt over a low cut, plain, black t-shirt and the beige cargo pants suited her perfectly. It was also the first time she had seen Yang's hair down as she usually wore it in a ponytail at work and it was far more wild than Weiss could have imagined. It was almost as long as her own but curls stuck up at all angles in an almost stylised way. Despite her countless hours in clothes stores talking to stylists, Weiss couldn't think of an outfit that would suit the girl better.

"As do you."

A small chuckle could be heard coming from the direction of Yang's father and Weiss felt the blush harshen.

"I thought you were going out, dad," Yang said in a stern voice.

"All right, all right," he chuckled as he got up from the chair. He picked up some keys from the table in front of the couch and made his way towards the door. "I should go pick up your sister anyway, she was supposed to be back an hour ago."

"It was nice to meet you s... Tai," Weiss offered.

"You too Weiss," He smiled and opened the door. "We should be back around ten. If you go out, make sure to let Zwei out before you go."

"Will do," Yang replied as he walked outside.

With a simple nod, he closed the door and silence quickly filled the space. Weiss was determined not to let the awkward silence continue as it often did when they were left alone.

"So where is your sister?" She asked after a moment of staring at Yang.
"Oh," The girl started and motioned toward the chairs. Weiss took it to mean she could sit down and made her way over to them. "Probably working on one of our neighbours old cars. She always loses track of time."

Weiss gave a nod and sat down on the chair. Despite its slightly worn look, it was actually rather comfortable.

"Well uhhh..." Yang said hesitantly. "I should get dinner started, it won't take too long. You said you like pork right?"


"Good, good," Yang replied as she wrung her hands. "Well feel free to snoop or watch the TV."

With that, Yang gave her one last smile and ducked through a doorway on the other end of the room. Now alone, Weiss took a couple of minutes to look around the room properly and noticed a picture of four people next to the television. Knowing she had permission from Yang to 'snoop' she got up from the chair and picked it up.

All four of the subjects were covered in snow but smiles adorned each of their faces. Two of the people were very familiar to her, however the others were not. Clearly a mother and her daughter with shoulder-length, black hair and while the older of the two had dyed the tips of her hair red, the younger was still a spitting image of her mother. The smiles gave Weiss a warm feeling in her stomach as she looked at it and she was so transfixed that she hadn't realised Yang had poked her head back into the room.

"Weiss?" Yang's voice caused her to jump slightly.

"Yes?"

"I asked if you wanted anything to drink?" The girl repeated. "Wine? Water? I think we've got some fizzy drinks left."

"Water is fine, thank you," Weiss replied as she placed the picture back where she had got it from.

Yang disappeared for a couple of seconds and returned with a tall glass of cold water that she graciously accepted. Weiss took a sip and followed Yang into the kitchen as the smell of delicious meat had already begun to spread through the house and she was eager to see what Yang was cooking.

"It smells wonderful," Weiss complimented the girl as she walked into the kitchen. "What is it?"

"Thanks," Yang replied. Her hair was once again up and Weiss noted she seemed a little more confident than she did earlier. "It's just a simple pork and hoisin stir-fry."

"Well it sounds delicious."

Yang sent a smile her way as she continued to stir the food and Weiss returned it happily.

"So I'm guessing that was Ruby in the picture?" Weiss asked in an attempt to keep the conversation going.

"Which one?" Yang replied, letting out a small chuckle at Weiss' confusion. "Yeah, that's rubes. She looks more and more like mom every year."
Yang had already told her about her mother passing away when she was a child so Weiss wasn't surprised to hear a small hint of sadness in the girl's voice.

"I'm sorry," Weiss said quickly. "I didn't mean to bring up bad memories."

"Nah, it's fine," Yang replied with a shake of her head. "It happened a long time ago."

"How did it happen?" Weiss asked hesitantly.

"Car crash," she said offhandedly. "It wasn't long after that picture was taken actually. The roads were still a little icy and she lost control."

"That's awful," Weiss replied as she held her glass a little tighter. "I can't imagine losing someone you love like that."

"It was rough," Yang nodded as she pulled two plates from a nearby cupboard and looked at her with a smile. "But enough about that, food's just about ready. Table or front room?"

"It's your house, which do you prefer?" Weiss asked in return. Normally at home she would sit in the dining room and eat with the family but she didn't want to impose too much since it was Yang who had done all the cooking.

"Front room's got a TV," Yang said with a wink as she leant down and pulled a large wooden tray from another cupboard.

Weiss stifled a chuckle and watched as the girl dished out two even plates of amazing looking food and poured the rest into a tub that she placed into the oven.

"They'll eat that later," Yang smiled and picked up the tray with the plates on it and walked towards the living room. "Mind grabbing my drink?"

Weiss grabbed what looked to be a small glass of wine from the counter and followed her into the living room where she had already placed the tray on the table in front of the couch. She watched as Yang pulled up a couch cushion.

"Is everything okay?" Weiss asked, confused as to what the girl was doing.

"Can't find the TV remote," she looked up and smiled while moving on to the next cushion. "I'm beginning to think Blake hides it whenever she... AHA!"

Yang held up the controller in triumph and quickly turned on the television. Fortunately, turned it down so that it was only just audible and put on a channel dedicated to rock music.

"Should have known you were a rock girl," Weiss laughed as she sat down on the recently disturbed couch.

"I can change it if you want?" Yang replied quickly.

"No," Weiss smiled. "I much prefer classical but rock has its charms too."

"Ahh classical," Yang playfully snickered as she sat down and picked up her plate. "How rich of you."

"Well, I am very rich," Weiss replied playfully and took Yang picking up her plate as an indicator that it was okay to eat on the couch.
Weiss carefully lifted up a forkful of food and took her first bite. A beautiful explosion of flavor filled her mouth and she had to suppress a satisfied groan. Both the noodles and the pork were cooked perfectly and every bite had just enough seasoning that none of the ingredients overwhelmed any of the others.

"This is amazing," Weiss breathed after swallowing her mouthful.

"I aim to impress," Yang replied and gave a little bow, or as much as she could with her legs crossed on the couch. "So, anything exciting happen today?"

Weiss shook her head as she swallowed the food in her mouth.

"Not really, I spent a majority of the day at father's office downtown," she replied. "You?"

"Well my coach told me that I've qualified for a tournament in November," Yang smiled.

"That's great news," Weiss replied.

"I know," Yang replied as she took another bite and covered her mouth. "So what do you do at your dad's company?"

"I mainly just sit in on meetings," Weiss sighed. "Or watch some higher up go about his usual business."

"That sounds... fun," Yang said hesitantly.

Weiss let out a small laugh at the girl attempt to be considerate.

"It's really not," She said. "I wish father would allow me to do more."

"Have you tried telling him you wanna do more?"

"Of course, but apparently I'm not ready despite having pointed out multiple mistakes his head accountant has made over the past couple of years," Weiss shook her head.

"Well he's an idiot then," Yang replied as she took a sip of wine. "So is that what you wanna do when you're older, run your father's company?"

While it was intended as a simple question, it was more complex than Yang knew and Weiss didn't know how to answer it properly.

"Sort of," Weiss said with a frown.

"Sort of?"

"I want to run the company my grandfather made," Weiss started to explain. "But I'm currently heiress to the thing my father has twisted it into. I'm sure you have heard the controversies."

"Kinda hard to miss," Yang nodded.

"And those are just the ones the public knows about," Weiss admitted.

"Well, maybe you could fix it," Yang said hopefully. "When you take over I mean."

"I hope so, I already have ideas about how I can do so," Weiss smiled.
"I would ask what they are but I doubt I would understand a single word," Yang joked.

"I will spare you the details then," Weiss chuckled. "But what about you? Do you want to box professionally or is there something else you want to do?"

"I would love to box professionally," Yang replied as Weiss took another bite of her quickly depleting food. "Although, what I really want is to own a restaurant."

"With how good your food is, I don't see you having a problem finding customers," Weiss replied with a smile and a raised eyebrow.

Yang let out a small laugh and finished up the last bit of her food before she replied.

"I will put that down as my first review then," Yang said and placed her plate back on the table. "Schnee approved."

"So long as I get an invite to your opening, you can use my name for whatever you want," Weiss joked.

"Deal," Yang smiled and held out her hand for Weiss' empty plate.

Not wanting Yang to have to handle clean up as well as cooking, Weiss placed her plate on the tray instead and picked it up. While she did, she saw one of Yang’s eyebrows arch as the girl uncrossed her legs and stood up.

"I wash, you dry?" She asked and turned up the volume on the television slightly before making her way to the kitchen.

"Sure," Weiss replied and followed her.

The clean up didn't take too long since they worked together while engaging in some more small talk. With everything put away, Weiss watched Yang pull a small box out of the cupboard and pull out a couple of cookies.

"Ruby won't mind if we rob some," the girl grinned as she handed one to Weiss and took a bite of her own.

Though she wasn't a big fan of sweets, Weiss gladly accepted the cookie and took a bite. They were obviously recently cooked as they were still rather moist but the overwhelming sweetness instantly made Weiss regret taking the bite.

"That is a lot of sugar," Weiss coughed and placed the remaining bits of cookie on the counter earning a small laugh from Yang.

"Sorry, I always tell her not to put too much sugar in but that's Ruby for you," the girl smiled and picked up the discarded biscuit and taking a large bite. "Mom's fault."

"How come?" Weiss asked out of interest.

"Well, Ruby used to help mom bake all the time and she would let Ruby add the sugar," Yang explained.

"You grew up on those?" Weiss remarked playfully. "How do you all still have teeth?"

Yang let out a full genuine laugh at the question and it took her a couple of seconds the compose herself afterwards.
"Mom never served those ones," Yang replied with a wide grin on her face. "She'd cook her own while Ruby was off busy doing other things."

"She sounds amazing," Weiss said as she wiped off the side where she had placed the biscuit.

"She was," Yang nodded. "Me and dad haven't had the heart to tell Ruby about the cookie thing though."

"I like that you don't want to ruin her memories," she smiled at Yang. "Even though it would reduce her chances of developing diabetes."

"Thanks," Yang replied and took a sip from her drink. "So what's your mom like? I hear a lot about your dad but you don't talk about her much."

"There's not really much to tell," Weiss shrugged. "We were close when I was young but some things happened that made us grow apart."

Weiss knew exactly what had happened but she didn't feel ready to talk about those things just yet.

"Any chance you will reconnect?" Yang asked, her voice soft since she was clearly trying not to push too much.

"Sometimes I think so," Weiss nodded after a moments silence. "But there are times I barely recognise her."

"That sucks," Yang mumbled. "But I don't think you should give up."

"I haven't," Weiss smiled at know the girl cared enough to try and support her. "I'm just waiting for the right time is all."

Yang said nothing but gave a simple nod as she looked at a clock on the windowsill. Weiss looked over to see that the clock showed it was twenty minutes to ten.

"Speaking of time, dad will be home soon," Yang sighed. "You can stick around for a bit longer if you want, you can meet Ruby."

"I would, but I really should get going," Weiss replied and felt bad when she saw Yang face drop slightly. "But I wouldn't mind a quick walk around the neighbourhood while I wait for my driver."

While Yang was retrieving her coat, Weiss sent a quick message to Hazel letting him know she was ready to be picked up. Just as she hit send, Yang return wearing a cream coloured jacket with black sleeves. While it didn't exactly match her cargo pants, the jacket itself was rather nice.

"Nice jacket," Weiss complimented the girl.

"I know," Yang grinned smugly. "You ready?"

Weiss nodded and followed the girl out of the house into the dark street. A chill greeted them as they stepped out and they both pulled their jackets a little tighter to stop from shivering. After a minute standing outside the house, Yang turned right on the sidewalk and she followed.

They walked at a gentle pace in silence for the first couple of minutes, each simply enjoying the presence of the other. For some reason, Yang always seemed to exude an aura of warmth so Weiss and since it was their first time walking together, she allowed herself to take it in.
"Soooo," Yang breathed, her voice tinged with nerves. "As first dates go, how did I do?"

Weiss let out a little chuckle at the girl's question.

"Well I wasn't scoring you out of a hundred," Weiss joked. "But I would say at least high eighties."

"Wow," Yang laughed at the reply. "Better than I expected."

"You expected to mess up?"

"It's sorta my speciality," Yang said flippantly before letting her tone fade back into a semi-serious one. "But a little. It wasn't exactly the fanciest date ever."

Weiss looked at Yang to see that the girl head was hanging slightly. Eager to cheer the girl up, she reached out as they walked and carefully took the girl's hand. She felt Yang tense up a little at the contact but after a moment, she returned the pressure. Weiss watched as the frown that had previously been painted across Yang face turned into a blushing smile.

"Yang," Weiss said slowly. "I have grown up around fancy restaurants, posh museums and royal theatre. And while they are nice, they are pretty much all the same."

Weiss stopped and turned to face the girl.

"Tonight, you invited me into your home and showed me what it was like to be a normal person on a normal date," Weiss said pointedly. "So no, it may not have been the fanciest, but it was definitely the best date I've been on."

As Weiss finished, she saw Yang cheek turn slightly red, whether from the increasing chill or her own words she did not know but she chose to believe it was the latter. It was while she was staring at the girl's blush that Yang raised her head slightly and their eyes locked. Warmth flooded her system and her breath caught as she realized the situation they were in.

Fortunately, a pair of lights came round the corner and broke their reverie. As they blushed and subtly shook their heads clear, the car came to a stop beside the both.

"I'm guessing that's your ride," Yang smiled.

"Yeah," Weiss replied as she looked into the window and saw Hazel drumming his fingers against the steering wheel.

"Well um..." Yang paused briefly. "I will text you tomorrow."

Weiss nodded and leant forward to kiss Yang on the cheek. Despite not wanting the night to end, she knew that her father would grow suspicious if she was away from the mansion for too much longer. With the parts of her face still blazing from its contact with Yang's, she pulled away and gave the girl a wide smile.

"Goodnight, Yang."

"Night."

Weiss slipped hand free to open the door to her car and stepped in. The warmth of the vehicle was nice but it lacked the welcoming feel of Yang's aura and she immediately regretted having to depart from the girl so soon.

"Home, Miss Schnee?" she heard Hazel call from the driver seat.
"Yes please."

As the car pulled away, Weiss waved goodbye to Yang and quickly found herself eager for the next time she would see the girl.
The New Overseer

Weiss Schnee

The hallways of the STC (Schnee Technology Company) headquarters had always been Weiss’ most hated part of the building. The way the bright lights reflected off the stark white walls quite often resulted in giving her a migraine that would persist for hours. However she knew that her father would not change it anytime soon.

He was a man who revealed in their family colour that her grandfather had become renowned for wearing and made it a point to show it wherever he could. He had even dyed his hair the instant he had begun to grey.

In her fruitless attempt to stave off the migraine, Weiss hastened her stride; but as she pushed open her target door she could already feel the first twinges of pain pulse through her head. Unfortunately, she knew what awaited her would only make it worse.

"Oh great, you're here," Said the sarcastic drawling voice of a man sitting at a desk. The walrus moustache, tailored grey overcoat and maroon undercoat showed he was a man who revelled in high society.

Doctor Arthur Watts, the head of research and development. Also probably the most insufferable man Weiss had ever had the misfortune to meet, and she had been raised by Jacques Schnee. In fact, Weiss was quite certain she had never heard a word from the man that wasn't either a snide remark or a direct insult.

"I am," Weiss spoke clearly and raised her head to show her authority. "Father has asked me to work down here for the next month to oversee your department."

"And what is it he expects you, a college girl with no expertise in this field, to oversee?"

"Father has concerns that both work, and standards, seem to have dropped lately," Weiss elaborated. "I'm here to ensure that your department does not continue to fall short and make cuts if need be."

A sneer took over the man's face and lifted his moustache to overtake his nose. Despite hating the man, she tried her best not to laugh so as to maintain her professional appearance. After a could of moments, he scoffed in derision.

"Falling standards? Doubtful," he sneered as he pressed a button on his desk phone. "It's more than likely that your father is simply tired of you and has decided to pawn you off on me."

Weiss was about to respond when the door to the office opened and a girl wearing a white shirt and blue skirt walked into the room. A gold star on the girl's forehead stood out against her dark skin and navy blue hair hung down just below her ears.

"Miss Soleil," Arthur addressed the girl without looking up from some papers he had pulled from his desk drawer. "Miss Schnee here has been instructed to check up on our department and since I am much too busy to waste my time on such nonsense, I am leaving the task of showing her around and bringing her up to date to you."

"No offence to Miss Soleil but I would much prefer to be shown around by the department head," Weiss interrupted quickly.
"And I would prefer not to have my time wasted by a spoilt little girl," He replied, his voice tinged with annoyance. "So like any good head of department, I have others assist me."

As much as it pained her to admit it, she could not find any fault in his reasoning.

"Very well," Weiss gave the man a nod and turned to the girl. "Then I am in your care for the rest of the day Miss Soleil."

Without bothering to look back, the two of them left the room. Regret filled her as the lights caused her to squint. She was not looking forward to a whole month of it.

"So what is it you do here Miss Soleil?" Weiss asked in a more polite tone than she has used with Watts as they started the stroll down the corridor.

"I am Dr Watts' personal assistant," The girl replied in a matter-of-fact voice. "As such, I am very familiar with the inner workings of the department."

"And have you been here long?" Weiss asked tentatively since the girl looked only a little older than herself.

"Thirteen months next Friday," She replied.

"That is some time," Weiss said. She could see there was no other option than to straight up ask the girl her age. "How old are you, might I ask?"

"Twenty-one," The girl replied and Weiss swore she saw the faintest hint of a smile. "I graduated high school a year early and received my bachelors in business management at twenty."

"That is quite an accomplishment," Weiss admitted.

"Thank you," The girl said and bowed her head a little.

They spend the rest of the short walk in silence until the girl finally pushed open a pair of double doors and they entered the main work room. Wasting no time, the girl began to show her around.

The tour of the whole department had taken nearly three hours in total and Weiss had filled almost her entire notepad with the details that Miss Soleil has given her. It was that notepad that Weiss was studying in one of the spare offices that she had claimed as her own.

From what she had seen, Watts had been correct. The department was functioning pretty well on the surface but she couldn't help but notice that there was a fair amount of tension amongst the workers. She had also noted that an overwhelming majority of the workers were human with only five faunus in the whole department. Admittedly, this was only a problem if other faunus were being denied positions due to there race but knowing how her father treated them, she had decided to take a closer look at that matter.

On the bright side however, she had met a few notable members that had impressed her. First off was Ciel Soleil herself. She was both smart and thorough. Her knowledge of not only the department, but almost all of its employees, had made Weiss wonder on more than one occasion during the tour as to why the girl had not yet sought a higher position in the company when she was clearly very capable.

Second was a Doctor by the name of Polendina, she had tried to write down the man's first name
but she had enough trouble understanding it, let alone spelling it. She had heard of him before due to his outstanding work on prosthetics but the man was a delight to be around. Smart, imaginative and fatherly were the only words she could use to describe him. He was also one of the few people who had not seized up the moment she entered the room and instead had greeted her with the type of smile one would give a lifelong friend.

Weiss was halfway through her notes when a knock on the door interrupted her thoughts.

"Come in," Weiss called as she looked up from her papers.

The door opened and Ciel entered carrying a large stack of folders.

"Here are the files you asked for ma'am," The girl said as she placed them on the edge of Weiss' newly claimed desk and split them into two piles, one much smaller than the other. "Is there anyth..."

"So this is the closet you have made your own," Said an irritatingly identifiable voice from the other side of the room. A quick glance past Ciel revealed Watts leaning against her door. "How quaint."

"It will do for my purposes," Weiss said offhandedly as she positioned the stacked files into a more accessible position.

"I'm sure," he smirked with a raised eyebrow. "So how was your little tour? Are you in need of some aspirin?"

"Only when you are around Arthur," Weiss fired back. "And the tour was just fine, thank you, Miss Soleil was extremely thorough. Speaking of, I would love to commandeer Miss Soleil's services during my time here. So long as it is okay with the both of you?"

"It makes no difference to me," Watts shrugged. "If you want her, take her."

Ciel gave Weiss a short nod after the man finished his sentence.

"If you are in need of my services then I am more than happy to help, ma'am."

"Perfect," Weiss replied and threw a smile at Watts as she knew it would annoy him.

The man simply rolled his eyes and exited the room. Now that she had Ciel under her, she could slowly begin to see if she was correct in assuming the girl was capable of more.

"What would you like me to do first?" The girl asked.

Weiss took a moment to think, she wanted to test the girl but she didn't want to do it too soon.

"Well," Weiss replied slowly. "What is it you usually do for Dr Watts?"

"Scheduling, correspondence and ensuring his instructions make it to the rest of the department."

Weiss gave the girl a nod, and placed a hand on the large stack of documents the girl had bought in earlier.

"These are all the proposed projects from the past year, including those currently in development, correct?"

"Yes ma'am."
"Good, then perhaps you can bring me the personnel file for..." Weiss pulled open the top document of the largest pile and looked at the name of the lead researcher. "... Dr Winchester. Then I would like you to sit down with me and help go through these files by telling me everything you know about each one."

"Of course," the girl gave a short bow and exited the room.

While Weiss waited for Ciel to return, she continued to go through her earlier notes. Most of them were about the projects she had seen a little off or about employees she had met but a few pages were dedicated to how the work environment felt. After ten minutes of reading about some of the employees, Ciel returned and took the seat opposite her.

"Dr Winchester's file ma'am."

As the girl placed the file and the table, Weiss immediately took note of a rather large green section in the middle of the file. Green was the colour of human resources complaint forms and told her that this particular file was going to be a rather interesting read.

* *

Four hours later and they had only made it through half of the stack of proposed ideas. Most of them were half baked concepts, most of which would require a huge amount of funding for something that would likely result in nothing; but scattered between them was the occasional promising idea that had either been overlooked or just plain rejected for some reason.

However she found that beside Dr Polendina, Dr Winchester had quite a few proposed projects that became more and more troubling as she read them. He was undoubtedly very smart but most were proposals for different types of weapons and instruments of war and while she appreciated advancements in protecting the country, the man's personnel file revealed that those intentions were far from his mind.

There were numerous reports of both sexual and racial behaviour toward fellow employees and even some of violence and threatening behaviour. As Weiss read further and further into his file she became more and more convinced that he was less in the interest of protecting the country than seeing a return to the times of subjugation. The fact that he had not yet been fired was astounding to her. Before she had even finished reading it, she had decided that he was more trouble than he was valuable and marked him down to be removed as soon as she could.

"Ma'am?"

Ciel's voice broke Weiss' concentration on yet another of Dr Winchester's weapon proposal and she looked up to see the girl was once again on her feet. Over the hours, the girl had been sent multiple times to retrieve certain files and Weiss was beginning to feel guilty for making her walk so much.

"Sorry, what did you say?"

"It's time for my lunch break, would you like me to pick you up anything?" The girl repeated.

"Oh, if it's not too much trouble," Weiss said and received a shake of the girl's head in response. She once again felt guilty for wasting the girl's potential on bringing her food but she was admittedly very hungry. "There is a small coffee shop called Black Cat Coffee, just say my name and they will know my order. I will call my driver to take you there."

"Of course, ma'am," Ciel nodded and made her way towards the door.
"Wait," Weiss called to her and frantically searched for a piece of paper. "Would you mind delivering a note for me while you are there?"

Weiss saw Ciel nod again as she found a piece of paper and began to write out a quick message. As she did, she pressed a button on her Scroll to call for her driver.

Sorry I have not stopped by lately, things at the company have been rather busy but if you are free next Saturday at 8pm, let me know and I will pick you up. Dress smart/casual and don't eat too much. Weiss x

She could have easily sent it by text but she had always loved receiving letters and she hoped that Yang would find the charm in it too.

"Ask for Yang and hand it to no-one else but her," Weiss said pointedly as she folded the note and tucked it into an envelope, from her drawer. She knew for a fact that Yang had only recently started her shift and would be there.

"Understood," Ciel said and took the envelope from her.

"Thank you," Weiss smiled at the girl. "The car should be waiting for you downstairs, you will know it. And write your lunch down as one of my expenses too."

"Thank you, ma'am," Ciel said as she left the room.

As she waited for the reply and her lunch, she decided to tackle some of the green-lighted projects.

*

Weiss was almost done with a pretty by-the-book new design for Scrolls when Ciel returned with the food. Weiss quickly stood up and took the coffee from her and took a sip as the rest of the food was placed on the desk.

"I also have a message for you," Ciel said and pulled a folded piece of paper from her bag.

Weiss tried to keep a neutral face as she took the paper and quickly read the note.

'Aww I missed you too but don't worry about it and I'm always free for you but I hope I get to see you before then. Yang xxx

also I love the new courier method. It's so posh of you.'

A small, hastily drawn picture of a face with its tongue stuck out followed the last line and Weiss knew that her face had broke into a smile against her will.

"Good news?" Ciel asked as she sat down and pulled a container towards herself.

"Very good news," Weiss replied and followed suit.
Secret

Weiss Schnee

The past couple of days had seemed like fall to be trying its best to preserve its final days of warmth before winter rolled around and froze everything over, and in seeing this, Weiss took her time to slowly make her way towards the waiting car in an attempt to enjoy as much of the day as she could.

The day had felt so much longer than usual. Not only had she been woken up by shouting in front of the house due to a reporter attempting to sneak to the house, but she had also had to contact Ciel to organise a few meetings throughout the day. While she knew many of them promised to be dull, there were two that she was looking forward to after having obtained permission from her father the previous night.

However, the most draining part of the day had been the annual four college transfer.

Every year, the four colleges of Remnant, Haven, Shade, Atlas and Beacon, engaged in a two week exchange where ten students from three of the colleges would travel to the hosting college. Unfortunately, it was Beacon's turn to accept the visiting students and Weiss had been asked to show the students of Shade around Beacon’s grounds, a task that had taken a full two hours and had meant she had to come in much earlier than usual.

Adding all of that to her classes and the upcoming meetings, it was no wonder that the warm air had been tempting her to sleep all day.

"Miss Schnee," Hazel Rainart's deep voice snapped her from her thoughts. "Is everything okay?"

"Yes, just tired is all," Weiss replied with a small smile. The man gave a short nod and opened the door for her to slide into the seat.

She hadn't known what to think of the man when she had first met him. The word intimidating was an understatement. He was by far the tallest man she had ever met at what she had to guess was nearly seven feet tall, if not more. And he was by no means a thin man. Every inch of him seemed to be rippling muscles and his voice was so deep that she felt her bones vibrate whenever he talked.

However, she had quickly found that he was very quiet, but not in the same way as other drivers she had had. Quite often they gave the feeling of wanting to talk but being too scared to potentially annoy her but Hazel was different. It was like he was completely uninterested and if she was honest with herself, she quite liked that about the man. The silences didn't feel awkward like with others. Also he was willing to lie to her father which immediately made her like him more.

"Where to?"

"Blake cat coffee, please," Weiss replied and slumped down a little in her seat.

She felt the car gently vibrate to life and watched as the green lawns of Beacon began to slide out of view to be replaced by brown trees, the small stretch of Remnant’s ocean that separated Beacon from Vale slightly visible between them. Weiss felt her eyelids begin to close as she watched the light dance between the trees and unable to keep it at bay any longer, she finally succumbed.
"We've arrived," Weiss heard as she awoke a little while later to a gentle nudge from Hazel.

Realising that she had fallen asleep, Weiss immediately straightened up and cleared her throat.

"Oh," Weiss cleared her throat again as she heard it croak and quickly stepped out of the car. "Thank you, Mr Rainart."

The man simply gave a grunt as his reply and Weiss closed the door. How could she be so foolish. To fall asleep in the presence of someone who was technically a stranger was incredibly stupid of her.

She continued to chastise herself as she walked through the door into the store and approached the counter and only stopped when the sight of Yang wiped all of her previous stupidity from her mind.

"Oh my Oum!" She gasped as the sight of the large, black eye that Yang was sporting. "Yang, what happened?"

"Nice to see you too," The girl smiled and leaned forward against the counter.

"Yang?"

"Calm down, it's just a sparring accident," Yang chuckled. "My partner got in a lucky shot."

*Right, boxing.*

"You're still calling it a lucky punch?" Weiss heard a voice say from under the counter.

"Yes, because that's what it was," Yang said as Blake emerged with a bag of coffee beans in her hands. "Anyway, you look a little pale, Weiss. Are you feeling okay?"

"Yes, it has just been a long day is all," Weiss sighed.

"Are you at least finished for the day?" Yang asked, concern evident in her voice.

"I wish," she replied. "I have some meetings I must attend to today."

"You can't call them off?" Yang replied and let out a small sigh as Weiss shook her head. "Alright, well you can at least rest here until your first meeting. Hold on a sec."

The tone of voice Yang used was gentle yet commanding and Weiss knew she wouldn't be able to argue with the girl. She watched as Yang leaned in to whisper something to Blake that made her nod her head.

"Come with me," Yang motioned towards the edge of the counter and Weiss was immediately confused.

"Where?"

"Upstairs," Yang replied as she pulled open the small wooden gate that blocked off the store from behind the counter. "Blake's got a super comfy couch."

"Ar... Are you sure?" Weiss asked, the question mainly directed at Blake.

After Blake gave a slight nod, Weiss slowly made her way towards the gate and followed Yang through the door she had seen the girl disappear behind so often. She was greeted by a brightly lit,
narrow kitchen that was only really wide enough for two people but was exceptionally clean. Clearly Yang took great care of the area.

She continued to follow Yang through a door at the end of the kitchen and up a flight of stairs to a plain black wooden door.

"That's not ominous at all," Weiss half joked and earned a chuckle from Yang.

"Just don't touch the skulls and you'll be fine," Yang winked as she opened the door.

"Encouraging."

Yang gave her a small smirk as she ushered her through the door.

The room she entered was actually rather pleasant. While a little sparse, it was clear to see that a lot of love had gone into its design. Bookshelves filled with books completely covered the walls and lead into what looked to be pillars with hanging plants dangling from the top. A long, dark brown couch sat in the middle of the room facing a large television.

"Still ominous?"

Yang's words come from right behind her ear, the girl's breath gently tickling its way down her neck and caused an involuntary shiver to run through her body.

"N-No," Weiss stuttered as less than respectable idea began to fill her mind.

"Are you cold?" Yang said, the slight hint of worry back in her voice. "Take a seat and I will turn up the heat a bit."

Not wanting to clue Yang in on what had actually caused the shiver, Weiss simply gave a nod and took a seat on the couch. She quickly discovered Yang had not exaggerated about how comfy it was as she sank into cushions which felt softer than her mattress at home, an exceptionally comfy mattress that had undoubtedly cost more than everything in Blake's apartment.

"So when is your first meeting?" She heard Yang ask from across the room.

"Four o'clock."

"Perfect, have you eaten today?"

"I haven't really had the time for food," Weiss sighed.

"Well, I'm pretty sure Blake has some eggs," Yang said as she made her way to the small kitchen in the corner of the room and began to search through the cupboards. "You're okay with an omelette right?"

"You don't have to cook," Weiss replied. "A sandwich from downstairs would be fine."

"I like cooking," Yang smiled as she pressed some buttons on the stove.

"Then an omelette is fine, but are you sure Blake is okay with you stealing her food?"

"Please, I spend so many nights here that her dad jokes about me paying rent," Yang chuckled.

"Okay then," Weiss gave up and decided to change the subject. "It does seem like a nice couch to sleep on."
"Yeah, no," Yang shook her head as she pulled some things from the fridge. "That thing is great for a short nap but sleeping for more than half an hour will kill your back?"

"So where do you sleep?"

"Mostly with Blake," Yang shrugged.

Weiss couldn't help the feeling of jealousy that tore its way through her. The idea of Yang and Blake sleeping in the same bed made her a little uncomfortable.

"You and Blake really are pretty close then?" She asked slowly, not wanting to sound like she was accusing Yang of anything.

"As close as two people can be, I guess," Yang replied offhandedly as she began to busy herself with the food.

"You never actually told me how you met her?" Weiss asked.

"Really?" Weiss shook her head as she watched Yang cook and waited for an answer. "Nothing special honestly. Blake moved to Vale while we were in middle school. We were both teased for different reasons and sort of just, ended up friends."

"Really? That's it?"

Yang laughed and poured some eggs she had beaten into a pan she had placed on the stove earlier.

"Not every story is like the ones in those books," Yang smiled and nodded towards one of the many bookshelves.

"True," Weiss had too agree. "So has it always just been friends, you've never been anything more?"

She could have sworn she saw Yang fumble the pan handle slightly but the girl quickly regained control. However, she didn't reply immediately and the look on her face was one of contemplation. After a couple of seconds, the girl shook her head slowly.

"I.. Uhh," Yang paused and took a breath. "I wanted more for a while but, you know... Different trees."

"Sorry," Weiss said, immediately regretting her decision to ask. "That wasn't any of my business."

"It's fine," Yang shrugged and threw some more things into the pan. "I've moved on from that."

"Good."

"Good?"

"No, I didn't mean it like that," Weiss blushed and quickly began to think of excuses only to hear Yang slightly chuckling as she pulled a spatula from the draw.

"Don't worry, you're not the first to ask," Yang said and pulled a plate from the cupboard. "So what about you?"

"What about me?"

"Any romantic skeletons in the closet?" Yang said with a wink.
"Oh," Weiss paused and thought for a second as she watched Yang tip what looked to be a perfectly cooked omelette onto the plate. "There was a girl back in Atlas but it wasn't anything serious."

"Wow, how scandalous," Yang said teasingly and walked over to the couch with the food.

She cocked an eyebrow at Yang as she sat down on the couch and passed her the plate. Weiss' stomach gave a small rumble as she cut into the omelette and melted cheese flowed from the middle. Flavour exploded in her mouth as she took the first bite and her stomach immediately ached for more.

"Good?"

Weiss hummed as she swallowed her mouthful. "Very, what's inside?"

"Just your basic cheese, ham and chives," Yang shrugged and settled into the couch. "So what's got you so busy, apart from work?"

"College, mainly," Weiss replied before she took another bite. "With all the coursework and now the annual transfer, I could just use a few more hours in the day."

"I know that feeling," Yang nodded. "What's the transfer thing?"

"Just some student from each of the four ivy league colleges go to a host college each year," Weiss explained. "I'm in charge of showing some of them around."

For the briefest of moments, Weiss could have sworn she had seen Yang's face drop ever so slightly, but before she had even had time to think why, the smile was back on the girls face.

"Sounds like an unnecessary hassle," Yang said and pulled her feet up onto the couch to sit cross legged. "If you have so much to do already, can't you ask for someone else to do it?"

"Not really, it was Father's idea," Weiss replied. "He said it was a good way to make contacts and make them remember me."

"I guess it's hard to argue with that logic," Yang said sarcastically.

"You don't argue with my Father," Weiss sighed. "If he tells you to do something, you do it."

Yang looked like she was about to say something but she clearly decided against it.

"That's unfair," Was all she ended up saying a couple of seconds later.

"I know but it's the way things are," Weiss sighed.

"Honestly, the way people describe him makes it hard to believe he's okay with you being into girls."

The words left Yang's mouth just as Weiss was about swallow, the accuracy catching her off guard and causing her to take a sharp intake of breath and making the food clog her windpipe. As she coughed to clear her throat, she saw Yang leap off the couch and return a moment later with a glass of water which she eagerly accepted and began to gulp down.

"Are you okay!?"

Weiss gave a short nod as she took in deep breaths and coughed away the last of the discomfort.
"I'm fine," She croaked once she had succeeded. "Thank you."

"Was there a bit of shell or something?" Yang asked and glanced down at the omelette.

"No," Weiss said and placed the plate, with the small amount of omelette left, on the table. While she didn't want to scare the girl away, she knew that she had to be honest. "It wasn't the egg."

"Good, did it just go down the wro.."

"Yang," Weiss interrupted with her head lowered. "My father doesn't know."

"Oh."

"And you are right, he most definitely would not be okay with it," Weiss said.

"So, I'm a secret?"

"I'm sorry," Weiss shook her head. "I will understand if you want to cancel our date tomorrow."

Yang was silent for almost a full minute and during that time, Weiss couldn't bring herself to look up into the girl's beautiful, violet eyes.

"Why would I want to do that?"

That wasn't the reply she had been expecting. Nervous about what she would see, she slowly looked up to find that Yang was wearing a small smile.

"Because.."

"Weiss," it was Yang's turn to interrupt her. "I'm not gonna pretend that it doesn't bug me a little and that it won't have to be dealt with eventually, but I like you."

Weiss was about to reply but Yang continued to talk.

"I've barely stopped thinking about you since you walked in the store so yeah, I'm okay with being a secret for a little while if that's what it takes to see where this can go."

"Are you sure?" Weiss asked hesitantly. "If... When my father finds out, things will get ugly very fast."

"Then we will deal with it then," Yang replied.

She felt Yang hand take her own and after a moment of hesitation, Weiss entwined her fingers with the blonde's and allowed the feeling of warmth that crawled up her arm to overtake her.

"Okay," Weiss nodded, the warm feeling making her a little more hopeful as she looked into Yang's eyes.

Butterflied filled Weiss' stomach but just as she was about to act upon her thoughts, she was interrupted by the ringing of her Scroll. Sad that the moment had been broken, she pulled it from her pocket and looked down at the screen to see Ciel's name written across it.

"I have to take this," Weiss said apologetically and Yang simply gave a quick nod.

"Alright," the girl said as she got up and made her way towards the door. "I'll go and get you a double-shot coffee."
With a smile at Yang, she answered the phone.

"This is Weiss Schnee."

"Hello ma'am," Ciel's voice said. "I'm calling to tell you that the proposal meeting has been moved up to three."

"What, by who?"

"Your father, ma'am," The girl replied. "He also asked me to inform you that he will be in attendance."

Weiss fought the urge to sigh at hearing the news.

"Alright," she replied shortly. "I will be there shortly."

"Yes ma'am."

With that she hung up the phone and stood up to leave. As she was making her way through the kitchen, the door to the store front opened and Yang walked through holding a to-go cup.

"Hey, who was it," Yang asked as she saw her.

"My assistant," Weiss replied in a hurry. "My meeting got moved up so I have to go."

"Oh, okay," Yang smiled. "Well if we are gunna keep this a secret, you probably should go out the back right? The store's a little full."

"Right."

Weiss followed Yang back through the door to the stairs, but this time instead of leading her up them, she instead lead her through a door at the bottom of them into an alleyway behind the store.

"Your coffee," Yang said as she held out the cup.

"Thank you," Weiss said as she accepted it. "So, tomorrow at eight?"

"I'll be waiting."

"Perfect," Weiss smiled and began to slowly walk backwards. "And Yang, just for the record. I really like you too."

With the wide smile that had just stretched its way across Yang's face imprinted in her mind, Weiss turned and made her way towards her waiting car.
A Long Day Continues

Weiss Schnee

Weiss was sat at her desk, her head in her hands with the palms covering her eyes in the hopes that darkness might help temper the raging migraine that was worryingly close to making her vomit. Unfortunately, it was doing very little to help.

The afternoon had been miserable. What should have been a simple, hour-long proposal meeting of new ideas had been completely hijacked by her father and then turned into a two-hour meeting of him criticising every single idea that didn't have a guarantee of making the company a profit. Weiss knew that profits were always to be taken into consideration when discussing proposals, but she was also aware that the STC was the world's foremost technological research company; and as such, they had more than enough room to be taking some bigger risks. However, every time she attempted to bring this up, her father would shut her down instantly.

It was the man's biggest problem. He was far too concerned with turning a profit that over the years companies such as Merlot Industries and Marigold Innovations had begun to close the gap. In fact, the only time he ever did something that he considered a risk was when trying to save face against a controversy and even then, he went about it in the safest way possible.

Thinking of those problems however made her head hurt more and with a sigh, she reached into her desk drawer for some aspirin. She knew it would take a little while to work but the promise of some future relief was more than enough to keep her going. As she leaned back into her chair and waited for the medicine to take effect, she pressed the button on her desk phone to contact Ciel and waited for her to answer.

"Yes ma'am?" The girl answered, barely a second later.

"Ciel, what time does Cornell Winchester start today?" Weiss asked. Usually she would try to ask much more politely but she found she was too tired control her tone.

"He is due to start in twenty-eight minutes, would you like me to inform him that you wish to speak with him?"

"The moment he arrives," Weiss confirmed, "Also, can you tell Arthur I have something to discuss with him."

"Of course ma'am," Ciel replied. "Is there anything else I can do?"

"No, that's all," Weiss said. "Thank you, Ciel."

With that, Weiss ended the call and pulled a small stack over paperwork towards her while she waited for Cornell to arrive. However she had only manage to finish a single form when a knock at her door pulled her attention. Before she even had a chance to call them in, the door opened and Arthur Watts stood in the doorway with his usual smirk plastered across his face.

"You called?" He said, his voice dripping with annoyance.

"Yes," Weiss said a little surprised that the man would show up so quickly. "Though I didn't expect you for at least another hour."

"Well, I prefer to get my annoyances out of the way," He shrugged and closed the door on his way.
to take a seat opposite her. "Also, I can't say I'm not a little intrigued by what a child such as yourself would wish to discuss with me."

"Right," Weiss replied, too tired to bother responding to his usual attitude. Instead, she searched around her desk for a file.

"I was looking through the rejected project ideas and there was one that caught my attention."

"Oh really?" The man scoffed. "A new rattle?"

"Please show some professionalism, Arthur," Weiss sighed as she found the desired file and handed it over to him.

She watched as he read it and a crease immediately formed on his forehead.

"This?"

"Yes."

"This was rejected for a reason," He said impatiently. "It's a waste of time and resources."

"Not according to my father," Weiss replied quickly. "In fact, the application to both medical and military was more than enough to convince him that the project is worth our time to explore."

"Do you even understand the science behind something like this?" he said condescendingly. "Tremors caused by nerve damage are not something a mere chip can fix."

"No," Weiss admitted. "However, I have discussed it with Dr Polendina and not only does he believe it is possible to reduce the tremor significantly, he is rather interested in leading the development of it."

"And you say your father has authorized this?"

"He has."

"Then he is more a fool than I gave him credit for," Arthur sighed.

"If you have a problem with it then I am sure that both you and Dr Polendina can schedule a meeting and show him your points," Weiss shook her head. "Though you know as well as I that he very rarely changes his mind."

She hoped that Arthur wouldn't call her bluff since she wouldn't be surprised at all if her father chose to go back on his word.

"Fine," Arthur said with contempt after a moment. "If Dr Polendina is interested in wasting his time, I will see to it that he is put in charge of the project."

"Perfect," Weiss gave the man a small smile and inwardly breathed a sigh of relief that he had relented. "Then I will leave the rest to you."

"Anything else your royal highness would like?"

"No."

"Then I will get back to doing something that is actually productive," He replied and left the room hurriedly.
Weiss rolled her eyes as he left the room. The man was quickly becoming one of those people that she dreaded seeing solely due to the fact that every interaction with him seemed to be a test of her patience. As much as she hated how her father treated her, at least he was upfront about it.

However, Weiss had very little time to celebrate her victory over Arthur as the small clock on her desk showed that Cornell would be arriving soon. Remembering a little detail in the man's file about small objects and their tendency to be turned into projectiles, Weiss began to remove everything from her desk that could potentially pose a threat.

She was just finished putting everything away when her Scroll began to vibrate. She pulled it from her pocket and smiled at Yang's name written across it. She happily pressed answer and was greeted by the sound of the blonde's voice.

"Hey Weissicle," the girl said in a singsong voice that brought another smile to her face. "Hope it's not a bad time?"

"No to the nickname, and no to the bad time," Weiss replied, hoping Yang could hear the amusement in her voice.

"Aww man, thought I had found a good one," Yang chuckled. "Anyway, how was your meeting?"

"Terrible, but that tends to happen when Father decides to throw his weight around," Weiss sighed.

"Ahh, that's why you seemed a little annoyed about it when you left."

"Yeah, sorry," Weiss apologised.

"No need to apologise," Yang said simply. "Are you at least taking it easy now?"

"I will be soon, I have one more meeting and some paperwork then I will be heading home."

"Alright," Yang replied. "Well if you need to cancel tomorrow to get some rest, just let me know."

"Absolutely not," Weiss replied quickly.

"Okay, good to know your eager to see me again."

Weiss could imagine a smirk spreading across Yang's face.

"Less eager and more... willing," Weiss teased back.

"You hurt me Weissicle, but I'll take it," Yang laughed. "So I don't suppose you're going to give me a hint about what we're doing tomorrow?"

"Nope," Weiss smiled, taking Yang's question was to mean she was also eager for the date. "But bring a coat, apparently..."

Weiss was cut off by the ringing of her desk phone.

"One minute," She sighed to Yang and accepted the call.

"Mr Winchester has arrived ma'am," said Ciel's voice.

"Thank you Ciel, give me five minutes and send him through," Weiss replied. "And no matter what you hear, do not enter the room."
"Understood."

"Sorry," Weiss said to Yang as she ended the call with Ciel.

"It's fine," Yang said from the other side. "I actually quite like hearing you be all bossy."

"Why does that not surprise me?" Weiss felt herself blush.

"No idea," Yang chuckled. "Should I be concerned about what you just said?"

"I highly doubt it, someone is just about to receive some news they are not going to like."

"If you say so," Yang replied slowly. "I guess you have to go then?"

"Yes," Weiss breathed sadly. "But I will definitely be picking you up tomorrow?"

"Can't wait."

"Who sounds eager now?"

"I'm always eager to spend time with you," Yang replied.

"Good to know," Weiss chuckled. "But I really do have to go."

"Alright, please message me once you are done with this thing."

"I will," Weiss agreed. "Goodbye Yang."

"See ya."

The sound of the call ending rang in Weiss' ear and she took a couple of moments to appreciate that Yang had felt concerned enough to call and ask how she was. With that knowledge and the fact that the aspirin seemed to finally be working, it was hard not to sit and smile to herself for a couple of seconds. Unfortunately, life continued and a sharp knock on the door broke her reverie and reminded her of what was about to happen.

"Come in," She called out.

The door opened and a large man wearing a plain black suit walked in. His shockingly ginger hair stood out immensely against the black suit and he blue eyes were sharp and piercing, almost as if they were judging you with every glance.

"Please, take a seat," Weiss smiled and pointed to the empty seat on the other side of her desk.

The man accepted the chair but his eyes never left hers. While it did unnerve her a little, she suppressed that emotion and kept a smile on her face.

"Why have I been called here, Miss Schnee?" he asked. Though his tone was low, its was clear it was just an act to cover his natural voice.

"How long have you worked here, Mr Winchester?" Weiss replied.

Once of the few lessons her father had taught her that she appreciated was to never answer the other persons question first. Doing so showed them that they were able to control the conversation.

"Twelve years," He replied after a couple of seconds.
"Twelve years," Weiss repeated while nodding her head and pulling his file from her desk. "And in that time, you have build up quite and impressive file."

A smile now stretched across his face as he clearly took her words at face value.

"Thank you, Miss Schnee."

"That was not a compliment," Weiss replied shortly.

The desire to break out into a grin as she watched the man's smile and bravado fall was almost too much but she fought it down.

"Mr Winchester, are you aware of why I my father has asked me to be here?"

"I believe I was told you were here to make sure the department is running efficiently," he answered with a squint.

"One of the few things I am here to do but correct for the most part," Weiss nodded. "To do that, I have been reviewing both the active projects and the rejected ones and I couldn't help but notice you have a lot of rejected ones."

"I have a lot of concepts, it's not unreasonable that many have been rejected," Cornell replied. "Many have also been accepted."

"True, however the difference between what has been accepted and what has been rejected is rather worrying to me," Weiss countered and pulled a sheet of paper from his file. "A cutting edge alarm system, a new Scroll design and a couple of other minor projects are among the accepted."

Cornell gave a short nod of his head.

"On the rejected side, we have numerous weapons that the STC has never been in the business of making, nor do we have any plans to do so."

"I simply saw it as an unexplored market, kingdom defence is a very big motivator for me."

"It is for most people as well, but these don't seem like defensive ideas," Weiss let her tone drop slightly. "In fact, they seem rather excessive considering we are in a time of peace."

"With all due respect, peace doesn't last," he said gruffly. "It never hurts to be ready to defend yourself."

"That is true," Weiss gave a short nod. "However I like to think peace would last a lot longer without people like you designing weapons like this."

"People like me?"

His voice carried clear hints of anger now.

"Yes Mr Winchester, people like you," Weiss glared at him. "People with prejudice."

"What are you talking about?" His voice raised a little.

"You see along with checking all of the projects, I also check all of the staff," Weiss explained. "And to be honest, after reading your file, I have no idea how you are still an employee here."

"I still don..."
"You are a smart man Cornell so do not take me for a fool," Weiss interrupted. "You have more complaints then the rest of the employees in this department put together."

"Those complaints were just things taken out of context by people who can't take a joke," the man shrugged.

"I highly doubt that," Weiss replied. "But none of that matters any more because as of this moment you are no longer an employee at STC."

"You can't just fire me," Cornell said and leaned forward in his chair. "Read my contract."

"Oh I have, multiple times," Weiss replied. "And I'm afraid with all these complaints, you voided it and I am legally within my right to let you go without severance."

"Listen here girl," He said as he launched himself to his feet with enough force to send the chair flying out from beneath him.

Weiss felt a small amount of fear rush through her at the man's sudden actions, but steeled herself against it.

"You don't have the authority to fire me. If I walked down the hall and told Dr Watts of this then I bet you would be pulled out of here by daddy before I get fired."

"I think you will find that I do have that authority but you can try, given your record and the recent allegations towards the STC, Father has already sided with me that your employment here has run its course," Weiss said flatly.

"You little bitch," The man said angrily with clenched fists.

"I would be very careful Cornell," Weiss said quickly before he could do anything that she had read in his file. "While your employment here is no longer an option, there are still many other companies that may accept you, but if you attempt a single thing against me, every second of your life will be spent regretting it."

"IS THAT A THREAT!" The man shouted.

While she had been expecting it, the fear didn't come. She was used to explosive tempers at home but this man before he didn't seem to have the same presence as her father.

"No Cornell," Weiss said in a dark tone. "It's a warning, I suggest you heed it."

The next couple of moments were silent as he seemed to be mulling over the consequences in his head. However, his eyes seemed to show he had made up his decision and second later he stormed out the door and slammed it behind him with enough force to make her desk rattle.

The silence that filled the room was a small relief and she closed her eyes to allow the adrenaline from the situation to escape her. Once her heart had settled, she pulled out her Scroll and typed out a quick message to Yang letting her know she was okay. As she hit send, a small knock sounded from her door and it opened to reveal Ciel.

"Everything is fine, Ciel," Weiss said, knowing what the girl was going to ask. "In fact, you have been working all day so please, take the rest of it off."

"Are you sure?" The girl asked. "I can stick around a little longer if you need anything?"
"That won't be necessary," Weiss shook her head. "I only have a little paperwork left then I will be heading home myself."

"Okay then," Ciel nodded. "Have a nice night ma'am."

"You too."

Once Ciel had left, Weiss took up the small amount of paperwork she had left. Fortunately, it didn't take too long and Weiss quickly finished. Just as she was about to leave the office, her Scroll buzzed and a message from Yang came up on her screen.

'awesome, good to know I dont have to bust any skulls ;)

now you can get some rest. xx'

With a small smile to herself, Weiss walked out the door with the decision that she would have an early night.
"Yang!" Ruby's voice came from across the living room. "You look so pr..."

"Shush," Yang interrupted quickly as she exited her room and rushed towards the bathroom. "I'm not done yet."

Once inside the bathroom, Yang shut the door and looked at herself in the mirror. She had decided to go with a simple elbow-cut qipao style top and a pair of dress pants. The top itself was actually rather nice in her opinion. While the majority of it was a shining yellow gold, a gentle pattern of swirling black stems wove their way through it from the bottom and bloomed into flowers around the two buttons that held the front and back pieces of the top together. The top itself hugged her body rather closely and put a little more emphasis on her generous bust while keeping it modest and comfortable.

The dress pants were rather plain by comparison. For the most part, they were a pair of standard pants however they flared out a little at the bottom of the legs. While she had never been a fan of high heels, she had decided to wear a pair of short-heeled, black boots.

The most important part however was her hair. Usually, she would only run a brush through it a couple of times to rid her of bed-head but she had spent most of the day trying to sort out the odd couple of curls that, though she normally loved them, were beginning to annoy her as they refused to cooperate. Eventually she had just had to relent and settle for what it allowed.

For the final touch, she reached into the cupboard below the sink and pulled out her small bag of make-up. She didn't apply too much, mostly just enough to cover her black eye, as she had never been too fond of it but once she was done she looked into the mirror once again and took it all in. She looked good, at least in her opinion. With everything finally done, she took a deep breath and exited the bathroom to face the judgment of her sister and father.

The moment she stepped out of the door she was met by a pair of gleaming silver eyes. Ruby was still stood in the same place as when Yang had left her room and the look on her face showed that she was now waiting for permission to give her opinions. After waiting a couple of seconds, she gave a short nod to show she was ready.

"You look so pretty!" Ruby practically shouted and began to rush forward.

Having spent her entire life on the receiving end of Ruby's tackle hugs, she held out a hand that told the little ball of energy to stay away.

"Ruby, If you ruin three hours of work I will hide every box of cookies dad buys you until I move out."

"Careful, flower bud," Yang heard her dad say as he stepped into the hallway. "She threatened the same thing with my vinyls and I haven't seen them in months."

Yang raised an eyebrow at him as Ruby gave a small giggle.

"Doesn't she look amazing dad?"

Tai gave her a long look before slowly walking forward and reaching out to adjust the side a little.
Seemingly satisfied with his adjustments, he looked her in the eye.

"You look like an adult for once," he said with a smile.

"Thanks dad, I could teach you sometime," she replied smugly. "Maybe then you can get some dates too."

He let out a small laugh and gave her a light punch on the arm.

"I do fine, thank you," Tai shrugged as they made their way to the kitchen. "Weiss should be here soon, right?"

"Uhh, yeah," Yang looked at the wall to see that it was almost eight. "Ten minutes."

"Any idea what time you will be back?"

"No idea, I don't know what Weiss has planned," Yang replied as she poured herself some water and took a sip.

"Oh yeah, before you go, Ruby wanted to ask you something."

She let out a small sigh and gave a brief nod as she washed out the glass. Ruby had had plenty of time throughout the day to ask her but the girl had a tendency to always forget something. Yang could hardly forget the time that Ruby had forgotten to tell her that her college acceptance letter had arrived and almost a week had gone by before the girl had remembered.

"Any idea what it was about?" Yang asked her dad.

"The party, I think."

Hoping that it would be enough to jog the girls memory, she walked into the living room to find Ruby laying on the chair playing her Switch.

"Rubes," Yang said as she approached and stole the gaming console from the girl to see she was playing the newest Zelda game. "Dad said you wanted to talk about the party?"

"Huh?" Ruby replied as she tried to take the gaming device back. "Oh right, do you think Weiss would want to come?"

"I'm not sure, rubes," Yang said hesitantly. She knew that there were going to be quite a few people there and while she knew she considered them all friends, there was one person that had a rather big mouth when it came to gossip. "But I guess I can ask."

"Awesome," The girl gave a smile and reached out for her game.

Yang considered just giving the girl her game back but she couldn't help the childish impulse that suddenly came over her. Knowing that Ruby refused to fast travel in games, Yang quickly pulled up the map and teleported to the other side of the game world before she handed it back to the girl with a grin.

"Yaaaang!"

She chuckled to herself as Ruby laid back on the couch with a pout.

"So what are you and dad doing tonight?" She asked as she sat on the arm of the chair and watched her sister run across a desert.
"Pizza and a movie," Ruby replied with a small smile. "Dad said he found an old favourite of his on Netflix that I would like, Smokey and the Bandit I think he called it."

"About cars I take it?"

Given how many of the film Ruby watched were about cars, Yang considered it a safe guess.

"Trucks too," Ruby said with a shrug. "And beer."

"Good luck with that," she smiled as she watched Ruby approach Gerudo Town.

Yang wasn't the biggest fan of the game but a whole town of hot amazonian-esque, warrior women was definitely something that caught her attention. Ruby, however, had yet to figure out how to get inside the small piece of fictional heaven and refused to let Yang give her a hint.

She normally enjoyed watching the girl stubbornly struggle with her games but as Ruby tried to climb the town walls, for what she could only assume was the hundredth time, the loud ring of the doorbell echoed throughout the house.

"I think that's for you," Tai called from the kitchen, his voice slightly muffled by the walls.

Before he had even finished his sentence, Yang had already leapt to her feet and entered the hallway. Before she reached out to open the door, she took one last look in the small mirror next to the door. Knowing that she looked good, she took a deep breath and pulled the door open. Cold air quickly wormed its way through the doorway and would have forced a shiver from her if she wasn't so taken aback by the sight that greeted her.

The bright light of the house that flooded through the open door made Weiss stand out against the darkness like an angel. She wore a long blue dress that started dark around her shoulders and gradually faded into a pale blue hem that stopped at her ankles where a long slit ran up the side of her left leg. Specks of glitter were sparsely placed on the material and made Yang feel as if she was staring into a starry evening sky. She wore a matt-blue shrug over her shoulders that was fastened by what looked to be a sapphire broach and matching heels covered the girls feet. Her hair was in the same slightly off-centre, knee length ponytail but the dress somehow made it seem longer.

"Hi," Yang breathed as she took Weiss in, all confidence in how she looked shattered by the appearance of the girl before her.

"Good evening," Weiss smiled back gently.

In the couple of seconds that Yang stared at Weiss' smile, she slowly felt her ability to talk return.

"Weiss, you look amazing," Yang said and let out a nervous chuckle. "I kinda feel underdressed now."

"Nonsense," Weiss quickly shook her head. "You look wonderful, Yang."

"Heh, thanks," Yang replied and scratched her head from nerves. "So I guess we should get going then?"

"Yes, we should," Weiss smiled.

She waited for Weiss to lead the way but after a couple of seconds of the girl simply raised an eyebrow. 
"Are you not bringing a coat?"

*Shit!* Yang thought to herself.

She knew she had forgotten something.

"Yes," Yang said and hurriedly looked around at the coat she had hanging by the door only to see that none of them would match. "Do you wanna to come in out of the cold while I get one?"

She watched Weiss gave a small nod and step over the threshold before turning and making her way through the living room into the kitchen. As she did, Yang caught the smile on Ruby's face however she knew she didn't have time time warn her of anything. She reached the kitchen where her dad was rolling out some dough and cleared her throat.

"Hey dad," Yang said in a pleading voice. "Where's my favourite jacket?"

"Check Ruby's room, she took everything in there to fold yesterday."

"Dammit."

Once again, Ruby's forgetfulness was beginning to affect her so with a sigh she turned back from the kitchen made her way towards her sister's room, making sure to give the girl a small nudge with her foot as she was almost hanging off the edge of the chair trying to peek into the hallway at Weiss.

"Stop it!" she whispered as she passed.

A couple of minutes later, Yang had found her favourite tan jacket. She had found it in a store last year and fell in love with it immediately. While for the most part an ordinary tan jacket, it also had two long pieces of fabric that could be attached to the hem at the back, each piece reaching down to her ankles. After leaving the junk-pile Ruby called a bedroom, Yang attached the two pieces of fabric and pulled it over herself as she greeted Weiss in the hallway.

"Sorry, now I'm ready," Yang smiled as she adjusted her belt.

While she was looking for her jacket, she had also found her small black and gold sash that looked good placed under and over her belt.

"Nice jacket," Weiss grinned and made her way towards the slightly ajar door.

"Thank you."

As Weiss stepped outside, Yang turned back to call goodbye before following the girl outside. Cold air tried its best to assault her but despite its appearance, the jacket was actually rather warm.

"Sooo," Yang grinned while following Weiss towards a car emblazoned with the same snowflake pattern that she had seen on quite a few of the girls clothes. "Was I supposed to be wearing a dress for this date?"

Weiss let out a small laugh as she reached the car where a very large man stood waiting for them.

"No, admittedly I went a little overboard," Weiss said with a little blush.

Once they were close enough to the car door, the man leant down and opened the door for them. Not sure what to expect inside, Yang was pleasantly surprised to find that, apart from the lavish seats and front dashboard, it was a very normal car interior.
"Also, I hope you don't mind; but I have some business to take care of as well," Weiss said hesitantly. "I promise it will only take ten minutes and I am sure that where we are going, you can find something that will amuse you."

"It's fine," Yang shrugged but quite turned her tone into a more flirty one. "I'm very aware that I'm involved with a very busy woman."

Weiss blushed slightly once again before letting a small smile pull at her lips.

"Are you ready to go Miss Schnee?"

Yang almost jumped from the depth of the man's voice but Weiss, seemingly unfazed by the bone-shaking sound, simply gave the man a nod.

"Does this mean I get to know where we're going now?"

Over the past week, Yang had tried multiple times to get some information from Weiss, both subtly and directly, about what she had planned but every attempt had been fruitless.

"Nope," Weiss smiled and sat back in her seat.

Yang squinted at the girl slightly but let it fade into a smile as she shook her head.

"Alrighty then," she chuckled. "So how's your day been?"

Though the silence they had fallen into was a comfortable one, the journey was taking far longer than Yang had expected. She watched as trees rushed by outside the car, their browned leaves glowing due to the street lamps to create a beautiful streak of gold that painted itself across the night sky. In the distance she could see the lights of two Vales.

One, the city itself, had been her home for the past twelve years. Her father had moved them there a couple of months after her mom had died. She had thought at the time it was unfair of him to drag her away from her friends, her uncle, from everyone she had left; but as she grew up, she had realised that the old family home had simply held too many memories for him. However it was there she had met people she loved more than life itself. Blake, her best friend, the only person who knew every secret she had. Pyrrha, a constant inspiration that helped drive her to be better. Even Jaune, completely selfless and willing to drop everything to be there for someone. It had taken some time, but now she loved the city.

The other Vale was not so fondly remembered. The Vale reflected in vast expanse of black water. The very water that had claimed her mother in the first place and never given her back. Through her whole life, nothing had scared her as much as the ocean at night. The stories she had heard from sailors on Patch, the lives it had ruined. How could someone look at it with anything other than dread.

"Yang?"

Yang sound of her name caused her to jump slightly and as she turned around, she saw that Weiss was looking at her, concern written across her face.

"Are you okay?" The girl asked gently.

"Yeah, sorry," Yang answered as she shook head. "Just zoned out for a moment."
"You looked unhappy?" Weiss replied cautiously.

"I'm with you, how could I be unhappy?" Yang said with a forced smile.

"Yang."

The tone in Weiss' voice made her drop to smile instantly. It wasn't angry or disappointed, but forceful enough for Yang to know that the lie would not escape her.

"Sorry," She apologised genuinely. "I just remembered things I don't like to talk about, is all."

"Oh," Weiss mumbled. "I can understand that."

Yang watched as Weiss' hand reached up towards the scar over her left eye before quickly diverting to flatten her already smooth hair. She would be lying to herself if she didn't say the blemish didn't intrigue her. Obviously she knew the stories, the attack on Schnee tower had been on the news for weeks after it had happened but nothing had been said about what had happened inside. However, not feeling it was the time to ask, Yang decided to change the subject.

"So I'm guessing we're heading to Beacon?"

Even though the last time she had taken it was during daylight, she had recognised the road the moment the driver had turned onto it. Beacon Academy had been second in her list of colleges, the first being Mistral's Haven Academy, but she knew she would never be able to afford Either and had to settle for something more affordable.

"Sort of," Weiss' face broke into a smile as the car passed beneath a large ornate gate. "Have you been to the grounds before?"

"Once," Yang replied as she looked out over the grass at the towering structure before her. "My father knows one of the teachers here and she showed me around last year."

"Well I am pretty sure she wouldn't have shown you what I am going too," Weiss said, her face uncharacteristically smug.

"Oh really?" Yang replied teasingly with a raised eyebrow. "You sound rather certain."

"Of this, I am," Weiss chuckled as the car came to a halt in front of a rather large, grey-stone building.

Yang's mouth dropped open the moment she saw it. Two large stone statues, one male and one female, stood to either side of its entrance.

The male had hair that fell just below his shoulders and was carved to look windswept. His chest, arms and legs were clad in armour and a cape hung from his back. His hands were crossed on a staff with pale green glass as its head.

The woman however wore a beautiful, flowing gown. Every detail of both her face as clothes were intricately designed with not a single flaw. The woman's long hair that spilled down her back with a few strands hanging over her shoulder. A glass jewel, similar to her husbands staff, hung around her neck, her hands clutching it as if it were the most precious thing in the world to her.

Yang knew exactly where she was. How could she not? The art museums attached to each of the four major colleges housed the rarest art pieces in the world. They were where every artist wished their pieces may end up one day. Admission however was very exclusive. Only the rich could
afford to go beyond the main hall to see the truly magnificent pieces. The only other way to was to either attend Beacon's prestigious art program or win a small art competition the school held every year. She had entered once but hadn't even scratched the top ten.

"Are you coming?"

In her daze, Yang had not noticed that Weiss had already left the car and was waiting for her with a very smug smile.

"We're going in there?" Yang asked, a small part of her not believing that she could be so lucky.

"Well that is what I had planned," Weiss smirked. "But we could always just tour the grounds."

"No!"

Yang had not meant to seem so eager but the prospect of finally seeing what hid behind those doors had succeeded in exciting her.

"I mean," Yang coughed to clear the excitement from her voice. "No point letting all your plans go to waste."

As Yang climbed out of the car, she saw Weiss grin to herself; though by the time she had straightened up it was gone, replaced by a raised eyebrow.

"Agreed."

Not wasting a single second, Weiss motioned forward and Yang eagerly followed. As she passed the statues, she took a closer look at their faces. The man's was hard but even in the stone his eyes portrayed a gentle kindness. The woman's face however was very gentle, her eyes filled with joy as she looked down on the clutched gem. As she got closer, Yang saw a ring on her finger and realised that it wasn't the gem that the woman was looking at so fondly, it was the ring itself.

Weiss reached up and pressed the button of a small intercom as they reached the large, ornate, wooden doors. It only took a couple of seconds before a voice echoed out of it.

"I am afraid the museum is closed."

"This is Weiss Schnee, Mrs Peach is expecting me."

A loud rumbling sound came from the intercom, almost as if the person on the other end had fallen out of their chair.

"F-Forgive me, Miss Schnee," The voice stuttered, a loud scraping a clear indicator that he was picking up something heavy. Yang guessed it was most likely his chair. "I will be there right away."

Yang couldn't help but be impressed. She knew the Schnee name was considered a powerful one in many circles but to hear someone actually fall over at potentially insulting her was something else. Weiss however, showed no indication of even having noticed. But before Yang could say anything to the girl, the loud grinding of a wooden latch being pulled back sounded from the door.

"My apologies, Mrs Schnee," Said a small man that come into view as the door opened. He wore a security outfit but looked a little too old to actually defend anything.

"Not needed," Weiss smiled kindly at the man. "You were simply doing your job, I would however
like to leave this chilling wind."

"Oh, yes. Of course."

The man moved aside and the two of the quickly walked past him into a large white room. While it wasn't warm in the slightest, at least it was free from the blowing cold winds of outside.

She looked around at the room and saw that it was incredibly sparse. A majority of it consisted of a large open space, easily able to fit a couple of hundred people, broken up by thin eight-foot high walls separated by enough room for two people to lay down head-to-foot between them. Each wall held a single painting on either side. Paintings also lined the white walls of the room but spaced much closer together. The ceiling was high and domed, painted a pale blue to beautifully let its naturally white stone serve as its clouds.

While she longed to immediately run over and check the painting on display, she knew that it was only because of Weiss that she had got this far and to run off alone meant a high likelihood of being kicked out.

"Mrs Peach will be down momentarily," Said the elderly man, slowly tilting back and forth.

"Thank you," Weiss smiled at the man once again. "Would you mind if me and my friend take a little walk around while we wait?"

While it was posed as a question, it was clear to both the man and Yang that it was only posed as such out of courtesy.

"O-Of course, Miss Schnee," The man stuttered and held out a hand towards the paintings as if to give permission. "I will be here if you need anything."

Weiss simply gave the man a small nod and took a step towards the paintings and after one quick glance at the man, Yang hesitantly followed her.

"He was scared of you," she whispered quietly as she caught up to Weiss and fell into stride by her side.

"He was scared of my father," Weiss said matter-of-factly. "My family donates a considerable amount to this museum every year so unfortunately he has a lot of sway here."

Yang didn't know how to feel about that. It didn't sit right with her that a single person had so much control over someone's job simply due to how much money he could throw at it.

"I guess your father is fond of art then?"

She was surprised by the sudden light scoff that escaped from Weiss.

"My father couldn't care less about the art," Weiss replied, a slight bitterness tinting her tone.

"Then why..."

"Superiority," Weiss explained before Yang could even finished her sentence. "He likes people to know just how much better he is than them."

"Oh."

"It's a stupid rich thing," Weiss sighed and stopped in front of the first painting. "But... It allows me to bring you here. So that is at least one upside right?"
Weiss looked at her with a smile that made her heart flutter. Taking a quick look around, she saw that the security guard was currently looking away and decided to take advantage of the man's lack of attention. Subtly, Yang moved closer to Weiss' side and caught the girl's hand with her own, careful to make sure it was hidden in case the guard looked back around.

"Definitely an upside," She smiled back as their fingers entwined.

"So... What do you think it means?" Weiss asked slowly.

With the feeling of warmth slowly creeping its way up her arm to make her heart rate increase, Yang struggled to focus on the painting before her. It was undoubtedly a well done abstract piece but it simply failed to capture her as much as the thin fingers that gently rubbed against her own.

"Hard to say really," Yang answered, it was a solid answer for any abstract piece as quite usually the true meaning was known only to the artist. "Abstract is not really my favourite field but it makes me feel confused, like the artist is trying to show us the mess of ideas his mind comes up with."

"I see the mess..." Weiss said hesitantly.

"That's rather honest," Yang answered, busy trying to suppress the loud laugh that was trying to escape her throat at the girl's words. "Abstract is a required taste, quite often people just make up things."

"Oh I am more than familiar with those people," Weiss said as she moved away from the painting towards the art lining the walls, fortunately these were landscapes, a personal favourite of Yang's. "What about this one?"

Weiss had stopped them in front of a beautiful painting of Vacuo's desert. The artist had captured everything perfectly, from the setting sun to the way its light skittered across the sand, a gleaming gold close to the horizon slowly darkening as your eyes drew closer to the artist's position.

"It's amazing," Yang sighed, she had never been able to produce anything near this level of perfection. "The sun, the lighting, the way the artist occasionally brushed vertically through the horizontal strokes to make the air shimmer like it would in the desert heat."

"At least there are some paintings here that we can agree are exceptional," Weiss grinned while her thumb gently massaging Yang's.

They continued to explore as much art as the museum had to offer while they waited. Some paintings they would pass with a brief glance as while the artists were good, the results simply didn't intrigue either of them. There were a few however that caused the to stop.

Yang stopped frequently at the landscapes to take them in and among them were some pieces she wanted to look up when she returned home to see if she could maybe find some more on the artists. The best being a marvellously hand drawn sketch of patch. While it was a shaded picture that didn't capture the vibrant colours of the island, it perfectly captured the feel of peace and comfort that Yang so fondly remembered.

Weiss on the other hand had a tendency to stop for anything that involved either snow or trees. Whether they were the focus or simply an element, Weiss would grind to a halt whenever she saw one that contained either and look at it intently for a good couple of seconds before letting Yang know she was ready to move on.

However, their aimless wandering between the pictures couldn't last forever and it was with a great
amount of effort that Yang pulled her hand free from Weiss' as they heard the sound of clicking heels making their way down a hallway close by. After dropping her dates hand, Yang couldn't help but feel saddened by the cooling sensation on skin that had once been so warmly pressed against Weiss'.

"My apologies, for the wait, Miss Schnee," said a very tall woman that emerged from the hallway. She wore a peach short and dark blue pants that gave a clear indication that gave of a very professional aura. "We've been very busy with the recent delivery."

"That quite alright, Mrs Peach," Weiss smiled and held out her hand. The woman gladly accepted it gave it a brief shake. "Me and my friend here have just been looking at your newest showcase."

"Ahh, yes," The woman replied, her green eyes twinkling with pride. "An outstanding array of pieces, don't you think? Were there any that caught your eye?"

"Quite a few," Weiss chuckled. "Though I did notice my friend here was rather enraptured by a certain landscape you have. The one of Patch I believe."

"Your friend has a good eye," The woman nodded, though Yang suspected it was more of an excuse to look her up and down. "Are you an artist?"

"Yea... Yes," Yang stumbled over her words. She hadn't expected to be asked questions by the curator of one of the world's most renowned art museums. "Trying to be at least."

"Well that is the most important thing," the woman smiled kindly before turning back to Weiss. "Well, if your friend is more than welcome to continue browsing as we continue."

"Actually, I was thinking she could join us," Weiss' smile was sweet but once again her voice held the same authority she had used when asking the guards if she could browse the paintings.

"But Miss Schnee," The woman replied quickly. The conflict clear on her face. "I'm sure you are aware of the delicacy of this newest piece?"

"I'm quite certain she has no intent on touching it," Weiss said and turned to Yang. "Right?"

Though Yang had no idea what they were talking about, she quickly shook her head. "I'm sorry Miss Schnee but I'm afraid I cannot allow it," The woman said, a slight tremble in her voice now. "It is against our policy."

"Oh!" Weiss replied and dropped her smile, replacing it with a look of defeat. "You are right, Mrs Peach. However, leaving Miss Xiao Long after inviting her along would be incredibly rude of me."

Weiss took a step back from the woman.

"I'm sorry Miss Schnee but I'm afraid I cannot allow it," Weiss said and held out her hand. This time the woman didn't take it, instead she looked at it with apprehension. Apparently sensing that the woman was not going to take it, Weiss lowered it back down to her side. "It is a shame, my father was quite interested in holding his next fundraiser here."

"I-I see no reason he cannot still," the woman stumbled, desperation now seeping into her voice. "The painting is here and we would be more than ha..."

"I'm aware," Weiss sighed and shook her head. "But I am afraid my father refuses to hold it anywhere that hasn't been viewed first."
With that final statement, Weiss turned and addressed Yang.

"We should probably not take up any more of Mrs Pea..."

"Wait."

Weiss, who had already taken a step towards the door by this point, stopped and turned to the woman her eyebrow raised. Mrs Peach hesitated once again but let out a defeated sigh.

"I-I suppose if we are quick," The woman said cautiously, slowly wringing her hands together. "There shouldn't be an issue."

"Really?" Weiss said, her previous smile etching its was back across her face. "That is great news."

"Yes, yes," Peach gave a slow nod. "Then please, follow me."

As the woman turned and started to head down the corridor, Yang saw Weiss flash a smile her way but though she returned it, her own was not so genuine. What she had just seen Weiss do was not a good thing in her opinion. What she had witnessed was Weiss doing exactly what she had scorned her father for only minutes ago. However, not wanting to ruin the night before it ended, she decided not to bring it up right then. Instead she simply fell into stride beside Weiss.

After a couple of turns, they finally arrived at a thick metal door. It looked more like something that would be more at home in a bomb shelter than a museum. It was however etched with a gentle pattern of fanned leaves than made it not seem so out of place.

Yang watched as Mrs Peach made quite the ordeal of opening the door. Not only did she swipe her key card, but she also knelt down for a retina scan and pressed her thumb against the panel. Yang couldn't help but feel excited by the prospect of seeing something that required that level of security.

A loud click sounded in the empty hallway and seconds later the door smoothly slid aside to reveal another smaller room. It was far smaller than Yang expected, not even suitable for any more than twenty people. The walls themselves were the same white as most of the museum but what looked to be occasional bricks painted gold were scattered across the white. These bricks came closer together until they reach the wall opposite the doorway, where they form into a golden road that lead to an emerald green square.

As they took a step closer, Yang saw that it was actually a large metal plate with a line that ran straight through its centre. The border however was encrusted with what Yang could only assume were real emeralds that sparkled in the soft light. Before Yang could even take a closer look, Mrs Peach had stepped forward and once again performed the same security checks on a small panel below the emerald border.

The same click sounded through the room as the door behind them locked, however this time it was accompanied by a small whirring behind the metal plate. A couple of seconds later, the metal plate split apart and revealed a black space that was quickly filled by a painting that slide gently into place.

It took a second for the realisation of what she was looking at to hit her but the moment it did, a loud gasp escaped her as her hand immediately shot out to grab Weiss' forearm. Weiss didn't pull away and while Yang knew that a huge grin was plastered across the girl face, she couldn't tear her eyes away from the painting before her.

One side made her feel sick. A long barren landscape all the way to the horizontal, with the only
signs that life had ever been there being the odd patches of dead grass, wilted and grey as ash. Large spikes of rock jutted from the ground to pierce the the blood red sky and in the centre of it all, a pool of black liquid. Even in the painting, she could tell it was not water. Its contents thicker, even than blood, but even more horrifying were the monsters that crawled from its depth. Twisted beings pulled straight from the minds of the insane, their glowing red eyes sent a chill down her spine as she stared into them.

Not able to look at them any more, she turned her attention to the other side of the painting.

That one could not be more different. The land was filled with vibrant gold grass. Gentle cliffs graced the horizon to close it off from the world and in the centre was another pool, its waters a clearer blue than Yang had ever seen in real life, littered with golden leaves that had fallen from a magnificent tree that grew from its waters. A small ringed fountain circled the base of the tree, water gently spilling over its sides and around the pool itself were people, most kneeling but some reaching into the water.

The most interesting thing however, was that each side only showed part of its image. It was clear that the image portraying the golden lands had been painted over it's dark and grotesque sibling but even still, the image of the blackened pool and hideous monsters comprised two-thirds of the painting’s space.

"T-T-This..." Yang stuttered uncontrollably. Though it took an immense amount of effort, she tore her eyes away from the painting to look into Weiss's eye before breathing her next words. "This is Ozpin's."

"I know," The girl replied with a smile that reached from ear to ear. "I assume you like it then?"

"Like it!" Yang said indignantly. "I love it. Weiss, this is the most sought after piece in the world."

"I know," Weiss repeated with a small chuckle.

A small cough come from the corner of the room and interrupted them. In her awe, Yang had completely forgotten that they were not alone.

"Since you seem so excited, I assume you know its history?" Mrs peach asked as Yang met her eye.

The look in her eye left no doubt that this was a question to test her so Yang took a second to compose herself before answering.

"He uhh..." Yang began hesitantly, not wanting to get a detail wrong. "He painted the first during The Great War. He believed it was the darkest years humanity had ever lived through so he painted his own representation on it. But just as he was done, the war ended and he decided he wanted to use it as an example of every positive step humanity took from then."

Yang paused briefly to look at Weiss only to see that she was listening to every word she said.

"So he decided to paint over it," Yang continued, now with renewed confidence. "Every time he saw that humanity was doing something that made the world a better and more just place, he would paint over a small section with a new vision. One of hope, and unity, where everyone lived in peace. But he died before he could finish."

"That's rather depressing," Weiss frowned, her eyes now on the painting.

"How so?"
"It almost feels like he was passing judgement on us," Weiss explained.

Once again, Yang had to suppress a slight chuckle at Weiss' words.

"Well, that certainly shows your outlook," Yang smiled, her own words receiving a raised eyebrow from her date. "I mean, the painting is kind of like that glass half full thing. Some people can see it as Ozpin's indictment of society not living up to his standards, but others can see it as his hope for things to be better. Neither is wrong, it's just how you look at it."

Yang watched as Weiss turned her head back to the painting to study it some more as if trying to find the other meaning Yang had just mentioned. Yang turned to face Peach while she did and for a couple of moments, she simply nodded her head; but soon after she gave a small smile.

"Well you certainly know your stuff," She said happily. "It is nice to see someone who appreciates the art for more than just its price."

Yang gave the woman a nervous grin but before she could reply, the woman had already turned to Weiss.

"Is everything up to your fathers standards?"

"Yes, thank you Mrs Peach," Weiss nodded, finally taking her eyes away from the painting to give the rest of the room the briefest of glances.

"Great, would you like a couple more seconds?"

"No, I wouldn't want to take up any more of your time than we already have," Weiss shook her head. "I will let my father know everything is in order and his personal assistant should contact you for anything else."

"Very well," Mrs Peach replied, seemingly satisfied with how the events had turned out. "Please, allow me to escort you out."

Yang was sad to see the painting go but with the press of a button, the picture gently slid backwards to be swallowed once again by darkness. As the metal plates slide back into position, the door security door behind them clicked and slid open. After ushering them through it, the woman sealed the door again and lead them back into the main hall and to the front door. A few more words were exchanged with Weiss but, very quickly, the door was opened and they were stepping back out into the cold night.

In the time they had been inside, rain had already begun to lash down with enough force that Yang could hear it strike the pavement; and even though they were stood under the extended archways that hung over the museums entrance, small droplets of rain still managed to catch her shoes. Before the door had closed behind them, Yang saw Weiss' driver walking toward them, a rather large umbrella open above his head.

"Thank you, Hazel," Weiss said as the man reached them and placed it over their heads, showing no care about the rain the now quickly soaked his clothes.

The walk down to the car was a quiet one but as they made it to the door, Yang reached out a hand to stop Weiss.

"I know it raining and stuff," Yang began, having to raise her voice slightly to be heard over the rain. "But can we go for a walk somewhere private? There's something I wanna talk about."
Weiss tilted her head in intrigue for a brief second before nodding and holding up a finger. She reached into her purse and pulled out a long, white ribbon before she passed the purse to Yang.

She was unable to look away as Weiss weaved the ribbon through thin holes at the hem of the gown that she hadn't noticed before and proceeded to lift the bottom up. A blush threatened to creep up Yang's face as she wondered what Weiss could be doing but in seconds, the ribbon was wrapped around Weiss' waist, turning her once flowing gown into a rather modest dress that stopped just above her knees.

"I think I need your dressmaker's number," Yang joked as Weiss straightened back up and flashed her a smile.

"If you have a couple of thousand Lien to spare, she may accept your call," Weiss replied with a small smile.

"Wow!" Yang exclaimed, refusing to believe and ordinary dress could cost that much. "I think I will stick to smaller shops."

Weiss let out a chuckle and gave a short nod of her head dictating that she was ready to go. Not wanting to make Hazel stand in the rain any longer, Yang held out her hand for the umbrella and he handed it over without a word, before walking back over and getting into the car.

"Follow me," Weiss smiled as she took a step forward. "I know somewhere we can go."

Yang followed as instructed, interested to see where Weiss was leading her and it wasn't long until she saw exactly where that was. That had only been walking for just over a minute when a large stone ball came into view and Weiss began to head straight towards it.

It was only when they were almost upon it that she realised it wasn't exactly a ball. While it did have a large stone shell, one part was completely open and a quick peek inside revealed some covered seats angled along the shell and a small table in the centre. Even with everything inside, there was more than enough room for four people to sit comfortably but unfortunately, the hole which they were supposed to climb through was facing the wind.

"I don't think we're going to be very warm in there, Weiss," Yang said, quite sceptical as she watched the girl step inside and offer her hand to her.

"Just trust me," she replied happily.

With only a slight roll of her eyes, Yang closed the umbrella and accepted the hand. Now inside with the trapped cold air, Yang had to suppress a shiver as she watched Weiss pull a badge from her purse and press it against the centre of the table.

A loud whirring sound emerged around them and suddenly, the stone wall of the pavilion began to rotate. Yang counted ten seconds until the grinding finally stopped and once it had, the entrance they had come through was now on the complete opposite side. She was about to speak up but a soft orange glow emanated from the floor and Yang looked down to see small lights below her, each one giving of a gentle warmth that quickly began to fill the inside of the sphere.

"What was that?" Yang asked, confused by the events that had just taken place.

Weiss let out a small laugh and began to remove the covers from the seat and set them aside.

"This is a student study ball," Weiss said, only adding to Yang's confusion. Apparently, Weiss saw this because she let out another chuckle before continuing. "A couple of years ago, some
engineering students were told to design something and they made these for people who hate being stuck inside on a rainy day."

With all the cover removed, Weiss took a seat on what Yang now saw was actually a bench.

"If a student scans their badge, a sensor on top reads which way the wind is coming from and the mechanical platform this is placed on moves the sphere to block it. They also added some heating panels below to warm the place up."

"Wow," Yang hummed as she sat down next to Weiss. "Remind me not to underestimate smart kids with a lot of money."

"Our headmaster liked the idea so much that he had three more constructed on campus," Weiss nodded but the smile on her face was no longer quite as apparent as it was seconds ago. "Anyway, you said you wanted to talk about something?"

"Yeah," Yang breathed out, she was nervous for what she was about to say. "I had a lot of fun tonight."

"Me too," Weiss replied quickly but she apparently saw the look on her face and stopped.

"You, the art, that painting," Yang said. "Every part of those was perfect."

"But?"

There was an almost imperceptible tremble to Weiss's voice but Yang caught it nonetheless.

"But," Yang paused and looked straight at Weiss, there was worry in the girl's eyes. "I saw what you did to Peach in there."

Weiss' eyebrows crinkled in confusion.

"The way you exploited her fear of your father," Yang said firmly.

This sentence seemed to finally make Weiss understand what Yang was talking about as her eyes changed from confused to shocked and finally, to sad.

"Oh."

"Look," Yang said quickly. "I know it probably wasn't intentional and that it's just something you did because that's how your father raised you, but that doesn't mean it wasn't wrong."

Yang took a pause. She hated having to do this, in fact every part of her was screaming at her not to, for fear of Weiss walking away from her; but Yang just wasn't the type of person who could just let things like that happen around her without saying something.

"I'm sorry," Weiss whispered, her head hung low to hide her eyes.

Worried about what Weiss was thinking, Yang reached out and took the girls hand.

"I'm not mad," Yang said gently and gave the girls hand a squeeze. "Just please, try not to do it again. I don't want to look back on any of our future dates and remember you acting as someone you're not. And especially not as someone you hate."

"Future dates?" Weiss said slowly as she looked up, there were no tears in her eyes but Yang could easily make out the remorse in them.
"Do you really think I'm gunna ditch you for one bad thing on an otherwise amazing date?"

Yang gave the girl the softest smile she could.

"Maybe," Weiss shrugged.

"Well, sorry to disappoint by I don't scare that easily," Yang said and bumped her shoulder lightly against Weiss in an attempt to cheer her up. Thankfully, she saw the beginnings of a smile tugging at her lips. "Just please promise me it won't happen again."

"I promise," Weiss nodded and finally allowed her fingers to weave themselves between Yang's. "But you are right, it was something my father would have done. I will apologise to Mrs Peach on Monday."

"Thank you," Yang replied and moved a little closer to Weiss.

Slowly, Yang raised the arm that was holding Weiss' hand and, without letting go, put it around the girls shoulder. Apparently sensing what Yang was trying to do, Weiss leant forward and allowed Yang to bring her arm to a rest at the girl's hip, their hands still locked together. One it was in position, Yang applied a little pressure, not much but just enough to let Weiss know she could get closer if she wanted too. Apparently she did as the girl quickly closed the rest of the distance and laid her head on Yang's shoulder.

"Thank you," Weiss mumbled after a short, comfortable silence.

"For what?"

It was Yang's turn to be confused now.

"For not running way when I told you yesterday that we would have to be a secret," Weiss replied quietly. "For not leaving tonight when I screwed up."

"You don't have to thank me for that," Yang smiled and leant her head against the top of Weiss'. "And you're too hard on yourself, everyone screws up Weiss."

"But I seem to do it more than most," Weiss replied. Her voice didn't sound sad, but pensive. "Not so long ago, I was horrible. I was your typical rich girl. I was spoilt, and entitled and I had no care for anyone except what they could do for me."

Yang didn't say anything, not wanting to interrupt the girl.

"Then, two years ago, I..." Yang heard Weiss' words catch in her throat. "I-I almost died."

Weiss was shaking now and Yang knew it wasn't from the cold but she tightened her grip on the girl anyway.

"And when he..." Weiss paused. "When he... When it happened, I saw who I was, and I hated myself."

Sniffling accompanied her shaking now.

"So after, I tried to change, I wanted to change. To make myself better and to be more considerate towards others but I keep falling into old habits."

It was only then that Yang began to feel the wetness that had started to soak into her shoulder and even though she didn't want to see the sight that awaited her, she gently put her hand on Weiss' chin.
and lifted the girl's face up to look her in the eyes.

"You are not a bad person, Weiss," Yang said certainly as she looked at the tears that gently made their way down Weiss' face.

"Bu..."

"But nothing." Yang said in a firmer voice. "Everything you just said is in the past but it's only been two years. Things like this take time, trust me I speak from experience, but you are trying and that's what is important. You will screw up from time to time but you can't beat yourself up every time you do. Just acknowledge it and do your best to make sure it doesn't happen again."

"But what if I'm just broken? What if I can't be anything but what my father wants me to be?"

"I know broken people, Weiss," Yang said, having to push down the memories of a certain redhead that had made her life hell for a while. "You are not one of them."

With her free hand, Yang used the sleeve of her jacket to wipe away the few remaining tears that stained Weiss' face. Once done, she gave the girl a smile. With the crying over, Weiss returned her head to Yang's shoulder.

"How do you always know the right things to say?" Weiss sniffled after a while, her voice almost back to normal.

"Wellll," Yang dragged the word out teasingly. "I don't know if you realised but I'm pretty mature for my age."

After seeing her cry only a couple of minutes ago, the sound and feel of Weiss gently laughing against her shoulder filled her stomach with butterflies.

"Pretty good at jokes too," Weiss chuckled and lifted her head of Yang's shoulder. "But thank you for listening, Yang."

"No sweat," she smiled and turned to look at Weiss. "I'm always here, remember."

Yang could have sworn she was further away when she had started talking.

"I know," The girl said, her face slowly inching closer to Yang's.

Before Yang could utter a single word, she felt Weiss' lips press lightly against her own. Weiss' lips were thin but still soft and their warmth shot through her like a bullet the moment their lips touched. Without a second thought, she closed her eyes and leaned further into the kiss.

A soft hum vibrated the girl's lips as Yang wrapped her free arm around Weiss to join her other. Now with both arms where she wanted them, Yang pulled the girl closer to her and began to deepen the kiss. Weiss didn't object and felt her body to melt into the arms of the other girl.

Yang had always been to one who took charge in these situations, it was just a natural place she felt herself settling into so as she felt Weiss's lips press between her own once again, she ran her tongue along them to ask for entry. Without any delay, Weiss lips opened just enough to grant access and Yang wasted no time slipping between them. Her tongue was greeted by Weiss' own and as the two danced over each other, Yang allowed a hand to slowly slide down the girl's back and over her hips until she felt the soft feel of flesh against her fingers.

However she knew she couldn't lose control. Despite the fact the her own body was already
reacting to the situation, she knew her hand could go no higher, at least not for now, so she settling for moving her hand down. As she slowly let her fingers glide across the Weiss' pale leg and Weiss let out a quiet moan. Unfortunately, it seemed to have been enough to snap her out of her lustful stupor as before Yang's hand could go any further, Weiss had pulled back from the kiss.

Yang opened her eyes to see that Weiss was breathing heavily and her face was very flushed, though she suspected she looked no better from Weiss' position. The two of them took a moment to breath but apart from the newfound distance between their lips that Yang so desperately want to close again, everything else was stayed where it had been.

"Th- That was.."

Weiss was unable to finish the sentence through her deep breaths and Yang couldn't help but smile at her. While Yang was definitely still feeling the warmth, her breathing had already evened out.

"Feeling a little breathless there," Yang grinned seductively as she slid her hand a little further down Weiss' leg.

The effort Weiss was making to not close her eyes and enjoy the feeling was clear as day but she couldn't stop the smile that painted itself across her face.

"W-We have to stop," Weiss breathed as she reached down and pulled Yang's hand away from her legs with a smile. "I have to get home."

"You're right," Yang grinned.

Despite her hand having been moved away, Weiss had done nothing about the fact that they were pressed together so closely that she could feel every curve of her date through the girl's thin dress.

"And we are definitely..."

Unable to resist the temptation any longer, Yang interrupted her with another kiss that ended just as soon as it began.

"Not doing..."

Another kiss, this time it lasted a little longer, but still they broke broke apart much too soon for her liking.

"This here."

Weiss was right of course, but that didn't stop their lips from meeting once again. This time however, Yang controlled herself and wind down. Instead of the deep and frantic ones before, she allowed it to remain soft and tender. These were often her favourite. They didn't carry the heat or electricity of the lustful ones but they had more emotion behind them.

This kiss also didn't last very long but this time it was Yang who pulled away; and not just from the girl's lips, but from the girl herself. Even in the heated chamber they currently inhabited, she could feel the cool air rush in to fill the space between them.

"You are a devil," Weiss whispered gently, as soon as she had regained her breath.

"That, I don't deny," Yang winked and got to her feet. "But you are right, we really should get going before your driver thinks I've kidnapped you."
Yang held out her hand to help Weiss up and after taking a couple of seconds to straighten out her
dress, she took it with a smile. It was as Weiss stood up that she saw the girl legs give a very slight
shake.

"Wow!" Yang smirked cheekily. "One make-out session and you're already weak at the knees."

"Shut up," Weiss smiled and rolled her eyes before swiping her card back across the table. Before
the lights could fully turn off, Yang stepped out of the sphere into the heavy rain and opened the
umbrella for Weiss.

"Thank you," Weiss smiled as she stepped out under it.

As they walked back to the car, she felt Weiss retake her hand and though it wasn't as much contact
as they'd had a minute ago, she was more than happy with it.

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"So when are you free next?" Yang asked as Weiss' driver pulled up outside her house.

The conversation had, once again, been very little on the way back to Yang's house. They had
talked about their favourite pieces they had seen at the museum, her own being Ozpin's Two Pools,
and a little about what had been said in the sphere before everything had escalated but for the most
part they had been silent. They had been half way back when Weiss had resumed her earlier
position and placed her head on Yang's shoulder, whispering that her driver could be trusted; but
now that they were outside her house, they were once again sitting with a small bit of distance
between them.

"I'm not sure," Weiss sighed. "I have quite a lot to do this week but if you have any plans, I can
move some things around?"

"Actually, I kinda do, but I'm not sure if you'll be interested," Yang replied cautiously.

"Try me?" Weiss smiled and shuffled towards her slightly.

"Well I know we are keeping this a secret but, Ruby is having a birthday party on Tuesday, it's just
close friends and family but she wanted me to ask if you wanted to come," Yang said cautiously.
"Her birthday is on Halloween so it will be themed around that but there's no dressing up or
anything."

"Your sister wants me to come to her birthday?" Weiss repeated, a slight hint of disbelief in her
voice.

"You don't have too but yeah," Yang nodded. "I think she really wants to meet you."

"Then I will be delighted to attend," Weiss smiled gently.

"Are you sure?" Yang asked once again, wanting to make sure that Weiss knew she wasn't
obligated to anything. "You really don't have to come."

Weiss let out a small amused sigh and shuffled forward a little more.

"Yang, do you want me there?"

"I do, I just don't want you to feel obligated is all."

"You are not obligating me to do anything, Yang," Weiss said and closed the rest of the distance
into a brief but meaningful kiss before pulling back and looking her directly in the eye. "If you want me there, then I want to be there."

"Okay then, I'll let Ruby know."

With a final nod, Yang leant back in for another brief kiss and though she once again felt the desire to deepen it, she didn't. After pulling away, Yang quickly pushed open the car door and stepped out to avoid any more temptation.

"I had a great time, by the way," she said as she knelt down.

"You have already said that, a couple of times actually."

"Yeah well," Yang shrugged. "Just wanted to make sure you knew."

"I do," Weiss smiled.

With one final glance at Weiss' face, Yang straightened up and shut the car door. She watched Weiss wave through the window as the car drove away. The feeling of distance hit her almost immediately but with the knowledge that she would see her again in a couple of days, Yang turned with a smile and made her way towards her house.
Choice and Control

**Weiss Schnee**

"Would you like me to take this to the car for you, Miss Schnee?"

Weiss looked at the housekeeper to see her holding a box wrapped in blue paper.

"Yes please, Viola," She replied as she pulled on her jacket and looked at herself in the mirror.

The white leather jacket was one of her favourites and worked very well with her pale blue t-shirt. She had also opted for a pair of slim cut jeans and a pair of brown boots that came to a stop half way up her shins. While she was much more of a skirt and heels girl, she quite liked the outfit as a wh...

"Weiss."

The voice froze her, its unmistakable droning instantly causing her blood to turn to ice as she turned to look into the cold, apathetic eyes of her father who was standing in her doorway.

"Good afternoon, Father," Weiss greeted him cautiously as she straightened her posture.

"Where are you going?" He asked, his eyes squinting as he surveyed her outfit. "Did you mother once again fail to inform you that we are entertaining guests this evening?"

The hint of annoyance in his voice made her skin crawl. While Weiss' relationship with her mother was strained at best, the way her father spoke of her had always aggravated her.

"No," Weiss lied, trying her best to keep the spite from her voice. Klein had actually been the one to tell her but she didn't want her father to have the satisfaction of being right. "Mother told me of the dinner with Mr Scarlatina and his family."

Weiss rarely lied to her father as the man was exceedingly good as sniffing out the truth but since she was now hiding such a large secret from him, the little white lies were something that helped return some of the warmth to her system.

"So, again I ask," he drawled as his eyes narrowed. "Where are you going?"

Weiss felt herself cower a little under the man's gaze. She knew that an outright lie was not something she could get away with so quickly decided that a half truth would have to do.

"A friend is having a small birthday celebration," Weiss said in an even voice, summoning as much confidence as she could muster for her next words. "I gave my word that I would attend."

The slight twitching of her father's moustache was a clear indicator of the anger that now broiled within him. He was now stuck between two choices. To allow her to leave and risk her returning late for dinner or to force her to stay home and break her word to someone. Weiss was fairly confident that he would not choose the latter as he considered a Schnee giving their word as binding as any contract.

"Who is this, friend?" His voice was tinged with disbelief.

Weiss knew that he would not buy the lie so easily and had already came up with an answer.
"One of the students from Shade I have been showing around," Weiss replied with a shrug.

While she acted as though it wasn't a big deal, she knew it would be to her father as he would never allow tales of a Schnee breaking their word to reach the ears of another kingdom's companies. As she looked into the man's eyes, she saw them mulling over the potential implications of each option and knew she had won.

"Very well," He finally said with a sneer. "You can attend this... celebration... But you will be home in time for their arrival. I will not allow you to embarrass me in front of such... People."

The venom in the man's final word almost made Weiss wince as he turned on a heel and walked away from the room. While normally, she would have taken grievance with her father's hatred for the Faunus, today she found herself thankful for it. Though she knew that it was selfish and unfair to be glad for her father's unjust resentment, as it distracted him enough that she could successfully lie her way into seeing Yang again, she allowed herself that one tiny win with a reminder to push her investigation of the hiring process to the top of her to-do list.

The thought of Yang however did return a little fire to Weiss' veins, just as it had done ever since their last date. While the kiss had not been something she had expected to be so intense, she didn't regret it. She did however regret that she had let herself get caught up in the moment and was worried she may have given Yang the wrong impression.

Though the kiss had been incredible and the feel of Yang's hand running down her thigh was more than enough to make her body react, she was not yet ready for things to go any further; and neither did she know when she would be. All she knew for certain was that nothing like that would be happening until they could be open about their relationship. The last thing she wanted was for Yang to feel like a dirty secret.

That didn't mean she hadn't thought about it though, she was still a teenager after all; today was not the day for those kind of thoughts so she shook her head clear of the encroaching images that quickly began to fill her mind and took one last look in the mirror. Satisfied with what she saw, Weiss left her room.

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The walk to Yang's house was becoming very familiar to Weiss, and so was the feeling that accompanied the sight. Never before had something as simple as a few stone slabs and some grass caused such excitement within her. However, the prospect of finally meeting Yang's sister, Ruby, caused not a small amount of nervousness to weave its way through the excitement.

It wasn't that she thought she would make a bad impression on the girl. No, how to make a good impression had been drilled into her since she was a child. It was more that Yang thought the world of her little sister so if Ruby found any reason at all to not like her then Weiss had no idea what that would mean for the future of hers and Yang's relationship.

Not wanting to dwell on those thoughts, Weiss pushed those thoughts aside and decided not to waste any more time. Ignoring the nerves that coursed through her, she reached out her hand and knocked on the door. She didn't have to wait long before the door was opened by a tall, red-headed girl with gleaming green eyes.

"Hello, Weiss," Pyrrha greeted her, a friendly smile stretching across her face as the sounds of music and laughter floated from behind her.

"Good afternoon," Weiss smiled back.
Since they first met a couple of weeks ago, the two of them had been in semi-regular contact. While they had never actually taken the time to meet up and hang out due to their busy schedules, they had been messaging each other occasionally and Weiss had found that she rather enjoyed her conversations with the girl.

"I can take that for you," Pyrrha said and indicated to the present Weiss was carrying as she moved aside to let Weiss inside. "Ruby's going to open them all later."

"Thank you," Weiss said and handed the gift to the girl.

"No problem," she said and walked around the corner into what Weiss knew was the living room. "Yang, your friend is here."

Weiss did not miss the emphasis Pyrrha put on the word 'friend' but she had no time to stop the girl as Yang's smiling face popped around the corner.

"Hey, Weisscream," She grinned and walked into the hallway. Her outfit was almost the same as their first date except her flannel shirt had been replaced with a grey, long sleeved jacket that stopped around the bottom of her ribs. "You're just on time."

"No, and of course," Weiss smiled as the girl as she walked forward and took her arm. "But I can only stay for a couple of hours, there is a business dinner I must attend at eight."

"That's fine," The girl said happily. "Come on, I will introduce you to everyone."

Before Weiss could even try to argue, Yang was pulling her along into the living room.

"Hey guys, I got someone for ya to meet," Yang said as they entered the room full of people. "This is Weiss, a friend of mine."

Weiss watched as every head turned in her direction but she only recognised a few people. Blake was sat in the corner reading a book with her head resting against Sun and Jaune was sat in front of the television apparently playing a video game. She also recognised Yang's dad talking to Blake's mom and a man who could rival her driver, Hazel, in height that she assumed was Blake's father. The others though were very unfamiliar but a girl with very orange hair was already on her feet and walking over to them at a pace faster than Weiss could run.

"OH! MY! GOD!" the girl practically screamed less than a second later as she came to an abrupt stop in front of them. "Where did you meet a Schnee?"

"Well, we..." Weiss was about to reply when she noticed Yang give a little shake of her head and it wasn't long before she found out why.

"Never mind that, where did you get your boots? They look so awesome. Don't they look awesome, Ren?" The girls rambling only stopped as the girl gasped as if she had had some sudden realisation. "I should totally get some more boots, I would look super cute in them."

"Ren?" Yang said in a pleading voice towards a boy with long black hair with a single pink strip in his fringe.

The boy simply gave Yang a nod and made his way over to them. With a little sigh, he put his hand on Nora's shoulder.

"Come on, Nora, I think Tai said something about syrup cookies."
"SYRUP COOKIES! Why am I only finding out about these now?"

Before the boy could utter a single word, the girl had grabbed his arm and began to drag him towards the kitchen.

"Nice to meet you, Weiss," The boy said as he was being pulled backwards. Weiss didn't know if she was imagining it but she thought she could see a small smile on the boys face.

The next few minutes were spent greeting everyone at the party and being introduced to everyone she didn't know. Sun was someone she had encountered a couple of times in Blake's shop but they had never actually interacted, as his attention was almost always on Blake. However apart from him, Ren, and Nora, there were only two other people that she hadn't met. One being Blake's dad, which she considered a little odd as she visited his shop quite frequently, and a young well-spoken boy named Oscar.

"So where is Ruby?" Weiss asked Yang once she had been introduced to everyone but the girl who's birthday it was.

"Kitchen I think," Yang replied and started to walk towards the kitchen as Pyrrha, Ren, and Nora re-entered the room.

"Hey Yang," Jaune called from in front of the television while holding up a controller. "What about our game?"

"Oscar can finish it."

The kitchen was a much less crowded than the living room as it seemed to pretty much be only for the food, which was set out on the table buffet style. In fact the only two people in there were Tai and Ruby who were stood talking by the sink. As they drew closer, Ruby turned to look at them and Weiss was able to make out much more of the girls appearance. Yang had not been wrong, the girl before her was the spitting image of her mother in every way except height. The same black hair that just fell short of the girl shoulders, its tips dyed a dark red. The same eyes, a shining silver that mirrored back the kitchen around her. The same pale skin that made her own look full of colour. Every single thing about the girl was almost indistinguishable from the woman Weiss had seen in the picture a few weeks ago.

Weiss couldn't stop the nerves that settled in her stomach and filled her full of worry and it definitely did not help that the girl's eyes reflected her image like a mirror. In them, Weiss could see every little flaw and knew that if she could see them, Ruby definitely would.

"Ruby," she heard Yang say as they came to a stop in front of the girl and her father. "This is my... uhh... this is Weiss?"

Knowing her nerves would do her no good, Weiss swallowed them down and summoned what courage she could to hold out her hand towards the girl.

"It is nice to finally meet you, Ruby," Weiss said, trying her best to put on a convincing smile.

"It's nice to meet you too," Ruby replied slowly as she took her hand only to release it less than a second later.

Weiss was a little confused, the girl before her seemed almost as nervous as her. But why? She wasn't the one on trial, she wasn't the one whose relationship rested on the approval on someone else. In fact she was the person whose approval was required. It was only then that Weiss suddenly remembered what Yang had said about the girl having trouble around people.
For some reason, knowing that Ruby was just as nervous as she was helped settle her nerves a little so she put her hand into her small handbag and pulled out a small cardboard box with the word *Decadence* stamped on the top.

"Pyrrha already took the present but I also got you these," Weiss said as she held out the box to Ruby. "It's just some sugar cookies from a bakery downtown."

The girls eyes widened a little at the word *cookie* and she eagerly reached out to take the box.

"Thank you," the girl said as she opened the box to look inside. Apparently what was inside was more than satisfactory as she gave a small smile and looked at Weiss once again. "So, you're Yang's girlfriend?"

"I... uhh..."

Weiss didn't know how to answer that question as while she wanted to say yes, she and Yang had yet to actually have that discussion themselves. A quick look at Yang revealed that she was eagerly awaiting what Weiss and to say.

"I like your sister," was the answer Weiss finally settled on. She didn't want to lie to the girl nor make a decision without Yang. "We haven't really discussed what we are."

"But you do like her?"

Weiss took a quick glance around the room to see that between her and the doorway was a table full of food. Deciding that they were safely out of sight, she reached out and took Yang's hand.

"I like her quite a lot," Weiss said as she felt Yang's hand close on hers.

"Well then," Ruby smiled sweetly as she pulled a cookie from the box. "If you like Yang, then I like you."

It took a couple of seconds for it to sink in that she had just received Ruby's approval and by the time it did, Yang had already released her hand and pulled her sister into a tickle hug that caused the girl to erupt into giggles.

"Yanglemmego," Ruby laughed as she struggled to hold on to the cookie in her hand.

"Awww, but your so cute when you worry about me," The blonde replied and dropped the girl back onto her feet. "But you do remember what I said, right?"

"About what?"

"Abou... Ruby," Yang let out a small sigh. "Me and Weiss are keeping things quiet so you can't tell anyone."

"Oh right, but Blake knows?"

"Yes," Yang nodded.

"Okay, I promise not to tell anyone," Ruby smiled and took a bite of the cookie. "Mmm these are really good."

"No talking with your mouth full," Yang scolded her almost immediately with a small poke to the younger girl's forehead.
In response, Ruby stuck out a crumb covered tongue and immediately ran off towards the living room before Yang could do anything to stop her. Once she had disappeared around the doorway, Weiss heard a small chuckling coming from the sink. Being so focused on making a good impression on Ruby, she had completely forgotten that Yang's father was still in the room.

"Something funny?" Yang asked him.

"No," he laughed to himself while washing a plate. "I just remember having to tell your mom that constantly and she would react in the exact same way."

The look on the man's face as he talked was full of joy but there was a sadness to his eyes that made her feel a little bad for him. She couldn't even begin to imagine how painful it must be for him to watch Ruby grow up to look just like her mother. To look into those eyes and remember everything he had lost.

"Anyways, it's good to see you again, Weiss," the man quickly changed the subject. "I'm glad you could make it."

"Me too," Weiss replied with a smile at Yang.

"Well, I'll give you two some privacy," he said as he dried his hands on a towel and made his way to the door. "But if you're still here in a little bit, I'll be breaking out the family photos."

Weiss felt Yang move slightly beside her and looked to find the blonde glaring at her father.

"You know, unless I find something else to keep me occupied," he followed up with a knowing smirk at his daughter.

Weiss didn't want to speak as the two of them stared each other down, their eyes locked on each other's without blinking until finally Yang let out a loud sigh.

"They're in Ruby's old playhouse," she said in a defeated voice shaking her head.

"Very shrewd." The smile on the man's face was so smug that Weiss could only assume he had just won some long time war. "Keep it family friendly in here."

His departing words caused Weiss to blush slightly but the moment he disappeared from the door, she felt Yang slip her hand back into her own.

"I think that went pretty well." the girl said as she pulled Weiss in a little closer with a smile.

"You think she liked me?"

A wide smile stretched across the blonde's face as Weiss came to a stop so close to her that she swore she could feel the heat radiating from the girl.

"Weiss, you gave her cookies," Yang smiled down at her. "She probably loves you already."

"I hope so."

"Aww, were you nervous?" Yang teased.

"Shut up," Weiss scowled at the girl and leant into her.

Before their lips could meet however, Weiss heard the sound of heels against tile behind her. Not wanting to be seen, Weiss quickly pulled herself away from Yang and turned to see Pyrrha
watching them with an amused expression.

"You know, for what I'm assuming is supposed to be a secret relationship, you two couldn't be more obvious," the redhead said as she shook her head and took a small sandwich from the table.

"I don't… What do you mean?" Weiss said defensively despite knowing that Pyrrha had clearly just seen them.

"Mhm," Pyrrha hummed with a smile. "Don't worry, I'm not going to tell anyone."

Not knowing what to say, Weiss looked at Yang for help only to receive a shrug. Sensing that there was nothing she could do or say to convince Pyrrha otherwise, Weiss just sighed.

"Thanks."

"Yeah, I guess there's no fooling the queen of obvious attraction," Yang winked at the girl.

Weiss caught a small smile on the redhead face as she rolled her eyes.

"I will suggest you be a little more cautious though, Weiss," Pyrrha said in a more serious tone. "I don't know what reason you have for keeping this quiet but the paparazzi have been more persistent than ever lately."

While she was used to the occasional van following her whenever she left the house, there had definitely noticed another upsurge in their presence. It had taken Hazel twenty minutes to lose the ones following them on the way to Yang's house and he had only succeeded in doing so by making a turn that would have definitely made a police officer stop him if they had seen it.

"I have noticed," Weiss groaned. "They are probably trying to land a big Christmas bonus."

"I bet the story 'Weiss Schnee's super hot new girlfriend' would land them a pretty hefty Christmas bonus," Yang chuckled.

Weiss raised her eyebrow at Yang as she imagined her father's fury at finding out through a gossip magazine. Of all the ways for him to find out, that was definitely her least favourite.

"I would rather they had no title at all," Weiss huffed.

"Then I would suggest you both come and join us in the living room before Nora starts to suspect anything," Pyrrha suggested and grabbed another sandwich. "Yang knows just how fast it will spread if she finds out."

Whatever joy Yang was feeling seemed to drain from her face at Pyrrha's words.

"You're right," Yang said and gave the girl a nod before turning to Weiss. "Are you ready?"

Though Weiss was still a little worried by how Pyrrha's words had affected Yang, she gave the girl a nod and followed the girl into the other room.

* * *

Weiss had never been much of a party person. Every party she had attended had either been a fundraiser where she had not been allowed to leave her father's side, or a boring dinner party where her father had used her as nothing more than a resource to impress the guests. This party however was very different. For a start, the classical music had been replaced with punk rock that Weiss was sure would cause the attendees of her usual parties to leave in disgust, there were also loud
conversations, and the laughter and the occasional cheer as someone won a game. And she was loving every minute of it.

It had all started off pretty normal with Yang shoving Jaune out his seat for Weiss to sit down before joining Ruby at the television to play a game. She had no idea what it was about but the only rule seemed to be that you had to knock your opponent's character off of the many ledges. They had each taken it in turns to fight one another, even she had played a couple of games before quickly figuring out that it was definitely not for her, but just as Ren finally seemed to be about to defeat Jaune, who was surprisingly good at the game, Nora came barrelling out of nowhere and tackled him to the ground in a hug.

The commotion had lasted a few minutes, though it was apparent to everyone that the boy was clearly not trying very hard to escape, but once he had finally managed to free himself they had both retired to the couch where Nora had taken up residence on the boy's lap and neither had moved since.

They were not the only couple who had caused some commotion either. Only a few minutes after, Sun had let out a very loud yelp of pain that had drawn the attention of everyone in the room. Weiss had to do her best to hold in a laugh as she turned around to see the very heavy looking book Blake had been reading earlier crushing the poor boy's tail against the floor. Blake had quickly lifted it off with an apologetic look but Weiss was still not sure if she had simply dropped the book or if something else had happened.

After all that had passed, Weiss had somehow found herself in conversation with Blake's parents only to learn that she already knew of her father, Ghira. Ghira Belladonna was a lawyer who had become very well known in recent years due to his contributions to many of the laws that demanded the Faunus be given rights equal to any human. She also knew that he had gone up against the STC quite a few times, but despite that he treated her with nothing but kindness.

"So I recently heard some talk that an employee from the R&D department was fired rather abruptly," he said with a smile that showed off some teeth that were slightly more pointed than usual.

"Do you have ears in all our departments?" Weiss answered back jokingly. "But yes, though I still have no idea how he managed to stay at the company as long as he did."

"Yes, we've met a few times and I found him to be more unpleasant with each meeting," Ghira nodded in agreement.

"You know him?"

"In passing," Ghira sighed sadly. "Unfortunately his son caused quite a bit of trouble for Blake in high school."

"Well then, since he no doubt got it from his father, I now feel even better about firing the despicable man," Weiss smiled.

"While I appreciate the gesture, be careful not to make a habit of firing people with a different mindset from your own," The man chuckled. "You will find that most people's views are simply products of their time, but they can be shown the errors in their judgement."

"You think a man like Mr Winchester could change?"

"Him? No," Ghira shook his head but the smile didn't leave. "But that doesn't mean there isn't
others who cant."

He gave her a knowing look as he sat back in his chair and she immediately realised just why she liked the man. Unlike her father, who simply told her what to do, Ghira only advised. Just like Winter, he seemed to only want to show her a different path and let her choose whether to walk it or not.

"I suppose you are right," Weiss smiled kindly at the man. "I will take it into consideration."

"Good," The man nodded and looked towards the hallway as a man with black hair wearing a grey tailcoat and blank pants walked into the room. "I would cover your ears if I were you."

"Wh..."

"UNCLE QROOOOW!"

Ruby's scream of joy was louder the music and Weiss watched in awe as the girl ran at the new arrival so fast that she was almost a blur. She was even more surprised when the girl launched herself at the man's chest from a distance that would probably make even a long jump athlete jealous. Apparently the man expected this though as he caught her with ease.

"Uncle?" Weiss said in confusion. In all their talk, Yang had talked about her father, her sister and even a little about her mother; but she had never mentioned that she had an uncle.

"Qrow," Ghira nodded as he stood up from his chair. "And I should go say hello, it's been nice talking to you Weiss."

"You too, Mr Belladonna."

As the man made his way over to Qrow, Weiss saw Yang making her way over to the chair that Ghira had just left and it was only as she drew closer that Weiss saw the girl didn't look especially happy.

"Hey Weiss," She said while putting on a smile that was very clearly fake. "Enjoying yourself?"

"More than you seem to be, what's wrong?"

"It's nothing," Yang said dismissively. "So what were you and Ghira talking about?"

"Work stuff," Weiss said shortly. "But it's clearly something, you were laughing and smiling before your uncle arrived."

Yang gave her a long look that made Weiss worry she was pushing a little too hard but eventually the girl just shook her head.

"I just hate how much Ruby worships him is all," Yang sighed. "I don't really want to go into it but let's just say she doesn't seem to remember everything the way it actually happened."

"Oh!" Weiss exclaimed.

"Yeah."

"Well," Weiss said carefully. "If you ever do then..."

"I know," Yang smiled. A genuine one this time that made Weiss' lips pull on their own.
"So how is the tournament going?" Weiss asked to change the subject.

"You tell me?" Yang said and winked at her. "You've apparently been watching me all night."

A blush quickly rose to her cheeks to accompany the smile.

"I would but I think it's pretty clear I have no idea what is going on with that game."

"Yeah, you are pretty bad," Yang laughed. "Guess you don't have time to play video games, huh?"

"Not really," Weiss admitted. "But I have never really had much interest in them anyway."

"What!" Yang said in an insulted tone. "How can you not like video games?"

"This coming from the girl who won't open a book unless the teacher orders her too," said a voice from behind Weiss that she recognised as Blake's.

"Hey, books are too long," Yang replied.

"I think you are just a slow reader," Weiss laughed.

"She is, it took her two weeks to finish the first Harry Potter book."

"What! How?"

"It was just so dull," Yang cried. "Like why learn to fire pew pew lasers when you can just punch someone?"

"Did you just..."

"She did," Blake answered before Weiss could finish. "Typical brute thinking."

"I'm not sure how I feel about you two teaming up on me," Yang scowled at them both before turning to Blake with a grin. "How about instead you tell us what happened with Sun and the book?"

"I dropped it," Blake shrugged, but her eyes gave away her lie. Something that Yang clearly saw too as her smile widened.

"Bullshit," She scoffed. "If you dropped that book, you would be freaking out looking for scratches and folds."

"His tail caught it so there wouldn't be any," Blake replied as a small blush began to creep into her cheeks. "Anyway, I should go get us some food."

"Pretty sure he already has what you two want in his wallet," Yang whispered to Blake as she walked past causing the blush on her cheeks to deepen.

"Yang!" Weiss scolded her as even her own cheeks had heated up from the girls words.

"I'm only joking," Yang laughed and winked behind her to where Weiss knew Sun would be sitting. "Probably."

"You are terrible, do you know that?"

"I do."
Weiss couldn't help but smile at the stupid grin on Yang's face.

"Well, I would sit here and listen to more," Weiss said in a mock sarcastic tone. "But I need to use the restroom."

"Upstairs on the right," Yang replied.

"That had better be the restroom," Weiss scowled at the girl as she stood up.

"Of course," Yang winked making Weiss trust her even less.

Weiss walked through the crowded room that she had slowly realised through the night was mainly couples apart from Tai, Ruby, and Oscar, thought she had noticed Oscar giving Ruby the occasional sideways glance, and made her way up the stairs. On the right was a single door that she slowly pushed open. Fortunately Yang had not given her the wrong room and she stepped inside.

A couple of minutes later, Weiss dried her hands and was about to make her way out of the room when a pair of voices she didn't recognise floated up through the open window. Though she was generally against eavesdropping, she was just able to make out Yang's name and her intrigue was peaked so she went over to the window and listened carefully.

"... to know, Tai," said a voice that Weiss had never heard before.

"I know that but today is not the day to tell her," replied a voiced that, despite its slightly angry tone, was definitely Tai's.

"Then when?"

"I don't know. You know as well as I do how she'll react."

"Tai..."

"No, Qrow, this conversation is over for today. I'll talk to Yang when she's ready."

"When she's ready or when you're ready?"

Tai didn't respond to that but a couple of seconds later there was a loud bang of the door slamming closed.

Weiss had no idea what she had just overheard but she knew it was a conversation she definitely should not have heard and now she had no idea what to do. Did she tell Yang? Part of her wanted to but Tai had said something that had suggested Yang would react badly.

After a couple of minutes, Weiss had made her decision. This wasn't anything to do with her so with a sigh she left the room determined not to say anything to Yang about what she had just overheard. However, she had just left the room and gotten to the top of the stairs when a door to her left opened and she felt a hand wrap around her wrist and pull her inside.

Before she could even take in her surroundings, a flash of gold rushed towards her and she suddenly felt a pair of lips crash against her own as the smell of lavender filled her nose. It took her a couple of seconds to realise what was happening as heat flooded her system but she quickly recognised the strands of blonde hair that fell in front of the closed eyes of her kisser. Finally understanding what had happened, Weiss closed her eyes and returned some of the pressure.

As she felt the kiss deepen, Weiss wrapped an arm around the girls waist until her nails scraped
along the soft flesh of Yang's back. She allowed her hand to dig a little deeper, feeling all the strong muscles just under the girl's skin as she went. Wanting Yang closer, she raised her other hand and placed it on the side of the girl's jaw, her fingers burying themselves in the girl's hair, and pulled her in. Apparently sensing what Weiss wanted, Yang bent down and picked her up with ease to spin her around and place her on a nearby desk.

Now at the same height, Weiss pulled the boxer in until her lips almost hurt from the pressure. After a couple more seconds, Weiss felt Yang's tongue ask for permission and she gladly granted it. With the girl's tongue now wrestling with her own, a new heat made its way through Weiss. She knew she should stop but she didn't want to, the feeling of Yang's lips on hers, the smell of lavender, the hand that was now running it way down her back sending shivers through her spine. Each of them alone would be tempting enough but together they were intoxicating.

Wanting to feel more, she slid her hand around to the girl's stomach, her shirt riding up a little as Weiss' hand sought its destination. And by Oum was the destination incredible. Her hand was greeted by the strong muscles of Yang's abs that hid just below the girl's soft skin. Unable to control herself, Weiss dug her fingers in a little deeper, squeezing gently as a small groan of pleasure escaped from Yang. Much to her displeasure, Weiss felt Yang pull back slightly.

"I've wanted to do this all day," Yang said in a single breath before crashing back in and taking Weiss' lips once again.

This time however, Yang's hands didn't remain on her back. Instead they worked their way up until they were at the collar of her jacket and gave a small tug, not enough to pull it off but just enough to let Weiss know she wanted it gone. Without hesitation, Weiss slowly pulled her shoulder down to let the fabric slide over it. Taking the hint, Yang pulled it the rest of the way and Weiss quickly freed her wrists.

Now free of her jacket, Weiss felt the slight pinch of cold air assault her arms and quickly wrapped them around the back of Yang's neck to take in some of the heat that the blonde seemed to produce in excess. She felt one of Yang's hands skim against her back, easily pushing aside the thin t-shirt so that her hand could press against the skin, while the other seized the belt on Weiss' jeans and pulled their hips together.

Suddenly the door to Yang's room opened and Weiss felt Yang immediately rip herself away as they both turned towards the door to see black hair emerge from behind it.

"Yang, Ruby wan..."

"BLEAKE, CAN'T YOU KNOCK!"

The sound of Yang's yell made Weiss jump out of her skin as Blake's eyes widened and seconds later she had ducked back out of the room with her ears flat against her head. As Yang turned back to her, she could have sworn that the girl's eyes had turned a burning red but a blink later, they were back to their normal soft lilac.

Now that the moment was broken, Weiss took a moment to collect her thoughts and realised exactly how much she had lost control. Not only had she practically felt up Yang, she had even allowed Yang to start stripping her clothes off.

"Fuck."

Weiss looked up and saw that she wasn't the only one who seemed to be realising what had just happened. Yang was looking at Weiss with what seemed to be regret but her body was shaking a
little. It didn't take long for her to figure out from the girl's clenched fists that it was from anger.

"Yang," Weiss began only for Yang to cut her off with a slight turn of her head. "Hey."

Weiss reached out and took the girl's fist with her own hands.

"What's wrong?"

She felt Yang try to pull her fist free but tightened her grip so that the girl couldn't go anywhere. Silence filled the space between them for a few seconds but finally Yang let out a ragged breath.

"Me," Yang sighed. "I lost control."

"So did..."

"No, Weiss," Yang interrupted. "It's not the same."

"How?"

"Because I wasn't thinking about what you wanted," Yang said in a slightly raised voice. "I was mad at Qrow and I just wanted to feel good so I gave into my urges."

"Oh."

"I'm sorry," Yang apologised and finally looked her in the eye.

"It's fine, Yang," Weiss shook her head. "And if you think I didn't want that too then you were clearly not paying attention."

"That's not the point," Yang sighed. "If Blake hadn't come in, I don't know how far I would have gone and I don't want it to be like that, I don't want our first time to be me being selfish."

"I know," Weiss knew she couldn't wait any longer to have the conversation. "But I think I should apologise too."

"What for?" Yang asked, confusion creeping into her eyes. "You did nothing wrong."

"I did," Weiss argued. "I think I may have given you the wrong impression."

"About?"

"Yang," Weiss sighed and pulled the girl a little closer. "I liked what just happened, I really did, but I'm not ready for things to go any further."

"Ah."

"Yeah."

Silence crept between them but after a couple of moments Yang gave her a small smile.

"That's fine," Yang smiled.

"You're not disappointed?"

"I mean, sex is great but it's not like I need it," Yang shrugged. "If you're not ready, then we'll wait until you are."
"But I don't know when that will be," Weiss admitted nervously.

"I don't care."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes."

Hearing the resolution in Yang’s voice, she breathed a sigh of relief. Wanting to show Yang that she appreciated her understanding, Weiss gently pressed her lips against the blonde's. The kiss wasn't a long one but she tried her best to convey how much she cared about the girl.

"There is one other thing I wanted to ask you," Yang said as their lips separated.

"And what is that?" Weiss asked as she snaked her arms back around Yang's waist.

"Well," Yang paused in thought. "What you said to Ruby earlier when she asked about us."

"Oh, that," Weiss smiled. She knew what Yang was going to ask but decided to let the girl do it herself.

"Yeah, that," Yang nodded and placed her hands on either side of Weiss. "We've been dating for a couple weeks now, and I have no intention of ending it so I was just wondering what you would think if I said I was ready to, maybe, make things more... official?"

"Yang, are you asking me to be your girlfriend?" Weiss asked with an amused smile.

"I... I guess so," Yang replied quietly. "But only if it's what you want too."

While it wasn't common, she had found that she quite liked it when Yang acted bashful. There was something about watching the muscular, blonde boxer become flustered over her that made her feel warm as it was a clearest indication of just how much she cared.

"Hmm," Weiss hummed teasingly and pulled Yang close again. "I am unable to think of a single problem I would have with that."

A wide grin stretched across Yang's face as Weiss finished but just as she was leaning in, a gentle knock sounded from the door.

"Yang? Weiss?" Came Blake's voice from the other side.

Yang let out a groan as dropped her head but they was no anger this time.

"What do you want?" the blonde called to her friend.

"Ruby's about to open her presents."

"Alright," Yang replied with a sigh and turned to Weiss. "I guess we should go down."

Though she would have liked to stay alone with Yang in the room, she knew that Yang was right, so Weiss pulled back on her jacket and slid herself off the desk. With one final look at each other, Yang pulled open the door to reveal Blake still standing behind it. The silence between her and Yang was a little unnerving at first but in seconds Yang had put her arm around the back of Blake's neck and pulled her into a one armed hug.

"Sorry for shouting," she said in a soft voice.
"It's fine," the girl replied and pulled way quickly. "I should have knocked."

"Too right you should have," Yang scowled halfheartedly before giving the faunus a small shrug. "Oh well, let's go watch Rubes freak out over her stuff."

* 

As Ruby opened each her presents, Weiss began to feel she had made a mistake in her purchase since so far there had been a very distinct commonality between everything she had opened and that was that they were all clothes of some sort coloured red or black. The first present she opened was a pair of thick, gothic looking boots that Weiss doubted her father would even let near the house and from where she was sitting, she saw four buckles running up the side of each one.

The next two presents were hoodies from Nora, Ren, Pyrrha and Jaune. She actually liked the hoodies, despite their colour, as one was red with a black rose woven through the chest and the other was the same except the colours were reversed. Following them was a corset-style mini dress from Yang, it's skirt flaring out a little and multiple straps hung from the top. Weiss liked it but she definitely hoped Ruby always wore a top underneath it.

More clothes followed from Blake's parents but Blake's present was the first that wasn't. Instead it was a thin book. Weiss didn't see the title as Ruby quickly hid it from sight but the wink that Blake gave the girl made her really not want to. After Blake's, Weiss saw Tai pull her own gift from the pile and hand it to Ruby.

It had taken her a little while to find the right gift as while Yang had talked about Ruby quite a lot, the only real concrete thing Weiss had discerned about the girl was that she liked cars. With that being the only thing she knew, Weiss had talked to one of the engineering students about good gift and he had pointed her to a shop that sold models with fully constructable engines.

She watched Ruby unwrap the present carefully and turn it around to look at it properly. It took a moment for the girl to react but once she had figured out what it was, her face broke into a huge grin.

"Oh my Oum!" The girl exclaimed and looked up. "This is a 1962 Ferrari Berlinetta."

"The man in the store said it was a must have for car lovers," Weiss replied timidly.

"Thank you so much," Ruby said and gently placed it down on the floor like it was a delicate piece of glass. "These kind of construction kits are super expensive."

"It's no problem, honestly," Weiss smiled.

Happy that Ruby liked her gift, she breathed a little sigh of relief and sat back on her chair as the girl continue to open the rest of her presents. Just like most of the others, Qrow had chosen clothes and bought to girl a bright red cloak that she immediately threw over herself. Oscar had chosen a nice silver pair of rose earrings, not the kind of gift you would buy someone you didn't like, and Sun had given her a small box of new tools.

Noise quickly returned to the room once everything had been opened as Ruby made her way around thanking everyone and Weiss was surprised as the girl approached her and pulled her into a hug tight enough to squeeze the air from her. Not quite sure what to do, she simply gave the girl a small hug in return and soon after the girl moved on.

A couple of minutes later Weiss excused herself to the kitchen as the room was once again getting quite rowdy and was surprised to encounter Blake sitting alone in a chair eating what looked to be
a tuna sandwich.

"Hello," Weiss said, not wanting it to seem awkward.

"Hi," the girl replied and used her leg to push out a chair opposite her at the table. "I'm guessing you needed some peace too?"

"A little," Weiss smiled and accepted the seat.

"I don't blame you," Blake nodded as one of the cat ears on her head turned towards the doorway where Nora could be heard shouting something. "She's a good friend but she can be a little much sometimes."

"I can see that," Weiss responded cautiously, not wanting to insult one of Blake's friends.

Fortunately, the raven-haired girl only gave her a small smile and took another bite of her sandwich.

"Don't worry, you will get used to it," She said once she had swallowed her food. "Especially if you and Yang are official now."

Weiss raised her eyebrows at Blake only to see her wiggle her faunus ears again and it suddenly dawned on her that Blake had likely heard everything they said.

"Sorry for walking in on you two by the way," Blake apologised, her amber eyes locked on her own with an intensity that made Weiss nervous. "If it's any consolation, Yang has never yelled at me like that before."

"Thanks, I guess," Weiss nodded. "You've walked in on her before?"

"I don't make a habit of it but unfortunately it has happened a little more than I would like."

"Oh."

The implications of what Blake had just said quickly hit her and made her heart sink. It wasn't that she expected Yang to have not been with anyone else but they way Blake had said it made it sound like it was more common than she had thought.

"Everything alright, Weiss?" Blake asked, her eyes her still locked on hers.

Weiss tried to say yes but the intensity in Blake eye's made it very clear that she would see through the lie.

"I feel a little guilty is all."

"Don't," the girl replied without hesitation.

"Huh?"

"Yang is one of those rare people who knows exactly what she wants and will go for it, no matter the cost," Blake sighed and placed her sandwich aside. "If she wants a relationship with you, then she isn't going to care about keeping it a secret or having to be celibate for a while."

"I know," Weiss nodded. "But that doesn't change that it is still unfair to what she wants."

"True," Blake replied without blinking. "But life is quite frequently unfair."
"That's not helpful," She groaned.

"Like I said," Blake shrugged and picked up her sandwich. "Yang doesn't care, she knew everything going in and made her choice."

"I know," Weiss said again.

"Look Weiss, I know everything Yang has ever faced and this is one of the least unfair things that has happened to her," Blake said with a softness to her voice as she stood up. "But if you are really feeling guilty then talk to her about it, she will tell you the exact same thing."

"You are right," Weiss said reluctantly. Though the guilt was not gone, she knew that Blake was correct that Yang didn't care.

"I'm aware," Blake replied. "Well I'm going back in."

As Blake turned to walk back into the living room, Weiss realised what she had said about knowing everything about Yang and decided to ask the girl about what she had overheard in the bathroom.

"Blake?" Weiss called the faunus, causing Blake to stop and turn to face her with a raised eyebrow. "You said you know everything about Yang's life right?"

"Yes," the girl said with squinted eyes. "But those are things for her to tell you."

"I know," Weiss said quickly, not wanting Blake to the she was snooping. "I don't want you to tell me."

"Then why do you ask?"

"Well," Weiss paused to think about how to say it. "When I was in the bathroom, I overheard Tai and Yang's uncle arguing about something."

"Sounds rather usual for them," Blake said offhandedly. "What does this have to do with Yang?"

"They were talking about telling her something," Weiss clarified. "Something she apparently wouldn't like."

Blake suddenly stiffened and her eyes narrowed.

"Tai and Qrow?"

"Yes," Weiss confirmed. "Do I tell Y..."

"Weiss," Blake interrupted her in a voice that made her shiver. "Forget that conversation."

"But..."

"No," Blake interrupted again, the finality in her tone making it very clear that Weiss shouldn't argue. "Just drop it."

Without another word, Blake turned and exited the room leaving Weiss more confused than before she had asked. Could whatever Qrow had told Tai really be that bad? She thought to herself.

As she sat there trying to think of what it could be, she realised just how little Yang had actually said about her past. The blonde frequently spoke of her art and college, her family, and she even
spoke of her mother, Summer on occasion; but she had never mentioned anything of what had followed.

She had of course let small things slip. Yang's anger at her uncle was apparent and on the way to the museum during their last date, there had been a moment just before arriving at Beacon where she had completely zoned out. Weiss had tried to ask what was wrong both times but Yang had quickly ended the conversation without saying much.

Weiss knew that whatever secrets Yang kept still troubled her. Both times she had witnessed it because the emotion had been written all over her face. The first time it was pain, the second anger. Weiss was worried what the next one she saw would be. What really scared her though was pushing too far. She wanted Yang to be able to confide in her, to know that she would listen but she was worried that Yang would shut her out if she pushed too hard.

"There you are," Weiss looked up to see Tai standing in the doorway. "It's seven-fifteen, Yang said you have to be home by eight."

"Ah, yes," she gave a nod and stood up. "Thank you."

Though she wished she didn't have to, Weiss made her way into the living room to see Yang sat at a table talking excitedly to Jaune and Ren and she took a moment to stop and appreciate the smile on the boxers face. She was still getting used the butterflies that filled her stomach every time she saw the grin spread across Yang's face and hated that she couldn't stick around to watch it for longer but, with a sigh, she made her way over to the girl and tapped her shoulder.

"Oh hey," Yang said as she turned the smile towards her and succeeded in intensifying the butterflies. "Weiss so sad?"

Though she rolled her eyes at the horrible pun, she felt a smile pull at her lips.

"It's time for me to go," Weiss replied, the smile on her face not conveying her sadness of the statement.

"Damn, already?" Yang asked, the smile immediately dropping from her face and Weiss gave a confirmatory nod. "Alright, I'll show you out."

Over the next few minutes, Weiss quickly said goodbye to everyone at the party. While she simply exchanged the word with many of the guest, she was surprised when Ruby once again pulled her into a hug and thanked her for the present but she quickly returned it. The other surprise was from Blake's father who gave her his business card and told her to call him if she ever wanted some advice. All to soon however, she found herself in the hallway saying goodbye to the person she wanted to leave the least.

"So," Yang said as they moved closer to the front door in an attempt to stay out of sight. "Did you have fun?"

Weiss looked up into the girl's eyes to see a small amount of hope in them.

"I actually did," she smiled as Yang's eyes lit up from her answer.

"Great," Yang smiled back and leant back to take a quick look into the front.

Seemingly satisfied, Yang placed her hands on either side of Weiss' waist of stepped closer. Knowing that Yang was about to kiss her goodbye, she felt her body heat up a little but she knew she had to clear something up first.
"Yang," Weiss stopped the girl as she began to lean in. "Wait."

"What's wrong?" Yang asked, her brow lowering in confusion. "No-one's looking."

"It's not that," Weiss shook her head, both to emphasise her point and to clear the fogginess that was being caused by the placement of Yang's hands. "I know we talked about this a little but I need to know that you are sure about us?"

"Wei..."

Yang's initial scoff made Weiss cut her off.

"I am serious, Yang," Weiss interrupted. "I need to make sure you understand that I don't know how long it will be until I can tell my father, and I won't be ready for... that... until we no longer have to hide."

Yang was already shaking her head but Weiss knew she was listening to her.

"I just want to make sure that this is really what you want?"

Yang gave her a hard look that lasted for a couple of seconds before finally speaking.

"Are you done?"

"Yes."

"Good."

Without another word, Yang quickly closed the gap between them and pulled her into a kiss. It wasn't at all like the frantic one they had shared upstairs. That one had been pure frantic lust that had pushed all sanity from her mind. This one however was full of care. The pressure on her lips and how still Yang's hands were on her waist being more than enough to convey everything Yang needed to say. After a couple of seconds, she felt Yang pull away and took a shuddering breath.


Weiss breathed a sigh of relief as she gave Yang a small nod. While not all of the guilt was gone, the kiss had washed away most of her remaining concerns.

"Okay," Weiss smiled happily.

"Great," Yang smiled back. "So, I'm guessing it will be a while before we can hang out again?"

"Unfortunately," Weiss replied with a frown. "I had to move around some meetings and hand off a couple of things to Ciel just to be here today."

"Damn," Yang replied while reaching past Weiss to open the door. "I guess I will have to make the most of your morning coffee runs."

"And what exactly do you mean by that," Weiss grinned as she heard Hazel pull up to the walkway and stepped outside.

"Weeeeell," Yang playfully dragged out the word. "I'm thinking a little flirting, maybe some hand grazing, totally accidental of course."

Weiss laughed at Yang as she watched Hazel get out of the car and open the door ready for her.
"And I will most definitely be pulling you into back room for some private conversations."

"I can just imagine how insightful those conversations will be," Weiss teased.

"Oh, I intend to make them very insightful," Yang replied with a wink.

"Well then," Weiss chuckled and took a step backwards towards her car. "I must go but I look forward to seeing exactly how insightful you can be."

"Good to know," Yang grinned while leaning against the door frame. "Text me later?"

"I will," Weiss smiled and walked the rest of the way to her car and got inside. "Goodnight, Yang."

"Night."

As Hazel shut the door and made his way back to the driver seat, Weiss waved to Yang who responded by blowing a kiss; but even the joy that rose in her from Yang's playfulness could not stop the sadness that filled her as Hazel drove her away from the house and towards a dinner that would no doubt ruin her mood for the rest of the night.
Vibrations gently ran through Weiss' lips as her girlfriend let out a soft moan of happiness from their gentle kiss, the girls hands on her waist slowly pushing her backwards until she felt a hard surface press against her lower back. With no more room behind her, the two of them stopped and Weiss felt the girls arms position themselves on the counter either side of her to cut off any way she could move. Knowing why Yang was doing it made Weiss smiled to herself and decide to play along. Removing her own hand from the blonde's waist, she slowly ran it up one of the arms trapping her until she felt soft strands of loose hair brush against her fingers.

Smiling to herself, Weiss trailed her finger along Yang's collarbone to elicit another soft groan from the girl before laying her hand against the center of the girl's chest and applying a little pressure. After a couple of seconds, Yang pulled her lips away and opened her eyes questioningly.

"Is this not a health code violation?" Weiss teased with a smile.

"Normally," was the only word Yang replied with a small smile before moving back in.

Weiss allowed the blonde's lips to linger on his own for a few seconds before once again pushing the girl away.

"Normally?" Weiss chuckled with a raised eyebrow as Yang pulled back. "What is different about this time?"

"Well, you're pretty hard to resist," Yang answered with a small contented sigh.

"That is sweet but I am not sure that is how it works, Yang," Weiss laughed at the girl's logic.

"Then how about that this is the longest I have seen you in three weeks," Yang pouted jokingly. "I'm sure any health inspector would give me these few minutes."

"So, you are saying that you miss me?"

"I don't even have time to tell you how much," Yang replied, her voice tinged with disappointment. "When will you actually get a day off?"

Weiss knew how Yang felt. Her placement in the research and development was only supposed to last a month but one week ago, her father had surprised her by saying she would be staying there longer. Apparently the increased productivity and staff moral since she had fired Cornell, alongside the promising designs she had personally approved, had impressed her father enough that he considered her more valuable where she was. However, with college at the same time, Weiss had been unable to make much time to even come to Blake's store in person, let alone make plans with Yang.
"I know," Weiss sighed sadly. "Me and Arthur are still going over budgets for new projects and I really do not want to pawn him off on Ciel."

"You think that girl can't handle him?" Yang scoffed as a knock sounded from the door to the store-front.

With a loud frustrated groan, Yang bowed her head and stuck her arm out of the nearby door for it to return a second later with a piece of paper.

"Ciel can handle Arthur easily," Weiss said as Yang busied herself with making the ordered food. "I would just rather she did not have to. He can be...infuriating, to say the least."

"And you can't fire him?"

"As much as I would like to be done with him, no," Weiss smiled while she watched Yang. Even in the girl's rush to finish the sandwich, she still took care in its preparation. "For all his faults, he hasn't done anything to warrant it and he actually runs the department well. Most of the time anyway."

"Still sounds like a dick," Yang sighed. "I'm guessing a kick in the nuts is a no-no too?"

"Unfortunately," Weiss laughed at what she hoped was a joke. "Anyway, why have you been working so much lately? Your fight is next week, right?"

Yang gave the door a small knock as she finished making the food and Blake's head popped through to look at them both with sharp amber eyes.

"Don't worry, I am making sure she goes to practice every day," The raven-haired faunus said while she picked up the plate. "Besides, she isn't working another shift until after the fight."

"Keep eavesdropping and I will tape earmuffs to your head," Yang interjected with a raised eyebrow. "Again."

"How terrifying," Blake replied sarcastically and rolled her eyes as she left the room.

Due to the frequency of being in the kitchen over the past few weeks, Weiss had slowly become accustomed to how Blake and Yang's relationship worked. At first she had struggled to understand it but she had quickly realized that it was just how they communicated. Yang would quite frequently make cat comments or puns but it never felt as when her father used them. Though Blake did seem to hate the puns more, a sentiment Weiss herself had never thought she could sympathize with.

The Faunus was almost as bad as Yang when it came to shrewd comments and even Weiss had to admit that the girl seemed to be winning in the apparent insult competition. Almost every other interaction they had, Blake would make a comment about the blonde boxer being more brawn than brain; but much to Yang's annoyance, every once in a while Blake would make a comment that just flew over the girl's head and the Faunus would walk away with a smug look on her face. Yang usually recognised the insult seconds after but by then the battle was already won.

"You taped earmuffs to her head?" Weiss asked incredulously.

"Eh," Yang shrugged dismissively and pulled a stool from under a counter. "Only once."

Weiss let a smile take over her face for a few seconds as she took a sip from her coffee.
"So, why are you working so much?" Weiss repeated her question.

While she certainly had no problem with seeing Yang during her sporadic visits over the last week and a half, the fact that Yang had been in the store almost every time meant that the blonde was working almost as much as she was.

"And please do not say it is just to see me," Weiss added.

"That's just a bonus," Yang grinned. "But I'm actually close to something I've been working towards for a couple of years."

"And that would be?"

"Nope," Yang replied and stuck out her tongue. "That's pricey information."

Knowing what Yang was getting at, Weiss scowled at the girl for a second before she pushed herself off the counter and stepped towards her girlfriend. With Yang sitting down, Weiss was slightly taller than the girl so with her best attempt at a flirty smile, she reached out and grabbed the collar of Yang's jacket.

"Well," Weiss smiled cheekily. "Fortunately for me, I am very rich."

As she pulled Yang in for their lips to meet, Weiss felt a pair of strong arms wrap around her back and pull her closer. As usual, being wrapped up in Yang's arms made her heart race as the feeling of warmth flooded her system. The short moments that Weiss allowed herself to indulge had quickly became some of her favourite moments in the world since she knew that Yang was feeling everything the same way she was. Because of that, she had found herself enabling Yang's teasing far more often than not.

Not wanting to encourage the girl too much however, Weiss pulled back and gave her a small grin.

"Is that enough?"

"Hmm, you promise you won't freak?" Yang said nervously. Though she was a little worried by what she was agreeing to, Weiss gave a short nod. "A motorbike."

"Please tell me you are joking?" Weiss sighed at how unsurprised she was by the reveal. For some reason, now that she had said it, Weiss couldn't imagine Yang driving anything else but that didn't mean she liked the idea of her girlfriend endangering herself like that.

"Nope," Yang smiled, albeit a little nervously. "I already have my licence and dad promised that when I had raised enough myself, then he would put up the rest."

"And exactly how long have you wanted to die?" Weiss asked with a small scowl but Yang only chuckled at her question.

"Since I was twelve," Yang smiled. "But like I said, I have my licence so I know what I'm doing."

"I still don't like it," Weiss said stubbornly.

"Really?" Yang smirked with a raised eyebrow. "So you don't think I'll look super hot riding one."

Weiss rolled her eyes at the girl and halfheartedly tried to take a step back only to be stopped by Yang's arms. She looked down into Yang's eyes and saw that, despite the grin that was painted across her face, there was nervousness in those beautiful balls of lilac.
"Maybe," Weiss finally replied. "But I don't think you would look very good spread across the floor."

Yang let out a small laugh and Weiss responded by lightly hitting her chest. The blonde's ability to find an innuendo in almost everything was admirable but she would never admit such a fact to Yang.

"You know what I mean," Weiss scowled.

"Don't worry so much," Yang grinned and pulled Weiss forward so that she was now stood between the girl's legs. "I'm a great driver."

Weiss continued to scowl at her as she moved her hand from the girl's chest up to her cheek and watched Yang eyes flutter close for a second.

"You might be but there are many who are not," Weiss sighed.

"Then I will be extra careful," Yang replied, her tone serious despite her smile.

"Promise?"

"I promise," Yang smiled and bit her lip. "I've got some pretty amazing things to stick around for after all."

With one last sigh at Yang's reckless nature, Weiss lowered her head and pressed her lips softly against her girlfriend's. She knew Yang had heard her concerns as the girl didn't even attempt to deepen the kiss; instead she simply allowed her lips to linger in place in an attempt to reassure her. Finally feeling a little more at ease, Weiss broke away and looked into Yang's eyes with a content smile.

"Good."

Weiss would have loved to have stayed in Yang's warm embrace all day but unfortunately time was not on her side as her Scroll began to vibrate in her pocket to indicate it was time for her to leave. Yang apparently felt the vibration too as she let out a small groan.

"Please tell me its not?"

"I'm sorry," Weiss apologised and pulled her Scroll out to turn off the alarm.

"It's fine," Yang replied, a slight sadness seeping into her voice. "Just make sure to text me the minute you know you have a free day."

"I will be messaging you the second I know," Weiss countered as she straightened out her clothes.

"You better," Yang smiled. "Have fun at work."

"You too."

Weiss gave Yang a final peck on the cheek and exited through the door. She moved quickly as she knew from experience that if she lingered, she would likely spend far too long saying goodbye.

A familiar post breakfast silence greeted her as she walked into the store-front to see a majority of the tables empty. It wasn't surprising to Weiss that business often dropped during the day as the café was surrounded mainly by office building with only a few other stores but she knew that around lunch and afternoon the place became so busy that on the occasions she had arrived
during those times, Weiss had decided against going into the back so as to not distract Yang.

"She is a good driver you know," Blake said in a bored voice as Weiss walked out from behind the counter.

"I thought Yang told you not to eavesdrop?" Weiss smiled at the girl.

"Its boring out here," the girl shrugged. "Besides, she tells me pretty much everything anyway."

At first, the fact that Blake constantly knew everything about her relationship with Yang had unsettled Weiss a little; but she had quickly come to understand that there was nothing Yang didn't tell the Faunus and she had no intention of trying to change that. She knew that despite whatever Yang said, their secrecy did add a certain amount of strain and she wasn't going to tell Yang not to use her main confidant.

"True," Weiss admitted as Blake started to clean the coffee machine. "Do you know when Yang's fight starts, by the way?"

"You thinking of coming to watch?" Weiss gave the Faunus a small nod. "Friday at three."

"Thank you," Weiss smiled gratefully at her. "But please don't tell her, I don't want to get her hopes up in case I can't make it."

"No problem," Blake said with an understanding nod.

Grateful for the girl's understanding, Weiss gave Blake a quick smile before turning and leaving the café.

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**Blake Belladonna**

Yang often tried her best to sneak up on her but she had rarely been successful. In this case, Blake had heard the light creaking of the kitchen door open and was therefore unsurprised when two arms snaked around her waist, the hands linking over her stomach.

"Hey Blakey?" the girl cooed. "Where's the duct tape?"

"We're out," Blake said impatiently. She wasn't in the mood for Yang's teasing. "You didn't tell her."

Blake felt Yang's chin drop on her shoulder and she could imagine the smile fading from the girl's face. She was clearly trying to think of what to say as Blake could feel the slight movement of her jaw.

"I can't," she heard Yang whisper sadly. "She's finally stopped worrying so much."

"All the more reason to tell her now," she reasoned.

Silence followed her words for a minute and she felt Yang's arms tighten a little around her. Blake knew how she was feeling, she always did, but that didn't change what needed to be done.

"I'm scared."

The words would have been imperceptible to any human but not to her. The tremble in her best
friends voice made her pause but she had to make Yang.

"I know," She replied with a softer voice that was reserved only for Yang. "You are getting close, I can see it in the way you look at her, and you don't want to lose her but if you don't tell her yourself then that will most likely be the outcome."

"But if neither of us...

"She's planning on going to the fight, Yang," Blake interrupted and felt Yang's body immediately stiffen. She felt a little bad for betraying Weiss so quickly but she had no other choice. "If she does, then she will see it."

Once again, silence filled the small amount of space between them as Yang thought. Blake understood her hesitation. Yang's past was not a pleasant one and she knew the idea of it repeating was the girl's greatest fear, but Blake was trying her best to prevent that. She was almost certain that if Yang waited any longer then her fears might come true.

"You're right," Yang finally sighed, the fear evident in her voice. "She's going to hate me, isn't she?"

"I don't know about hate," Blake said honestly. "She certainly won't be happy; but I think she likes you enough to be understanding... eventually."

"Reassuring," Yang groaned. "I'm going in the back to think."

Without saying anything else, Blake turned and watched as Yang walked back through the door into the kitchen, her shoulders slumped at the prospect of the coming days.
Weiss sighed in relief as she left the meeting room. Having finally squared away the budgets for next year's projects; despite Arthur somehow finding new ways to be even less cooperative than usual, she was finally free to get back to her work. With all the meetings taking up her time, it had taken far longer than she had wanted to but she had slowly managed to get around to assessing the department's hiring practices.

So far she had been pleasantly surprised by what she had seen, or more accurately, by what she hadn't seen. She had only been able to sift through a couple piles of the previous hires and applications in the few short moments that she wasn't incredibly busy but so far she hadn't seen any hint of discrimination. It seemed that as much as she hated Arthur, she had to admit that he was very thorough in hiring only those who merited it.

Weiss also had noticed that the man himself wasn't particularly racist in any regard either, in fact he seemed to hate everyone equally. Outside of the projects he headed up himself, he quite often chose to remain in his office, and would usually just relay orders via his new assistant. If she was honest, his reclusive nature was one of very few things she actually liked about Watts.

Not wanting to think about the man any more than necessary, Weiss shook her head as she walked down the hallway to her office. Not long after she had finished setting up her office, she had ordered someone from maintenance to replace the bulbs with something less harsh on the eyes so as to no longer have to deal with migraines.

"Good afternoon, ma'am," she heard Ciel say as she walked into her warm office. "How was the meeting?"

Ciel had almost become more of a staple in her life than Yang. In a different way of course, no matter what jokes Yang made. The small Atlesian woman had been invaluable to Weiss from day one with her keen knowledge on everything happening in the department along with her ability to somehow get a task done quicker than anyone else she had met before. She was also incredibly smart and Weiss was sure that if Ciel had not been by her side, she would have not made as much progress in the department as she had.

"Good thank you, Ciel," Weiss said as she dropped into the chair behind her desk. "We finally have the budgeting sorted."

"Dr Watts finally conceded then?"
"It took some convincing, but yes," Weiss groaned and gratefully accepted the coffee that was handed to her.

She took a sip of the delicious brown liquid and took a moment to savour the taste. Her addiction to coffee was something she knew would come back to haunt her one day, but that day was too far in the future for her to truly be concerned.

"Would you like me to start organising more files for you to go through?"

"Yes please," Weiss gave the girl a short nod. "And could you also tell Dr Polendina that I would like to see him?"

"Of course, ma'am."

As the girl left the room, Weiss slumped down in her chair and thought back over the last three weeks. While she had managed to quickly get acclimated to balancing college and work, she hadn't accomplished much of what she wanted. Fortunately she had begun to review the hiring process but she was still using Ciel for things far below her worth. Weiss had been subtly testing her since day one by letting her handle meetings and allowing her to act as an overseer to smaller project, but so far the young woman had excelled in each and every field. She was considering promoting her to the interdepartmental liaison team after reading in her file that she had originally applied there but she needed to make sure it was something she still wanted first.

The main thing she wanted to do was spend time with Yang; but with her current workload, that hadn't been possible for more than an hour at a time. While the occasional visit was nice, Weiss had to admit to herself that she really did miss the boisterous blonde and those few moments were quickly beginning to leave her unfulfilled as every time she left, she wished for just a few more minutes.

With nothing to do until either Ciel returned and Dr Polendina arrived, Weiss allowed herself to think back on her time spent with Yang the day before. The way the blonde made her feel was unlike anything she had ever felt. She had been attracted to girls before, liked them even; but this, this was something else. The mere thought of the girl would make her heart race, but the feeling of actually being in her arms, their lips pressed together as Yang towered over her; made her face burn and her breathing quicken. Simply remembering how she felt during those moments pumped a terrifying energy through her. Though it wasn't terrifying because she hated it, but because she craved it more every time.

Groaning to herself, Weiss leant forward onto her desk and placed her head into her hands. She wasn't stupid, nor was she so naïve as to not know what the feelings were. But it was too soon, too complicated, for those types of feelings to have developed. It's not even been two months, she told herself. However, before she could once again convince herself that she was simply misreading her feelings, that it was simply because she had never been in a relationship like this, a knock on the door pulled her from her thoughts.

"Come in," Weiss called as she sat up straight, thankful for the distraction.

The door opened and a man's head topped with white hair stuck itself through the opening, his usual white lab coat only peeking slightly into view.

"Good afternoon, Miss Schnee," the man said jovially. "Young Miss Soleil said you wished to see me? Nothing bad I hope?"
Weiss smiled inwardly at the man's cheerful nature.

"What bad thing could you have possibly done, Dr Polendina?" Weiss countered in a serious tone that they both knew was false.

"Nothing that I recall, but one can never truly know the full impact of their actions," the doctor said thoughtfully. "The evident distress on your face could very well be of my own doing."

"Well, I assure you it is not," Weiss shook her head and pointed to the empty chair opposite her. "Please, come in and take a seat."

"I am both gladdened and dismayed," The man hummed as he entered the room and took the seat. He clearly noticed her confusion as he let out a small chuckle.

"If it is not I that has caused you such distress, then it is another," He explained in a sympathetic voice. "Is my experience in these matters, as a father, why you called me here?"

Weiss gave the man a small smile as she understood what he was trying to say. She had only ever seen pictures of the man's daughter but from everything she had seen of the man, she believed the girl to be incredibly lucky.

"The offer is appreciated, but no," Weiss answered, truly grateful that the man was willing to listen if she ever asked. "I brought you here to discuss the funding for our nerve chip."

"Ah yes, Arthur's new most hated project," The man said with a cheeky smile. Weiss knew that just like her, Dr Polendina couldn't stand Arthur but unlike her, who was open about it, he preferred to stay silent and focus on his own work.

"You will be glad to know that I have convinced Arthur to allow a generous amount to be given to the project," Weiss smiled. "So funding should not be in issue for your research."

"That is great news," Dr Polendina said, his tone betraying a little of his disbelief. "I am impressed, not many are able to make Arthur give way on such things."

"I can see why," Weiss laughed at the compliment. "But this should mean that if the research shows promise, as you say it will, you won't have to worry about funding at all. With enough progress, I am sure we will get additional funding from both the Atlesian military and the Remnant Medical Research Foundation, for both further research and development."

"My recognition in prosthesis should help greatly with securing the support of the RMRF," Dr Polendina added. "So, with things shaping up perfectly to make this project a success, all the pressure is on me and my team."

"And me," Weiss said. "I feel comfortable in telling you that I want this project to be an indication of the direction I wish to take with the STC when control is handed over to me."

"I am unable to think of a more noble direction," He replied with a smile. "I will do my best to not disappoint you."

"You have my fullest confidence, Doctor," Weiss smiled back at him.

Dr Polendina gave her an acknowledging nod.

"Thank you."
"No problem," Weiss sat back in her chair. "But that is all on that, I just wished to inform you myself."

"Very well," Dr Polendina replied happily. "Then I should return to work, unless there is something you would like to discuss?"

"I'm fine," Weiss reassured him. "Have a good day, Dr Polendina."

"You too, Miss Schnee," he said as he stood up and made his way out the door.

Weiss watched as the man left and gave a little sigh. She would have loved to have confided in someone like Dr Polendina but she was worried about the amount of people who knew already. Beside Yang's family, both Blake and Pyrrha knew and Weiss was fairly certain that Ciel had figured it out, though the woman had not said a word about it. Adding another person to that list only increased the odds of it getting out.

Needing to take her mind off of Yang for a while, Weiss pulled her college essay from a drawer in her desk and decided to work on it until Ciel's return.

"I think that will be all for today," Weiss sighed in frustration as she stretched her arms. "If I have to look at another page of someone describing their interests as just 'vast and varied,' I will lose my mind."

She heard Ciel let out a soft chuckle as she placed her papers aside and stood up to stretch her legs. For the last three hours, they had been sifting through past applications for people who had managed to make it to the interview process and so far she had only found one confusing case. A Faunus who's applications looked perfect but was rejected for supposedly not being a good match for the workplace; however Ciel had said the woman was extremely polite when she met her.

"They are a little dry," The woman said as she stretched her back.

As she did, Weiss looked away out of respect. The sight didn't captivate her the way Yang could, but even Yang had made passing comments on Ciel's looks, comments that Weiss couldn't deny.

"Yes, well, a lot of them are Atlesian," Weiss commented jokingly. "No offence."

"None taken," Ciel replied. "Did you find any more problems?"

"No, just the one," Weiss answered with another tired sigh. "How much more is there on file?"

"There are still quite a few more to go but we only keep the past two years on record," Ciel explained as she straightened out the discarded pile of past applications. "They automatically delete after that."

She groaned at the idea of having to eventually read more pages of formulaic résumés, they all began to blend together over time. At one point during the pile they had just finished, she had been reading one and had to go back to an earlier one just to make sure Ciel had not accidentally printed the same page twice.

"Well it's better than nothing," Weiss replied and sat back down. "Thank you for helping me with all of this."
"It is no problem," Ciel smiled. "I actually enjoy working on this with you."

"Really?"

"Absolutely, ma'am," the woman replied with a nod. "I rarely felt useful with Dr Watts."

"Well, you are more than useful," Weiss complimented her and decided now would be a good time to broach the subject of the potential promotion. "I have actually been wondering why it is that Arthur kept you as an assistant for so long?"

"I'm not sure," Ciel said matter-of-factly. "Maybe I never earned anything higher."

"I do not believe that for a second," Weiss argued firmly. "I've given you plenty of tasks over the last month and how you have handled them is more than enough to convince me you deserve a better position."

"Those are kind words, ma'am," Ciel smiled.

"Maybe, but they are true," Weiss said and sat back in her chair. "Can I ask? What were you hoping to get out of working here?"

Ciel sat up straight in her chair, clearly aware of what Weiss was doing. At first she remained quiet for a minute as she thought about her answer, but eventually she took a deep breath and began.

"Experience," Ciel said simply. "I have always had a passion for organization and keeping a tight schedule. I think working as Dr Watts' assistant for over a year has shown me much of what a department in a company such as the STC requires in terms in both."

"Well I can't say much in terms of your progress since starting here, but you certainly seem to understand both of those," Weiss smiled. "So I would say your time was well spent."

Weiss paused and looked at the woman who gazed back without any hint of nerves.

"But what about the future? What were your intentions after you learned those things?"

"I wanted to work my way up to a managerial position," Ciel said.

"Where?" Weiss interrupted her with a raised eyebrow that was just for show. "Here in R&D?"

"Yes," Ciel nodded. "This departments success is integral to the STC and therefore the people managing are among the most skilled, it is why I applied for a place here after my final year."

"As an assistant?" Weiss asked, though she already knew the answer.

"No, that is just the position that was offered to me," Ciel admitted. "I originally applied to be a part of the liaison team."

"And why do you think you didn't get the position?"

"I was recently out of college and lacked experience," The woman replied without hesitation.

Weiss gave a short nod and hummed at the girls answer.

"Well those are definitely not an issue now," She said, making sure to keep eye contact with the girl. "Is that position one you are still interested in?"
"It is."

"Good," Weiss smiled and leant her elbow on her desk. "Because I believe you would be great in that position."

Ciel didn't reply but Weiss could see a small smile pull at the woman's mouth.

"However," Weiss added. "I still need to clear it with the team but I would like you to be transferred once I leave."

"That's..." Ciel quickly caught herself, her usual polite and measured tone slipping as excitement cause her to blurt out her words. "I mean, thank you for the opportunity, ma'am."

"There is no need to thank me," Weiss gave the girl a pointed look. "You have earned this yourself and it is long overdue."

Ciel smiled at Weiss' words, her ocean blue eyes twinkling with glee.

"I will also be making sure that you report directly to me," Weiss added. "My father will undoubtedly place me into another department in the new year; but I have a vested interest in a few projects here that I would like to keep an eye on."

"I understand," The woman replied carefully.

"Good," Weiss said with a small nod and stood up. "Then I will do my best to make it happen, but for now I think we should get some rest. As you said, there is still quite a lot of this to go through."

Weiss waved her hand at the files Ciel had reorganised.

"A rest would be nice," Ciel agreed and picked up the pile as she got to her feet. "Would you like me to contact Mrs Jadis before I leave?"

"That can wait until tomorrow," Weiss replied. "It is getting late and I overwork you enough as it is."

"I honestly don't mind," Ciel chuckled lightly. "I like the work."

"I'm aware but I am sure you have someone to get home to."

A wide smile now spread across Ciel's face, the same smile Weiss had occasionally caught on her own in the mirror.

"There is someone," She replied, clearly unable to wipe the smile away.

"Then go," Weiss grinned at this new side of the woman that she hadn't seen before. "Go give them the news and enjoy yourself."

"Thank you, ma'am," Ciel said and bowed her head slightly.

With the smile still on her face, Ciel turned and left the room leaving Weiss to wonder who could make the usually serious girl act in such a way. She was glad though that Ciel had someone and made sure to remember to interrogate the navy-haired woman a little. She also made a mental note to drop the hint to Yang in hopes that the jokes would come to an end.

Weiss sat back in her chair and sighed. She had been doing her best to not think of Yang all night, but the image of the girl would somehow always manage to sneak its way back into her head.
Admittedly the boring files had done little to help, along with the fact that the occasional thought of her girlfriend did help raise her spirits a little; she had made sure to clear her head quickly and focus back on her work so as to not alert Ciel to her distraction.

Knowing that the thoughts were not going to go away this time due to having nothing to distract her, Weiss pulled out her Scroll and brought up Yang's details. She knew that Yang would probably be done with training for the day, and would either at home or at Blake's so she quickly hit the call button and waited for the girl to answer. Fortunately, she only had to listen to the dial tone twice before Yang picked up.

"Isn't this a Weiss surprise," Said the blonde's voice.

"I immediately regret my decision to call you," Weiss scoffed at her.

"Please, I can hear the smile on your face."

"I doubt it," Weiss said in her best attempt at an impassive voice. "You must have taken a hard hit during practice."

A laugh came from her Scroll causing a wave of pleasure to flow through her body.

"Maybe," The girl replied, the fading laugh making her voice a little breathy. "So what's up?"

"Nothing," Weiss replied and leant back into her chair as she enjoyed the soothing sound of Yang's voice. "I just sent Ciel home for the night."

"Oh really?" Yang replied, her seductive tone causing Weiss' body to heat up a little. "So you're all alone in your office and decided to call me."

" Maybe," Weiss hummed as she felt her face burn. "What are you doing?"

"Doodling in bed," said Yang's voice, punctuated by the sound of a pen clicking. "But I can take a break."

"I can call back later," Weiss said quickly.

"Don't you dare."

Yang's voice was gentle but she could hear the command in the statement and her stomach exploded into butterflies at knowing just how much Yang wanted her to stay.

"Don't call you later?" Weiss teased.

"You know what I mean," Yang replied and clicked her tongue. "So did you wanna talk about something?"

"Not really," Weiss answered and fiddled with her jacket sleeve. "I just..."

While Weiss stopped herself from finishing the sentence, it was her turn to hear the smile on the other's face as Yang's mirthful voice replied.

"Just what?"

Rolling her eyes at how much the blonde brute enjoyed her embarrassment, Weiss took took a breath and prepared for the teasing.
"I just... wanted to hear your voice?"

"Hmm," She heard Yang hum and was confident in believing that Yang smile now stretched from ear to ear. "Is it living up to expectations?"

"It will do," Weiss smiled as she purposely held back just how much even the call was doing to clear her mind.

"Well, you know that if you're finished work you can come over right?"

"Do not tempt me," Weiss sighed. She would have loved nothing more than to get in her car and have Hazel drive her to Yang's house.

"I mean it," She heard Yang say; but there was suddenly something different to the girls voice that she couldn't quite put her finger on. "I..."

As Yang's voice seemed to catchy on her words, Weiss figured out what it was. She was anxious.

"Yang? What's wrong?"

Yang didn't reply for a couple of seconds but finally her quiet voice came through the small device.

"I need to talk to you about something important," the girl whispered and if Weiss wasn't mistaken there was now a hint of fear in her trembling voice. "I know you're busy, but I need to do it now and I can't do it over the phone. Please?"

Worry coursed through Weiss as she listened to Yang short breaths. She had never heard Yang talk in such a way before and the pit in her stomach told her that there was no way she would turn her down, especially when she so clearly needed her.

"I will be there soon," Weiss said as she stood up and made her way out the door without hesitation.

"Thank you," She heard Yang breathe from the other end.
A Past Regret (Part 1)

Chapter Notes

This is the final catch-up chapter, from now on I will be publishing on here at the same time as I publish on FF.
Also I would like to say a huge thank you to anyone who takes the time to read.

Updated with edits by ToxicExotic (17/09/2019)

Chapter 13 – A Past Regret (Part 1)

Yang Xiao Long

Yang dropped her Scroll onto her bed as the end call tone sounded in her ear. She had heard many sounds in her eighteen years of existence but at that moment she couldn't remember any of them filling her with as much dread as that one had. The sound indicated she was likely about to endure a pain she was all too familiar with, and once again provided proof that the gods were still not finished ripping things away from her.

But why? She thought as she placed her arms around her knees and leant back, trying to get herself as close to the wall as she could. Why can't I just have something? She asked herself, the sting of tears burning her eyes as she thought on everything life had already taken.

First her mom, Summer, had been physically torn from her. Some people had had the audacity to tell her that there was bound to be a reason, that the gods had plans they couldn't know. She had quickly shouted them down, for she saw no reason whatsoever a god could have to drive such a kind and selfless woman off a cliff and drag her out to sea besides cruelty.

But the cruelty of the gods had not ended there. Her childhood was next as her father shut down and delved deeper and deeper into depression. Very quickly he had fallen to drinking and quite often she would come home from school to find him passed out somewhere. When he wasn't passed out, he was moody and inattentive. He would ignore the upkeep of the house and forget basic things such as food or shopping.

All of that meant she was left alone to take care of her sister, forcing Yang to become a mother before her time to a child that wasn't even hers. She didn't blame Ruby at all; but as time continued she found herself bitter that instead of spending the days laughing and playing like other kids, she was home cooking and cleaning. Her nights spent soothing her little sister as the girl woke screaming from nightmares and begging for her mom. Their mom.

It had taken years for Yang to come to terms with that, to move on and accept she had filled her mother's role in her absence. She finally believed that the gods could take nothing more from her. They had taken her mother and in a way her father, made her life one of loss and pain and regret but through it all, she had the memories of her family. Of Summer's happy face, smiling with joy as she opened her presents on Christmas, how she would hear her laughing from the kitchen at her father's stupid antics as she watched television. They had taken so much from her but she thought
those memories untouchable.

Oh how she was wrong.

When she finally thought they had forgotten her, finally thought they'd had their fun, the gods attacked those too. Though they didn't take them from her this time. Instead they tarnished them, twisted them in ways that threatened to break her, ways that made her doubt everything she had known.

No longer believing anything was safe, her pain started to turn to anger and rage. If the gods insisted on taking everything she cared for from her then why should she care about anything. In fact not caring might just save them instead. So she began to act out. She would start fights at the slightest provocation, ignore both school and curfew. Even worse, despite Tai having already taken the steps to sort himself out years prior, Yang refused to let him forget. She would throw it in his face every chance she got just to spite him. All in an attempt to make herself unlovable.

But there was one person who had stuck by her through it all, one person who had refused to see her alone and eventually drew her back from that destructive path, Blake. She had been a victim of the gods but so had Blake. Everywhere they went people would sneer, bullies would pull at the girl's ears, trip her in the halls, shops refused to serve the young faunus and even Yang by association. And Yang hated every single one of them, so when the opportunity came, when Blake told her she was finally taking action against them, Yang stood at her side without hesitation, just as Blake had done for her. And so she made the decision that was now threatening to undo her happiness years later.

She joined the White Fang.

In retrospect, it was one of her stupidest decisions. She should have talked Blake out of it immediately, but at the time it had felt good. She finally had somewhere to direct her anger, not that they had participated in anything the White Fang had become synonymous for. There may have been the occasional fight with blatantly racist punks, but the most damage that had come from those was to their precious egos. Most of what they did was tagging. People that refused them service would quite often find themselves staring at some vitriolic graffiti when they next went to open their stores.

But still, even then she knew of the rumours. Stories of stores that were set ablaze in the night, people who were beaten so thoroughly that they were hospitalised. Even then, those stories gave her pause for concern about what they were doing but the final straw had come two years later when the news had reported an attack on the Schnee Company headquarters.

She had been at work in Blake's store when it had happened but even that was close enough for the panic to reach them. Rumours of explosions reached them within the hour followed quickly by eye witness accounts of people in white jackets barring the White fang logo rushing in with all sorts of weapons. She remembered the sickness that rushed over her at that point. She may not have been involved but she was affiliated. She had helped spread their message, but she couldn't any more and fortunately neither could Blake. Before the day was out, they had both made the decision to leave it behind.

It had been tough to leave. Members who agreed with the drastic actions had accused them of being traitors, and for a while they had been outcasts in both races. The fact of them being White Fang had been common knowledge due to the occasional run in with the police, and how quickly things spread around school, as such, people were terrified of them for a while. As for the Faunus, they had managed to piss off someone very dangerous. Adam Taurus.
Blake's first relationship and someone that had, at first, been a good man at heart, but who slowly became more and more deranged as time went on. Once they had left, he seemed to snap. Wherever she and Blake went Adam would be hiding in the shadows, always waiting for them to be alone so that he could confront them. At first he was upset, pleading for Blake to return, to give him another chance but the more they refused, the more they told him to leave them alone, the more aggressive he became. Pleading turned to grabbing which turned to violence. It finally all came to an end when he seemed to decide that if he couldn't have Blake, then no-one could.

Yang still had the scar just above her right breast from the switch-blade he had tried to shove into Blake, but fortunately she had managed to push the girl out of the way and took the blow as Blake had slammed a brick into the man's face. As Adam had laid on the ground, blood spilling from a nasty gash in his head, the police and paramedics had arrived. Fortunately for Blake, he survived and no charges were filed against her, but Adam was in jail very quickly with the new crackdown on White Fang related violence.

All of that fear and panic had stemmed from a single moment. The moment she had decided to encourage Blake, instead of pull her away from the darkness like the girl had done for her. And worst of all was that she couldn't blame it on the gods. There was no fate or larger plot that had made her do that. The blame was entirely her own. And now she was about to tell Weiss, a victim of the Schnee tower attack, and Yang knew what would happen when she revealed it.

The girl would run.

Just imagining the look of fear that would etch itself on the girl's face sent a painful ache through her, and in anger she shoved her leg away from her body, her foot catching her small drawing desk and sending it soaring across the room, its flimsy wood cracking audibly as it hit the wall.

Not feeling any better and with nothing else nearby to kick or throw, Yang pulled her now throbbing leg back up to her chest and just sat there, quietly waiting for Weiss to arrive so that she too could leave her alone.

*Just as I'm supposed to be.*

The sound of knuckles striking wood filled Yang's ears once again but she ignored it. Ruby had been knocking occasionally for a while but each time the girl had given up after Yang hadn't replied. This time however, the sound again echoed through her room again. She tried to ignore it but less than ten seconds later it came again.

"Go away, Ruby," Yang called, her voice a little raw from trying her best to not let the tears flow.

But the voice that replied wasn't her sister's.

"It's me," Weiss' voice said through the door.

A cold shiver ran up her back at the voice. She had expected Weiss to take longer to arrive, but it only made sense that she would rush, because why would the gods allow her five more minutes to try and think of a way to tell Weiss the truth that didn't make her run.

"Yang," Weiss voice came through the door again, the worry in it evident. "You called me over to talk so please let me in."

Though fear ran through her, Yang slowly pushed herself to the edge of her bed and stood up. She knew there was no longer a way she could make it easier so with a sigh, she walked over to the door. With trembling fingers, she pulled the small lock she had installed aside and opened the door.
Yang eyes immediately met Weiss' pale blue ones and she felt what little resolve she had left threaten to give way.

"Yang?"

She didn't reply due to fear of throwing up so instead she simply moved out of the way to indicate for Weiss to come inside. Without wasting a second, she stepped over the threshold and immediately stopped. Yang couldn't see the girl face from her position but the girl's head was turned towards the mangled remains of the drawing desk.

"What happened?" She asked, her tone taking on a harder inflection.

Knowing she now had to speak, Yang closed her door and made her way further into the room while still keeping her face turned away from Weiss'.

"I got angry," Yang croaked, deciding that if she was about to lose her then she may as well be completely honest.

Upon hearing what was said, Weiss turned to look at her with a raised eyebrow. There was concern written on her face but Yang couldn't bare to look at it and turned away.

"Why?"

Yang felt her eyes begin to burn again as tears welled up in them. She still couldn't look at Weiss and the pain of it was tearing her apart. This is the last time I will ever see her so why can't I look at her? Yang thought to herself.

"Because I need to tell you something," she sniffled.

"Yang, you are worrying me," Weiss said and Yang heard her take a step closer. "Please turn around."

Yang took a step away and shook her head, a warm liquid dripping onto her cheeks as her tears finally spilled over.

"Y-You will hate me," She replied.

"I could neve..."

"You will!" Yang half shouted, her tears falling in earnest as she flinched away from the small hand she felt touch her shoulder. "And I d-deserve it."

"Yang!" Weiss' voice was strong but caring. "Do not say such a thing, now look at me."

She was unable to pull away from Weiss' hand this time as it seized her shoulder and spun her around. Through waterlogged vision, Yang locked eyes with Weiss and felt a sob force its way out of her. She knew she probably looked a mess but she didn't care and neither would Weiss soon. But she did now and as the girl went in to hug her Yang pushed herself backwards, her back slamming into the wall hard enough to force another sob from her depths.

"Don't."

The word wasn't her own. It had escaped from her lips of its own accord and she hated it. Hated that she could ever make Weiss feel her touch was unwelcome.

But the time had come. She had to do it now while she still was still holding herself together, even
if it was with the mental equivalence of paper clips and chewing gum.

"I w..."

The admission caught in her throat, refusing to allow itself to be spoken because it knew. It knew that once it was out, there was no going back, knew that the consequences would shatter her heart into a million pieces and leave her alone in a mess of tears.

She once more but again it caught in her throat so she turned to something she knew would work. Her hands. They had never failed her, they always did whatever she wanted, drew whatever she wanted but as they slowly took hold of them hem of her shirt, she found she hated them. Why? she asked them as they inched up the right side of her shirt. Stop, please... she begged them. But they didn't. They carried on inching the shirt higher because the knew it had to be done.

STOP!

It was too late and she knew it. She knew that Weiss was watching, letting her get out what it was she needed to do and she knew that her shirt was high enough now. High enough to see the first hints of three black claw marks inked against her white skin. Knowing that she could no longer recover, she gave up and allowed her hands to finish their job, her eyes closed to save her the pain of seeing Weiss' disgusted face.

Before they could however, a hand closed over them making her halt her movements and causing her head to buzz in confusion. She can see it. Yang thought to herself, her eyes still closed. Does she not know what it means?

Fear rushed through her at the idea that she would actually have to say it, when a soft voice broke through her thoughts.

"Stop," Weiss said, her soft voice carrying a firmness to it that made her body obey. "That is enough."

She didn't understand. Weiss was speaking so softly when she should have been shouting.

Or running.

Anything that was the opposite of her current actions.

"I already know."

The words caused Yang’s eyes to snap open and pale blue eyes met her own with such affection that all of the pain and despair vanished for a split second. Weiss was still there, her hand holding hers, and her eyes refusing to leave her own. The small smile on her face showing that she wasn't going to leave.

But it only lasted so long as the last of her energy drained away from her and the floodgates opened. Her legs gave way taking both her and Weiss, who had tried to catch her, to the floor as she collapsed into a mess of blubering tears.

Yang had no idea how long she had been crying. It could have been minutes, or hours, she wouldn't have even been surprised had she looked up to see daylight blazing through her window. The only thing she did know however, was that Weiss was still holding her, and that the only move the girl had made in however long she had cried for, was to make herself a little more comfortable.
Not a word had been said during her breakdown, maybe because Weiss didn't know what to say, or because she knew there was nothing that needed to be said; Yang didn't know but she appreciated it. Appreciated that Weiss had simply held her while she cried herself out, and now that she had calmed down a little, she couldn't help but feel stupid. She had allowed her emotions to once again take control of her; emotions that she had tried her best to keep buried.

But she didn't care because Weiss was still there. Not only had she not run away, she had already known. She had known what she was and never left her. But Yang was still confused as to how the girl had known. Did Blake tell her? No, Blake barely spoke of it herself. Then how? Yang would have loved to have sat there in silence with the feel of Weiss arms around her for a little longer but she needed to know how Weiss had found out.

"H-How?" she asked with a small sniffle. Just saying the word made her throat sting from how much she had strained it during her meltdown.

A slight fear filled Yang as she felt Weiss loosen her grip and pull away, but the girl didn't move very far, only shifting far enough back so that they could look at each other properly.

"I saw Blake's," Weiss said with a sigh. "If she was a part of it then I knew there was a high chance you would have been too."

"And y-you're okay with it?" Yang asked, not believing for a second it would be that easy.

Weiss locked eyes with her and seemed to take a breath.

"No," Weiss replied with a slight shake of her head and Yang felt her heart drop slightly. "Not entirely."

"Then why are you still here?" Yang instinctively held Weiss' hand a little tighter for fear the question might make her realise she should leave.

"Why wouldn't I be?" Weiss asked.

"They almost killed you."

"They did," Weiss said firmly, her eyes narrowing slightly. "But I know the names and faces of every single person involved in that attack because they were either killed, or arrested."

Weiss paused for a second before continuing, her voice steady and precise.

"I also found out after I left the hospital that a great many people had left the White Fang in disgust after the attack," she continued. "Am I wrong in assuming that you were one of them?"

Yang shook her head as talking hurt a little too much.

"Then I have no reason to go anywhere," Weiss said with a finality to her voice. "But I do have to ask, did you ever hurt anyone?"

"No," Yang croaked instantly, not caring about the pain that shot through her throat. "Some scraps but nothing serious."

"Good," Weiss sighed in relief. "That's all I needed to know."

As she finished speaking, Weiss moved to sit by her side and returned the pressure that Yang had on her hand. The fear had begun to slowly ebb away now, not entirely but thankfully she was no
longer in danger of crying again. With a shaky sigh, she carefully leant her head against Weiss and pulled her legs up to her chest again.

"When did you see Blake's?" She asked tentatively. "And why didn't you tell me you knew?"

Weiss was silent for a good minute before she finally replied.

"Two weeks ago," Weiss said. "And I needed to process it."

Yang thought back to the aforementioned time and remembered that it had been Ciel who had picked up the coffee. There had also been a small dip in Weiss' texts, but she had just thought she was busy.

"You were mad?"

"No," Weiss said, her gentle tone returning as she shook her head. "I was shocked for a bit, but mainly I was worried because of what this means."

Yang was confused once again and Weiss clearly saw it on her face as she continued.

"Yang, I'm risking so much just being with you," She sighed softly. "And that's fine, it is my choice and I have made it, but this will only make it so much worse."

"I'm not sure I follow?"

"The company," Weiss said simply. "When we tell my father, I will likely lose the company for a..."

"What!" Yang hadn't meant to half shout in the girl's ear but that news had shocked her. She knew Weiss' father wouldn't be happy from the way she had described it but she had never imagined that would be the consequence of them being together. "Weiss, you can't..."

"I just said I made my choice," Weiss interrupted her in a tone that Yang dared not argue with. "Besides, I will get it back."

"You will?"

Weiss gave her a nod and smiled at her.

"The only other heir is my brother but my father despises him," Weiss said simply but the venom in her voice was clear. "He knows that for everything he tried to do to make Whitley like him, all he did was turn him into a puppet who would be ousted from the company as soon as my father stopped whispering in his ear."

"That's awful," Yang said in disbelief.

"I agree but it is the truth," Weiss sighed. "Father will transfer the title to him for some time but he will never let Whitley actually take over. However, when my father finds out about this..."

Weiss paused and took a breath.

"Well, I'm not sure what he will do entirely but it will definitely make my reappointment take longer," Weiss said honestly. "That is why I have already begun to take steps to cement my importance to the company."

"I'm sorry," Yang whispered. Thought she didn't know too much about what Weiss actually did at
the company, she did know that Weiss took it very seriously so the idea of her putting that at risk didn't sit well with Yang. "You shouldn't have to risk that for me."

"It's not your fault," Weiss replied.

"I still feel bad," Yang lowered her head.

"Well don't," Weiss replied and Yang felt the girl push her fingers between her own. "I will be fine."

Yang didn't know what to say as she focused on the feel of Weiss' thin fingers latching onto hers, the warmth spreading up her arm helping to assure her that Weiss wouldn't leave.

Finding herself content in their silence, Yang simply allowed it to continue for a couple of minutes. Eventually however, she couldn't help but notice the room had in fact darkened considerably, the last rays of dying light that had streamed through the sides of her curtain when Weiss had arrived having faded away. The only thing that gave them any light to see by now was the small lamp the Yang had screwed to her bed's headboard.

"It's getting late," Yang said sadly. She didn't want Weiss to have to leave but she knew the girl was still very busy with work and college.

"I know," She replied quietly, clearly enjoying the silence as much as Yang. "I should get home."

Yang couldn't help but tighten her grip on the girl's fingers, an actions that did not go unnoticed by Weiss as she use her thumb to stroke the back of Yang's hand.

"Don't."

Again, Yang hadn't meant for the word to slip out but she had been unable to stop it. She felt Weiss' thumb stop its ministrations and the girl turned to look at her.

"Sorry," Yang apologised meekly as she met the girl's eyes and looked away. "I just... Five more minutes?"

With a small smile, Weiss gave a silent nod and Yang returned her head to the girl's shoulder, the smell of Weiss' perfume calming her head, and making her breathing slow as she got comfortable. The comfort only lasted a couple of seconds however as Weiss began to fidget around.

Curious at what Weiss was doing, she glanced over to see the girl's free hand digging through her purse and in a couple of seconds she had pulled out her Scroll. With nimble fingers, she brought up someone's contact information and raised the device to her ear.

"Hello, Klein," Weiss said into the microphone and an unknown voice replied from the other end, too quiet for Yang to hear. "I am fine, can you please inform Mother that due to the amount of work I still have to do, I will be spending the night at the town house as it is closer to Beacon."

Yang couldn't hear the other voice properly as it replied but she honestly wasn't listening. *If she was choosing to stay somewhere closer to school, did that mean she's planning on staying for a little longer?* Yang thought to herself.

"Thank you, Klein," Weiss hummed. "And please prepare Snowpea and some overnight things, Hazel will collect them shortly."

Though Yang still couldn't make out what was being said, the inflection of the man reply was
definitely one of confusion and Yang understood why. *She doesn't have clothes at her town house?* She asked herself before realisation suddenly hit her.

*She wants to stay here.*

Yang was too distracted to even hear Weiss' next words but a couple of seconds later she had hung up the phone and began to type a message. After Weiss had hit send, Yang watched as she shoved her Scroll back into her purse and once again closed the distance that had been created during her shifting.

"You're staying?" Yang asked, unable to keep the disbelief from her voice as she continued to look at Weiss.

"Is that a problem?"

"No," Yang replied was quick, quick enough to betray the eagerness that was now quickly replacing her disbelief as she realised Weiss was serious. "But your homework?"

"I'm pretty sure I can do my coursework here too," Weiss said with a raised eyebrow, her tone making it very clear that she fully intended too.

A sudden surge of happiness flooded through Yang as she realised that Weiss was doing this for her, and it was that happiness that made Yang press her lips gently against Weiss' in an attempt to show her gratitude. They were only together for a moment before Weiss pulled back and looked her in the eye with a small smile.

"Without distractions."

All Yang could do was nod and pull the girl into a hug that was returned immediately, her heart quickly picking up pace as Weiss' arms wrapped around her, as it suddenly clicked that she would be sharing a bed with her girlfriend that night.
A Past Regret (Part 2)

Chapter Notes

So there we have it, Weiss' first night at Yang's. I tried to make it a little cuter than last chapter but still carry those feelings through but you will have to let me know how I did on that and how it felt as a whole. But yeah, this marks an area where the bigger things I have planned are going to start happening, I am pretty sure you can guess one but I wont spoil it I you cant.

A huge thank you to everyone who read and left Kudo's/Bookmarks (I'm still getting accustomed to what those mean xD) but they mean a lot.

Updated with edits but ToxicExotic (18/09/2019)

Chapter 14 – A Past Regret (Part 2)

Yang Xiao Long

"How do you understand any of that?" Yang whispered to the girl sat between her legs.

It had been just over an hour since they had moved to the bed where Weiss had taken out her college books and began to focus on her work. At first they had been sat side by side but after Yang had bumped into her a little too hard while trying to look, Weiss had let out a sigh and moved to sit between her legs. Not that Yang was complaining. The moment she had moved, Yang had taken the opportunity to place her arms around the girl's waist and that was the position they now found themselves in. Weiss focusing on her work, her pen scratching perfectly neat cursive across the paper as Yang held her and watched over her shoulder.

And Yang couldn't have been happier.

"It is quite simple once you remember the important bits," Weiss replied offhandedly as she pulled one of her books closer to her to check something against her own work.

"If you say so," Yang replied, seriously doubting what Weiss had said to be the truth since, in all the time she had been looking over Weiss shoulder, she hadn't even figured out what class the essay was for.

Not wanting to disturb the girl further, Yang went back to resting her chin lightly on Weiss' shoulder. They had been this close before but never for prolonged periods of time so Yang had never noticed just how intoxicating Weiss' scent was. She had certainly enjoyed it, allowed herself to become lost in it on occasion but this, this was something else.

She smelled like rain in spring. No, Yang stopped herself as it was so much more than that. It was more like pure rain, free from the pollutants of the city, as it hit a field of freshly bloomed flowers, kicking up the scent from every flower and allowing it to permeate every molecule of the air surrounding her. The scent was what had caused Yang to disturb the girl in the first place. With every breath, she felt her head buzz and her eyes droop, its fragrance gently lulling her into a sleep she didn't want as it would mean less time with Weiss.
A small shiver ran through Weiss and pulled Yang from her thoughts. She could feel the girl's stomach lurching slightly as she took shorter breaths and as she looked to see what had happened, she saw that Weiss' hand had stopped writing.

"Are you okay?" Yang asked, confused as to why the girl had stopped writing.

"Mhm," Weiss hummed in response and turned her head slightly to the side. "You're just tickling my neck."

It took a moment for Yang to understand but she quickly caught on. In her stupor, she hadn't realised that her slow breaths were landing directly on Weiss' neck.

"Sorry."

It was only semi-intentional that she had breathed the word out on the girl's neck, but the groan that Weiss let out made her childish antics worthwhile.

"I'm working," the girl said faintly, her tone somewhere between pleasure and scolding.

"Sorry," Yang smiled and removed her head from the girl's shoulder only for Weiss to push back into her.

"I didn't say for you to stop."

A wide grin spread itself across Yang's face as she felt her heart start to race at the girl's words, and rested her chin back on Weiss' shoulder. After a couple more seconds, the girl's hand once again began to scribble across the page.

"So what are you actually studying?" Yang asked, still trying her best to not disturb Weiss, though was unable to fully contain herself seeing how she had received permission to do just that.

"It is a study from a failed business in Mistral," Weiss replied simply. "I am supposed to ascertain where the business fell short, what led to its closure, and mark out the steps they could have taken to prevent it."

"I thought you said it wasn't hard?"

"I said it wasn't hard when you understand the basics," Weiss corrected her. "This is a pretty easy case since the owner was overzealous and tried to force himself into an already over-saturated market."

"So he didn't get the customers?"

"Partly," Weiss nodded. "But there were other things like poor management, shady practices and the market he was trying to get into collapsing shortly after."

"And you lost me," Yang chuckled jokingly.

"Well, that is why you are the pretty one," Weiss said in a teasing tone.

Yang did a double take at the girls insult as it was something that she was more likely hear from Blake.

"Oh, I'm the pretty one, am I?" Yang replied, the words coming out as more of a breathy whisper in an attempt to return the teasing.
She was rewarded with another lurch of Weiss' stomach as she watched the girl's hand flinch, threatening to drag the pen across her neat handwriting. Enjoying the reaction she received, Yang gently blew out another breath and felt the girl shiver in her arms once again.

Feeling emboldened by the reaction, Yang leant forward slightly and allowed her lips to brush against the side of Weiss' neck. A small gasp immediately escaped from the girl, followed quickly by a contented hum as Yang felt her push back into her more.

"You are so distracting," Weiss sighed as she turned her head to look over her shoulder.

Before Yang could say a word, one of Weiss' hands had come up to rest against the back of her head and applied enough pressure to pull her forward. As their lips met, Yang felt a surge of exhilaration flood through her at just how much of an effect she had on the girl. The fact that Weiss was just as weak to her affections as she was to Weiss' made her heart soar.

However, the kiss was unfortunately cut short as a loud knock issued from the door, the sound cutting through the encroaching fog that was beginning to take over her mind.

"Dad's starting dinner," said Ruby's voice from outside the door.

"Okay," Yang groaned as Weiss pulled away, a small smile on her face.

Much to her dismay, Weiss wasted no time in attempting to get up from the bed but Yang locked her arms and kept her girlfriend in place, earning a raised eyebrow in response.

"I'm comfy," Yang pouted, trying to come up with any reason to keep Weiss in her arms a little longer.

"Well, I am hungry," Weiss argued before her eyes widened a little at her own words. "Don't you dare!"

A cheeky grin spread across her face as she understood what Weiss meant.

"I wasn't gunna say anything," Yang shrugged honestly as she let out a small chuckle. "What a dir..."

"Finish that sentence and I will leave this bed right now," Weiss huffed.

She weighed her options for a couple of seconds but quickly decided she didn't want to leave their position just yet and settled for pulling the girl closer to her.

"Good choice," she heard Weiss mumble quietly as she melted into the hug.

As Yang held Weiss, she couldn't help but once again think about about lucky she was. Only a couple of hours earlier, she had been so terrified that she would never get to feel her again; but now with Weiss nestled against her, she couldn't have been happier. It was only when the mouthwatering smell of cooking meat began to seep into her room that Weiss shifted, her stomach giving an audible grumble.

"Wo..."

"Shut up," Weiss interrupted her before she could even finish the word. "I haven't eaten today and I never have dinner this late."

"Then I guess we should go down then," Yang chuckled and finally unlinked her arms from around
the girl.

She couldn't help but feel a little sad as Weiss moved off of the bed and colder air rushed in to fill the space, solidifying that the comfortable position she had been enjoying so much had come to an end. Letting out a loud, pretend sigh to show her displeasure at the distance, Yang shuffled herself off the bed and followed Weiss out the door.

As the pair made their way down the stairs and into the hallway, the smell of seasoned meat increased and Yang finally felt a hunger she hadn't noticed grow in her stomach. The smell of onions joined the mouthwatering aroma once they entered the kitchen and Yang's stomach groaned happily as she saw her father working over some burger patties.

"Nice of you two to join us," Tai said teasingly as he flipped a burger over to reveal a perfectly browned side.

Her father's ability to cook burgers was something she had always been jealous of. While she was capable of cooking pretty much anything she wanted but she had never been able to match his skill at making a simple patty into the most delicious thing in the world.

"Why would we hang out with an old fart like you?" Yang joked as she walked up to the cupboard next to her father and pulled out some plates.

"What? Old? I'm only... Never mind," Tai pretended to stumble over his words and turned to Weiss. "I'm sure a smart girl such as yourself would much prefer to hang out with an educated gentleman than a bullheaded brute, right?"

"Well..." Weiss hummed in thought. "While I do prefer an intellectual conversation, your daughter has her own charms."

"Ewww," Ruby interrupted from the dining room table and Yang watched as a deep red blush painted itself to Weiss' face.

"Hey, head outta the gutter," Yang shot at her little sister as the girl cracked into laughter at Weiss' reaction. "I swear, you read too many of Blake's fanfics."

"Blake writes fan fiction?" Weiss asked, an eyebrow raising in surprise.

"Yup," Ruby replied with a smile. "And it's really really good."

"And stuff you shouldn't be reading," Yang interrupted knowing exactly what kind of stuff Blake frequently wrote. "Right dad?"

"What's up with Blake's stories?" Tai replied in confusion.

"Nothing," Yang sighed at her dad's hopelessness.

"Alright then," he said with a suspicious scowl. "Ruby, come take the plates from Yang and set the table."

"Whaaa... no fair," Ruby replied but stood up and took the plates anyway.

With a pout she began to place them around the table and seemed to be talking to Weiss who had also taken a seat there.

"You feeling okay now?"
The question was a low whisper that Yang barely picked up but she turned to see her father looking at her with a concerned expression on his face. After a minute she smiled and gave the man a nod.

"You sure? I know this time of year..."

"I'm fine, dad," Yang cut him off softly. She appreciated his concern but she just wanted to forget her freak-out as much as possible. "Thank you for letting Weiss stay."

"No problem," he replied and went back to tending to the burgers. "You know the rules though."

"I know," Yang scoffed at the rules she had broken more times than she cared to admit. "How long till the burgers done?"

"Another couple of minutes," he replied as he sorted out the food. "Go hang with your girlfriend, I'll bring 'em over."

With a quick nod to her dad, she pulled a large plate from a nearby cupboard and went to join the two girls who seemed to be enjoying their conversation.

"... many tools I didn't even know existed," Ruby was saying with a far away look on her face.

"What's got her so happy?" Yang asked as she sat down next to Weiss.

"Ruby was telling me about her recent visit to Beacon's engineering department," Weiss explained with a smile. "You never told me Ruby was moved ahead a year?"

"I didn't?" Yang asked, surprised she had never mentioned the small detail. "Slipped my mind I guess."

"She probably just didn't want to admit that I got all the brains," Ruby replied and stuck out her tongue.

"Well if you had got some of my muscle maybe you wouldn't need my help carrying all the junk you bring home upstairs," Yang replied smugly.

"It's not junk," Ruby argued back with an insulted expression. "It just needs a little care."

"I'm confused?" Weiss interjected.

"Ruby collects abandoned technology," Yang explained to Weiss. "Her room is a tetanus trap."

"It is not," Ruby cried indignantly. "And I do not collect. I fix, thank you."

"Really, so you didn't build Zwei a light up dog cave out of discarded computer parts and our blankets?"

"It's a doggy fort fit for a king and he loves it," Ruby replied unapologetically.

"Enough you two," Yang suddenly heard her dad call from the stove.

After a quick scowl at her little sister, Yang looked at Weiss to see her smiling at them both in amusement.

"Anyway," Yang said pointedly to Ruby only to receive another stuck out tongue in return. "She starts college next year."
"Yup," Ruby said proudly before her face fell slightly. "But that means I leave Oscar behind."

"Awww, gunna miss your boyfriend," Yang teased.

"He is not my boyfriend," Ruby said pointedly as she scowled at her.

Yang couldn't help but laugh. She knew that the younger boy was incredibly fond of her sister by how he acted, but Yang had never been able to figure out how Ruby felt about him. It was the reason she tended to poke at Ruby, but so far she was slowly starting to believe that the girl just wasn't interested in him that way. Poor boy, she thought to herself.

"Yang, stop teasing Ruby about her boyfriend," Tai called over, a huge smirk on his face as the little red-haired girl growled in frustration and crossed her arms like a child.

"You guys suck," She pouted.

"Then I guess you don't want any burgers then?" Tai said as he picked up the large plate full of them and placed it on the table.

"I never said that," Ruby replied and reached out to pull a burger towards herself.

"That's what I thought," Her dad chuckled and placed some condiments on the table as he took a seat next to his youngest daughter. "Help yourself, Weiss."

"Thank you," Weiss said as she reached out and took the smallest burger on the plate, clearly being careful not to touch any of the others.

However after a couple of seconds, Weiss had still not taken a bite.

"Is everything okay?" Yang asked as she pulled two towards herself. "I can make you something else if you don't like them."

"No, this is fine... it is just," Weiss paused for a minute, her face showing a little embarrassment. "Can I get a knife and fork?"

Silence quickly fell all around the table as everyone clearly took a moment to process what Weiss had just said.

"Umm... s-sure," Yang said in bemusement at the idea of someone eating a burger with cutlery. "Let me ju..."

Yang cut her words short as she saw the mischievous grin begin to spread itself across Weiss' face as she could no longer uphold the act.

"Really?," Yang tutted at the girl as both she and Ruby burst into giggles. "Rich girl got rich jokes has she."

"You should have seen your face," Ruby laughed as she almost fell off her stool. "You looked like you'd been smacked."

"That's the face of someone confronted with a terrible joke," Yang argued back and turned to Weiss. "I suppose that was her idea?"

"It might have been," Weiss replied as she started to calm down. "Though I think you look adorable when you are confused."
"I'm suddenly regretting letting the two of you meet," Yang groaned and turned back to her food to take a bite.

"You gotta admit, firecracker," Tai spoke up, his voice tinged with amusement. "They got you pretty good."

"They got you too."

"Oh one hundred percent," He nodded unashamedly.

"Fine," Yang conceded reluctantly. "It was alright, I guess."

With a victorious smile, Ruby held up her hand for a high five and after a second Weiss complied and reached out to hit it with her own.

"Definitely regretting it," Yang groaned and returned to her burgers.

Dinner was a little quieter than usual. In fact, all three of the family members being sat around the table was quite an unusual thing in and of itself, as usually everyone normally ate in the front room or took their food to their respective rooms. However instead of paying attention to the television as they usually did, her father and Ruby seemed to be taking turns to ask Weiss questions. While Tai's were more about her work and what it was like growing up under the public eye, Ruby's tended to stray more towards what it was like at Beacon.

Once they were all done eating, Yang found herself walking with Weiss into the living room while her father and sister took care of the dishes.

"Sorry about the interrogation," Yang said to Weiss as they sat down on the living room couch.

"I actually enjoyed it," Weiss smiled back and slipped her hand into Yang's own. "Your family is really sweet."

"That's one word for them," Yang replied jokingly, earning an eye roll from the other girl. "So how often do I have to worry about you and Ruby teaming up to make terrible jokes?"

"Hmm," Weiss hummed in a mocking tone. "I am thinking weekly."

"Oum help me," Yang grinned and put her feet up on the small table in front of them.

"So are you only one allowed to make terrible jokes?" Weiss chuckled as she scooted herself closer and leant against Yang.

"Hey, my jokes are good," Yang argued with a false pout.

"Your jokes make me think I am being Pun-ished."

Yang stared at the girl in disbelief. A rich girl joke was one thing but had Weiss really just told a pun?

"A little basic but I can't be mad at a pun," Yang laughed as the grin on Weiss face continued to widen. "Almost makes up for the earlier in-Schnee-dent."

"Dear lord," Yang heard Weiss say and felt the girl shake in silent giggles. "I don't know if I can stand this conversation much Long-er."

Yang couldn't help but feel her heart swell as the words left Weiss' mouth.
"You truly are the best girlfriend ever," Yang chuckled and relaxed more into the chair, Weiss immediately scooting closer to further melt into her side. "Thank you for staying tonight."

"I can't do this regularly," Weiss replied in a low voice and Yang felt the girl slip an arm around her stomach. "But this was where I needed to be today."

"You're not worried about your parents?"

"My father is away on business in Vacuo," Weiss replied. "And the only thing my mother notices is her wine glass being empty."

"Oh."

A somber feeling permeated the air around them as Yang realised just how little Weiss had mentioned her mother in the time that they had been dating. She had assumed there just wasn't much to talk about but that comment made her think that wasn't the case.

"That so..."

"Not tonight," Weiss interrupted her. She didn't sound unhappy but there was an unmistakable reluctance to her voice. "Tonight I just want to forget my family and be with my girlfriend."

"That I can do," Yang smiled and rested her hand on Weiss', happy that, for once they were not hiding but simply sitting in her home like a normal couple.

"And here we see the elusive love birds," Yang heard from the doorway to the kitchen and saw both her father and Ruby watching them. "Legend has it that when interrupted, the yellowone gets very mad."

His final words came out rushed as Yang threw a small couch cushion at them both only for them to duck back into the kitchen, accompanied by the sound of Ruby bursting into a fit of audible giggles.

"Should have listened to the weather report before bird watching," Yang called. "It warned of flying cushions."

"How peculiar," Tai laughed as he re-entered the room, catching a second cushion shaped like a corgi.

"Heyyy," Ruby whined and snatched it from his hands. "Don't throw Zwei."

"Speaking of Zwei, where is he?" Yang asked. Usually Ruby's little corgi would waddle his way down the stairs at night.

"I took him on a run while you were upstairs so probably sleeping in his fort," Ruby shrugged and jumped into her seat on the other end of the couch.

"The fort is real?" Weiss asked as she put a small amount of distance between them, clearly embarrassed at being so openly affectionate around others. "I thought you two were joking."

"Nope."

"Unfortunately not," Yang sighed. "He does like it though."

"Wait, I have been here a couple of times," Weiss said in confusion. "I knew you had a dog but why have I never seen him?"
"Honestly, he rarely leaves Ruby's room," Yang explained as she watched the aforementioned girl turn on the television and pick up her Nintendo Switch Joycons. "She found him abandoned as a puppy and hid him in her room for almost a week before we found out, now he just stays there mostly."

"How did she hide a dog for a week?" Weiss asked in clear disbelief.

"If you ever see her room you'll understand," Tai smiled from his recliner and mimed an explosion that made Weiss chuckle.

"My room is fine," Ruby countered and offered Yang one of the controllers.

Gladly taking it, she rolled her eyes as Ruby booted up her Pokemon save and began to run around in the exact same spot she had been the entirety of yesterday.

"It's a disaster zone," Yang winked at Weiss, who smiled in return, before turning back to Ruby. "So, we still hunting Blake?"

"Yup."

"Wait, what?" Weiss interrupted, looking at the game with a suspicious look.

"Shiny Meowth," Yang chuckled but stopped as she saw genuine confusion on Weiss face. "Wait, have you never played Pokemon?"

"I have heard of it," Weiss said with a raised eyebrow. "But I never had time to play games."

"Oh," Yang replied, remembering exactly how bad the girl had been at Smash Brothers during Ruby's party. "Well it's just a cat, Ruby likes to catch Pokemon that remind her of people she knows."

"I wish Alolan Meowth was in the game since its purple and Blake really likes purple but a normal will do," Ruby sighed.

"Alolan?" Weiss asked, confusion once again on her face.

"Different forms from different regions in other games," Yang explained. "She even has an Alolan Ninetales she named Weiss."

"And she was bred to perfection," Ruby said proudly.

"Excuse me!"

"Sorry Rubes but there is only one Weiss that's been bred to perfection and she's right here," Yang said and pulled the confused, white-haired girl into a sidelong hug.

"I have no idea what you two are talking about but I will choose to take that as a compliment," Weiss squinted at her but the slight blush that crept up her pale face showed that her compliment had landed.

"Grossss," Ruby groaned and covered her eyes. "Get a room."

It was Yang's turn to stick out her tongue at the girl as she watched Ruby's character run towards a white cat on the screen that had just emerged from the grass. Upon seeing that the thing was just a normal Meowth, Ruby let out a groan and absent-mindedly swung her arm to throw a pokeball at the small creature, Yang matching her action to double the chance of capture.
Almost three hours had passed since they had begun to hunt for Ruby's prize but unfortunately it had once again proved to be almost as elusive as Blake on her moody days. However, with it just having passed midnight, Yang finally had to call it a night.

"All right Rubes, I think we're done," Yang groaned as she stretched her back. "Weiss is almost passing out."

"I'm fine," Weiss grumbled while her head rested against the back of the chair, her eyes drooping closed as she stared blankly at her coursework.

"And you will be even better in the morning," Yang argued as she stood up and held out her hand to Weiss. "Time for you to get to bed too, Rubes."

"But I can..."

"No buts," Yang cut her off firmly as Weiss took her hand and scooped up her paperwork. "You have school tomorrow."

"Ugh, fiine."

"Come on, Princess," Yang chuckled and pulled Weiss up from the chair.

"Heiress," Weiss corrected her with a stifled yawn.

"Same thing," Yang rolled her eyes and smiled. "You wanna head on up and get ready? I'm just gunna make sure she goes to bed."

With a small nod, Weiss made her way towards the hallway and disappeared from sight. Wanting to join her, Yang quickly went about clearing up the little mess they had made of the living room, Ruby reluctantly turned off her Switch and left the same way as Weiss. Fortunately they hadn't made too much of a mess so it didn't take too long but just as she was placing the cushion she had thrown earlier back onto the couch, she heard a noise behind her.

"Finally going to bed, firecracker?" She heard her father say, his voice gravelly from tiredness.

"Yeah, have to be up pretty early to train," Yang nodded and straightened up the table. "Night d..."

"One minute," He interrupted her, his tone taking on an air of caution.

Squinting at her father, Yang waited for the man to talk and after almost a full minute had passed, he let out a sigh.

"We need to have a talk soon," He said, running his hand through his own blonde hair. It was a nervous habit of his that Yang knew all too well as she had picked it up herself.

"What about?"

"Not today," Tai sighed. "We'll talk after your fight."

While Yang was curious about what her father wanted to discuss, she knew him well enough to know he wasn't going to explain that night and she was honestly far too tired to try and make him. Instead, she simply gave the man a nod and received a small smile in return.

"Good," He said and gave her a kiss on the forehead. "Sleep tight, Fireball."
"Night dad," Yang rolled her eyes at her father's stupid joke towards her name and walked up the stairs to brush her teeth before bed.

Knowing Weiss was most likely waiting for her, Yang hurriedly brushed her teeth when she suddenly remembered that her night clothes were still in her room. Where Weiss was. With nothing that could be done about it, Yang finished up and made her way to her room. The sight that awaited her as she enters however was one she doubted she would ever forget.

Weiss was sat on the bed wearing a pale blue nightgown that ended just above mid-thigh and while it certainly looked stunning on her, the thing that truly amazed her was the girl's hair. She had never seen it out of it's off-center ponytail before but now it was loose. And everywhere.

Flowing white hair of shining ivory spread itself out against the dark yellow bedding like a spider's web, it's delicate looking strands criss-crossing in intricate patterns that Yang found her eyes tracing with seemingly no end in sight. In it's ponytail, the hair usually reached down to Weiss' knees but at that moment it seemed so much longer.

"This may not be a regular thing but I could definitely get used to it," Yang grinned as she pulled a t-shirt and a pair of shorts from her drawer and held them up to her girlfriend to indicate she should turn around.

With a small blush and Weiss seemingly realised what Yang meant, the girl turned her head to the side, though Yang noticed that her eyes darted towards her quickly.

"No peeking," Yang chuckled.

"Like I would," the girl replied shortly but the red tint to her pale skin was telling of the thoughts in her head.

Very quickly, Yang changed into her nightwear and made her way towards the bed to join Weiss where she was met with a very new feeling.

While Weiss wasn't the first person to be in her bed, she was definitely the first she hadn't been trying to sleep with. Weiss had made it very clear that wasn't going to happen and Yang respected that but now she had no idea what to do. Usually when someone was in her bed, things would normally happen and then they would sleep. Or at the very least things would have already happened and the awkwardness would be gone.

With a quick look at Weiss, she noticed that she seemed to be wrestling with the same thoughts as her face was still a slight shade of red. Deciding she had to do something before things got even more awkward, Yang laid back and slipped beneath the covers, holding the other side open for Weiss.

"It's warmer under here," Yang joked as she reached up and turned off the light but even she could hear the nerves in her voice.

Weiss seemed to think for a moment longer before she finally rolled her eyes and laid back so Yang could throw the quilt over her. Silence filled the air for a minute as they both took a moment to acknowledge the situation but wanting it to end as quickly as possible, Yang turned to her side and slowly stretched out her arm to lay a hand on Weiss' hip, heat radiating up her arm as she felt just how thin the girls nightgown was.

However, Yang watched as, with no coaxing, Weiss immediately turned onto her side to face her and the girl let out a frustrated sigh as she scooted towards her.
"Is this okay?" Yang asked, lifting her hand slightly out of worry that she may have been a little too forward.

"Yes," Weiss breathed quietly, the tiredness evident in her voice as her own hand reached back and moved Yang's back to her waist. "Just...Why does it have to be so awkward? We were on the bed together earlier."

"I think the extra layers helped," Yang chuckled lightly, glad she hadn't done anything wrong.

"True," Weiss said with a little pout.

"So," Yang said after a couple seconds of looking into Weiss' beautiful, pale blue eyes that seemed to shine in the darkness. "How was your first night at the Xiao Long-Rose house?"

Yang held her breath as she waited for Weiss to reply. She at least thought Weiss had had a good time joking around with Ruby and her father while she did her coursework but she was genuinely unsure.

"It was perfect," Weiss smiled and Yang felt a hand close around her own waist.

"Even with the way it started?" Yang said nervously. Despite having had the time of her life all night, her earlier freak-out still bothered her.

"Yes," Weiss breathed but the smile faltered slightly. "Can I..."

She cut herself off as if she suddenly decided against her own words.

"What?" Yang asked, determined to answer whatever Weiss wanted to know.

"Well..." Weiss paused again before finishing. "I was just curious why you..."

"Freaked so hard?" Yang finished as the girl seemed unable to.

Weiss gave her a short nod.

Yang paused. She had known it was what Weiss wanted to ask but it didn't make answering any easier.

"This Wednesday is when it happened," Yang explained slowly, feeling a knot began to wind up in her chest. "When my mom... Well."

"I'm sorry," Weiss replied quietly, her hand moving under the quilt to find her own. "I shouldn't hav..."

"It's fine," Yang shook her head, the familiar burn of tears stinging her eyes. "I just... tend to struggle around these weeks and I guess finally having something to lose again scared me."

"Well, I can promise you are not going to lose me," Weiss smiled gently and finally closed the distance to press their bodies together, her head coming to a rest beneath Yang's chin.

Yang couldn't stop the few tears that leaked down her face but happy at Weiss' promise, she wrapped her arms around her girlfriend and whispered a quiet thank you that Yang doubted she heard. Neither of them moved from that position and fully believing that Weiss was not going anywhere, Yang allowed the girl's floral scent to finally lull her to sleep.

But not before one final thought invaded her mind.
I love her.
The Next Morning

Chapter Notes

Warning: It has been toned down to keep this story T-rated but this chapter does contain a saucy scene. (May be changed to M if needed)
Disclaimer: All characters belong to Rooster Teeth Productions.
Updated with edits by ToxicExotic (19/09/2019)

Chapter 15 – The Next Morning

Weiss Schnee

_ Stupid Pillow_, Weiss thought to herself as she woke from her peaceful slumber. For some reason, her pillow had folded in a way that had created a gap which her head was now slipping into, pushing her nose into a position that was a little uncomfortable now she was awake.

Groaning to herself at the bizarre new state her pillow had somehow worked its way into, Weiss reached up and attempted to straighten it out only to be met with a feeling that was most definitely not the usual gel-foam her head would rest against. A rough, warm fabric met her hand instead, her fingertips brushing against what felt like soft, squishy flesh. It was only a second later that Weiss realised exactly what was happening.

Realisation suddenly pushed the sleep-induced fog from her brain, quickly replacing it with the reality of her situation. She wasn't in her bed and that certainly was not her pillow. It was Yang's breast.

Embarrassment rushed through her as she realised that not only was her face, for all intents and purposes, was nestled between them and her hand was currently resting on one. Not just resting, squeezing. Her previous attempt to straighten out what she thought was a pillow was still the appendage's primary goal. With that understanding, she hurriedly pulled her hand away, hoping to whatever gods may exist that it had not woken Yang.

"You know..."

_Dammit._

"... Usually I prefer to be woken up before I'm fondled," Yang said in a husky voice that Weiss, had she not been embarrassed beyond belief, would have realised was completely clear of the usual sleepy slur one had upon waking. "At least then I get to enjoy it too."

"S-Sorry," Weiss stuttered and began to move away, feeling her face burn at Yang's words. "I d-didn't..."

Her headrest began to vibrate slightly as Yang chuckled to herself and Weiss felt hands on her back stiffen a little, not to hold her in place but simply showing it was okay for her to stay.

"Relax." Yang whispered as the vibration stopped. "I don't mind a little wake up grope."

Knowing that Yang most likely had a wide grin on her face, Weiss rolled her eyes but stopped
trying to pull away. Finally feeling the effects of waking up, Weiss let out a small yawn and gently stretched out her limbs.

"You are an idiot," Weiss sighed as she placed her hand in a more respectable position.

Or at least she thought she had been a more respectable position. Yang’s stomach was normally perfectly fine for her but during their sleep, the yellow t-shirt Yang had worn to bed had risen just enough to expose her abdomen. This quickly became apparent as her fingers came into contact with the blonde's blazing hot skin, the feel of hidden muscles sending a shiver through Weiss.

"S-Sorry I woke you," Weiss apologised, the heat from Yang's stomach doing nothing to stop the flustered heat that was assaulting her body.

"You didn't," The girl replied, her hand slowly starting to gently stroke along her back. "I woke up about ten minutes ago."

"So you have just been laying there?"

"Didn't really have much incentive to move," Yang said as Weiss felt the boxer's chin rest gently against the top of her head. "It was either go for my morning run or watch you for a little longer."

"So you chose the creepy option?" Weiss joked but the small smile that pulled at her lips would have betrayed her if Yang could see it.

"That's funny, you weren't complaining when you..."

"Shut it," Weiss groaned and looked up at her girlfriend to see her smiling happily.

Despite the earlier embarrassing situation, Weiss herself was incredibly happy as well and allowed a few minutes to pass in blissful silence. She'd slept better than she could ever remember, free of the usual tormenting dreams or haunting nightmares, and now she was in the strong arms of a girl who she was fairly certain she cared more for than anyone but Winter. Everything about her current situation felt amazing. The warmth generated by both of them under the quilt, the comfortable position of her head now that her nose was no longer bent awkwardly, the hand that was still gently stroking her back through her nightgown; but there was still one feeling that kept pushing itself to the front of her mind.

It had been done absentmindedly at first but after a couple of times feeling Yang's stomach lurch and the girl's breath hitch slightly in her chest, she soon realised what it was she was doing.

Every time she felt the blonde's fingers reach the square of her back, Weiss would gently dig her own into the girl's stomach, feeling the firm muscles beneath soft skin, and every time her own breathing would deepen a little. Weiss wasn't completely inexperienced but the few girls she had been with had not been anywhere near as in shape as Yang. While none were particularly visible, every single part of the girl she had laid her hands on so far seemed to be made of strong muscle and Weiss had quickly discover that she enjoyed touching them.

A lot.

Every time they were close, Weiss would catch herself playing with whatever muscle her hands could touch at that time. Yang's arm, Yang's back, but the one she found herself toying with the most was Yang's stomach. For some reason it captivated her. The pleasure she derived from running her fingers between each section, from exploring the path it led her along, was a feeling that she just couldn't get enough of.
And this time was no different. Once she had realised exactly what she was doing, she suddenly became aware of the heat that had already taken hold of her body. With every lurch of Yang’s stomach, fire would flare through her, a wave of want that made Weiss take a deep breath. But as much as she was enjoying the muscles alone, it wasn't enough so as Yang's hand once again reached the bottom of her back, Weiss dug her fingers in deeper to get the girls attention. Fortunately it worked, and looked down at her with a slight grin.

"Enjoyi..."

Weiss cut her off with a kiss. It wasn't soft and gentle, as they had all been lately, but hard and desperate. Fueled mostly by desire, Weiss pressed her lips into Yang's as firmly as she could. However, Yang wasn't responding as she usually did and Weiss became very aware of the girl's free arm, the one not stroking her back, rooting around the side of the desk. When it stopped, Yang pulled away from the affection.

"Morning breath," Yang said and held up a small bottle and sprayed it into her mouth before pointing the nozzle her way. "Open."

Weiss obliged and flinched as the cold mist cover her tongue.

"Way to kil..."

Weiss didn't finish her joke since Yang's lips came crashing back into her own and now she was most definitely responding as Weiss expected. A soft thud sounded somewhere off the bed indicating that the girl had chosen to simply throw the bottle aside.

The small amount of reason that had managed to break back into her mind was quickly shooed away as Yang's hand stopped it's stroking and planted itself firmly on the square of her back. With a solid hold, Weiss felt the girl apply some pressure, her strength more than enough to shift her slightly up so that they were now eye to eye, not that Weiss could see Yang's lilac orbs through her closed eyelids. Now on the same level, Weiss eagerly closed the already limited space between them.

The intensity of the kiss grew with every second that passed and with each second Weiss felt more and more of her sanity slip away to be replaced with a haze of lust. She knew she should stop, knew that there was a danger of losing herself in the moment, but there wasn't a single part of her that wanted to. She didn't know if it was the situation of waking up happy in Yang's bed, the pleasure of the kiss itself or simply the knowledge that Yang wouldn't let things go too far, but she no longer wanted to stop herself from indulging in her desires.

It still surprised her however when Weiss felt Yang push herself up, the pressure her hand was applying to her back increasing slightly as the blonde used it to pull herself into position. Excitement tore through Weiss as Yang came to a stop above her, one of the girl's knees coming to a rest between her own legs to hold her up with the help of her free arm. Now apparently in a position that suited her better, Yang's tongue requested access and Weiss gladly gave it, her own meeting it and quickly wrestling with the slippery muscle.

As waves of pleasure coursed through her, thoughts of everything she wanted assaulted her mind and while they all sounded wonderful, there was one that Weiss was keen to act upon.

Excitement driving her actions now, she raised the hand that had fallen from Yang's stomach during the repositioning and lightly grazed the muscles once again, feeling a shiver run through her girlfriend at her touch. Despite knowing Yang probably wouldn't stop her, not yet anyway, Weiss' next actions were slow. Very carefully, she started to move her hand up, her touch only hard
enough to just feel the muscles glide past, muscles that soon became bone as her hand slipped below the hanging t-shirt and reached the girl's ribs.

More, She thought to herself and allowed her hand to keep going, each rib that she felt her fingers brush against only increasing the excitement she felt. She counted three. Three pieces of bone that her fingers skimmed across before the side of them touched against the underside of Yang's breast. The heavy breath that Yang took was unmistakable, her body now shaking slightly, and Weiss pulled her lips away slightly.

"Too f..."

"No," Yang interrupted her and reclaimed her mouth.

Weiss gladly returned the heated kiss and, now with permission, slowly traced her fingers along the underneath of Yang's large bosom until they came to the curve that led up between it and the other. Yang's breathing became heavier as Weiss followed the curve up until finally her digits found flat skin. Now at what she knew to be to top of the practically panting blonde's breast, she changed direction and let her fingers drift down. With her fingers no longer tracing the edge, soft, malleable flesh greeted them instead.

It was her middle finger however that finally elicited the soft moan from her girlfriend as it swiftly passed over the more sensitive area and Weiss couldn't help but smirk inwardly as she pulled her hand back up. However, it was a smirk that quickly faded. As Yang shifted her body upwards in an attempt to get Weiss' finger back to where she desired it, her knee rose along with her and a whimper left Weiss as she felt it press against her, sending a wave of pure pleasure through her body.

It felt good. Beyond good. Every nerve in her body tingled and she found herself pushing down into the limb, Yang still breathing deeply as she began to trail kisses down Weiss' neck while Weiss returned her finger back to where she knew Yang wanted it. She felt every slight moment Yang made now, each press of the girl's lips against her skin caused her nerves to spark, the girl's knee pressed against her turning each spark into blazing fires that spread across her body and it wasn't long at all until a familiar feeling that had quickly been growing came close to spilling over. It was only then then sense began to return as she knew what it meant.

"Ya... We hav..." Weiss gasped between breaths but the pleasure was too great for her to even finish a word. She didn't want it to end now. Her body didn't want it to stop. But they had too before it was too late. "Yan... St-stop."

She had barely been able to breathe out the final word, her trembling voice little more than a whisper as it threatened to give out but the effect was immediate. In less than a second, Yang's lips had left her neck and Weiss' hand had been torn away from its previous position. In fact there was now a sudden distance between every part of them.

But the feeling wasn't stopping fast enough. Excitement still pulsed through her as Yang was still positioned on top of her, the promise of being able to start again keeping her on the edge so it was with great effort on her part that she slipped her way off the bed and practically ran towards the door as fast as her shaky legs would permit. While she felt bad for leaving Yang like that, she needed to get some distance. The first room she came across was the bathroom which she rushed into and locked the door before falling to the floor, her breathing almost as fast as her heart rate.

What on Remnant was that? Weiss screamed in her head. She barely touched me.

Weiss knew she had what a past lover had called a 'short fuse,' but it had never been like that. She
had never had every touch feel like her nerves were screaming from pleasure and she had certainly never approached her climax that fast, despite others doing far more that what Yang had just done.

It had taken a couple of minutes of calming herself before her breathing finally reached what she considered to be a normal rate but her heart was still pounding. To make things worse, in that time that she had been calming herself, Weiss still had no idea how Yang had effortlessly made her feel that good.

"Weiss?"

Yang’s voice was soft and carried a little worry as it drifted through the door, its volume telling Weiss that the girl was right up against it.

"You okay?"

Weiss didn't reply. While she hadn't been able to figure out how Yang had done it, Weiss certainly remembered everything Yang had done. Everything she had done. And what she had done once Yang had stopped without hesitation after Weiss had asked her to. How she had just ran away. Left the girl after being the one who instigated everything.

"Look, I'm uhh," Yang paused and Weiss could imagine the look on her face just inches away from her. "I'm going for my run but I'll be back in about thirty minutes. Ruby won't be up for another hour so you can take a shower if you want."

"A-Alright," Was all Weiss replied.

Weiss sat there for a little longer after hearing the door open and close but she knew that Yang wouldn't be long so, with a sigh, she stood up and exited the bathroom to grab her towel and the outfit that she had lovingly named Snowpea from the night bag Hazel had delivered last night. With one last look at Yang’s bed and its messed up sheets, that I messed up, she made her way to the shower, hoping that it would clear her head a little.

Weiss sighed to herself as she sat dressed at the desk in the corner of Yang's room. While the girl had said she would only be thirty minutes, it had already been closer to an hour and with each passing minute Weiss found herself getting more and more worried. As well as being very helpful in cooling the heat from her earlier activities with Yang, it had also helped her understand something. Something she very much needed to talk to Yang about.

However, simply sitting at the desk waiting for the girl to return was making her antsy so she stood up and began to explore the room. The first thing that caught her eye was a small cork board on the wall, its face littered with pinned pictures. While most of them were of Yang with either Ruby or Blake, a huge smile on her face in all of them, there were a couple of others too. She knew most of the other people in the pictures but there were a couple that she didn't.

One of the pictures was of Yang and Blake with their arms around a girl wearing a black jacket, her long brown hair tied into a ponytail that curved into a spiral at the end. The girl was clearly a faunus as what appeared to be very large freckles on her cheeks and hands were a bright pink, clearly showing her embarrassment at the situation she had found herself in.

But as she scanned the pictures of everyone she didn't know, there was one that caught her eye. While it was mostly covered by another picture, Weiss could just make out a familiar looking, dark-skinned girl with platinum-blonde hair being kissed. The only indication of who the kisser was being the strands of shining blonde hair that fell over the darker girls face.
Feeling a small amount of jealousy rise within her, Weiss reached out and moved the picture covering it aside but immediately wished she hadn't. As expected, the kisser was definitely Yang, though she looked younger but not by much. If Weiss had to guess, she would have put both girls around their junior or senior year of high school. And they looked happy.

The picture had been taken in the middle of a field, the sun illuminating their faces as they sat on the grass. The darker skinned girl had one arm around Yang's shoulders as they kissed and the other was stretched out towards the camera showing that it was her who had taken it. There were many things about the picture that made Weiss' jealousy spike. The fact that it was the only picture of its kind on there; the way Yang was grinning as if there was nowhere else she would rather be, the people in the background showing how public they were, but the biggest thing was that it made Weiss realise that despite them being together for almost two months, there wasn't a single picture of them together.

"Do you snoop every time someone leaves you alone in a room?"

Weiss had been so deep in her thoughts that Yang's voice made her jump and turn towards the sweaty blonde who had suddenly appeared, the difference in the years since the photo had been taken stood out a little more now. Yang's hair was a little longer but just as wild, her face fuller. A face that, despite her words, was smiling enough to indicate she was joking.

"Which one are you..." Yang started to ask while making her way over, only for her to stop talking as her eyes fell on the newly exposed picture Weiss had been looking at. "Oh, that one."

"Sorry," Weiss said carefully.

"It's fine," Yang shook her head with a slight smile. "That ended a while ago."

"Who was she?" Weiss asked, her curiosity peaked a little too much to not ask.

"Arslan," Yang said thoughtfully. "We started dating in my junior year, she was a senior."

"It looks like you were happy?"

Yang eyes flicked to her as she gave a small nod.

"We were," Yang answered simply. "We had quite a lot in common. Martial arts, a love of the arts, wanting to travel. She was the one who helped me finally get over Blake."

"So what happened?" Weiss probed, her jealousy growing as she knew exactly how big of a deal that was.

"Life," Yang shrugged and reached out to cover the photograph up again. "She graduated with a scholarship to Haven and I wasn't really a 'long-distance' person. You can probably tell why."

Weiss thought back to how Yang had acted the day before, the clear signs of a girl scared of being abandoned, and was easily able to understand why Yang couldn't have done long distance.

"But as I said," Yang sighed and moved to sit on the bed. "That was years ago."

"Did you love her?"

Silence followed that question but Weiss had no idea what made her ask it. The words had just came from her before she could stop them.
"I dunno," Yang shrugged again. "I thought I did at the time; but I was young so, who really knows."

It was a reasonable answer and all Weiss could do was nod in response. Not able to think of anything else she wanted to know, Weiss moved to sit on the bed too, careful to keep a good distance between her and Yang.

"So?" Yang said hesitantly. "Are we gunna talk about what happened or do you want to know more about her."

Weiss didn't reply straight away but eventually she mustered up the courage to say the one thing she knew she had to.

"I'm sorry."

"There's nothing to apologise for," Yang replied in a soft voice.

"But I ran away," Weiss argued. Through her entire shower, that had been the one thing that had been clear. "I broke my own rule, I started everything and when it went too far, I did the very thing you were so scared of yesterday."

"Look," Yang's voice was gentle but firm. "I'm not gunna say it didn't hurt for a second or two when you ran, because it did, but yesterday I was scared you would run out of fear."

Weiss felt a strong hand rest on her shoulder.

"You didn't do that earlier, and you went to the bathroom because you needed to get some distance," Yang reasoned. "I understood and that's why I didn't run after you."

"But it was still unfair of me," Weiss replied. "These are my rules, you are holding back when I know you normally wouldn't and then I get us both worked up and just leave you."

"Okay so first, I'm guessing whatever you know has come from Blake and I'll be having a word with her later about that," Yang said, a little annoyance seeping into her voice but quickly fading. "And secondly, so fucking what?"

"What?"

"Weiss, what happened felt amazing," Yang said as she pulled her legs up on the bed and turned to face her properly. "Like seriously, whoever you learned that thing you did with your hand from I should send them a thank you letter; but just because I don't orgasm, it doesn't mean I'm disappointed."

Weiss couldn't hide the scarlet bloom on her face over Yang's bluntness; as the memory of what her hand had done and where it had been came back to her.

"And you're right, I am holding back but you don't have too," Yang continued and shuffled forward. "I'm waiting for us to be out and open, like you want, before I do anything and will stop the moment you say so, but you have my full permission to do whatever you want above the waist."

"I think what just happened proves how dangerous that is for me," Weiss sighed and looked up into Yang's eyes to see them glinting in amusement.

"That was probably my bad," Yang chuckled and scratched her head. "I actually didn't realise where my leg was, I'll be a little more careful next time."
"Next time?" Weiss asked with a raised eyebrow.

"Well," Yang grinned and leant forward. "You're the one who clearly can't keep their hands off me."

Weiss rolled her eyes at the girl but she knew that the statement was very true from how often she would run her hands along whatever part of Yang she could.

"But I am curious," Yang asked and shifted forward slightly more. "Are you always that quick, or do you just really like touching me?"

Yang was dangerously close now, and Weiss could once again feel the heat emanating from her, the slight smell of sweat permeated it's way into her nostrils. Contrary to what most would think, the smell was far from unpleasant to the white haired girl.

"T-That was new," Weiss admitted and instinctively leant forward a little, the fires once again starting to light up within her.

"Good to know," Yang grinned and closed the distance for a quick teasing kiss. Unfortunately, it didn't last very long as Yang pulled back to move her mouth towards Weiss' ear, her next words nothing more than a breathy whisper. "But if you enjoyed that so much, just you wait until I'm not holding back."

Weiss' head spun at the words as another wave of pleasure hit her, a shiver running down her back as images of exactly what Yang could do popped into her mind. However, by the time she had recovered, Yang had already moved herself away from the bed to search through her drawers and Weiss realised what Yang had just done.

"Tease," Weiss scowled and the girl simply laughed.

"Yup," Yang laughed and pulled some clothes from the drawer and made her way back over. "And trust me, I would love to stay and give some starting examples; but I gotta wake Ruby up and I still need to shower."

Another quick kiss was placed on her.

"What time is your first class?"

"Eleven," Weiss replied and looked at the clock to see it was nearly eight.

"So are you staying for breakfast then?"

"Well," Weiss pouted at the girl. "Will there be any more teasing?"

"Only if you want there to be," Yang smirked and let out a chuckle at Weiss' scowl. "Joking, I promise I will behave."

"Then I suppose I can stay a little longer," Weiss bit her lip and pulled Yang into another short kiss.

"Good."

Weiss watched as Yang made her way to the door but she suddenly remembered something that she wanted more than food at that moment.

"Yang," She called as she stood up from the bed and walked towards her with her hand out. "Give me your Scroll."
"Why?" Yang asked as she pulled it from her pocket and handed it over.

Without replying, Wiess tapped some buttons on the screen to pull up the camera and grabbed a handful of Yang's t-shirt to pull her into a kiss. Weiss felt her girlfriend's lips form into a smile once she understood and returned the affection as the picture was taken. Weiss allowed her lips to linger a little longer but quickly pulled away and handed the Scroll back to the grinning blonde.

"It might not be us in public, but it is at least proof that I stayed," Weiss smiled and left through the door to make her way downstairs.

Half an hour later, Weiss was once again struggling with the enormous effort of not having to roll her eyes at the sight before her. Her attention had previously been on Ruby and the girl's apparent insistence on eating the entire pack of cookies she had pulled form the cupboard; but the sounds of footsteps on the stairs had drawn her eyes towards the kitchen door just in time to see Yang appear.

"Is that what you call behaving?" Weiss groaned at her.

Weiss was almost certain Yang had chosen her current attire to torment her further. How could she not have, Weiss thought to herself as she inspected the outfit further. A yellow crop top, that Weiss was almost one-hundred percent certain was a size too small, with a black flaming heart covered the girls chest, it's fabric only falling down to the bottom of her ribs and exposing her midriff, the very edges of the regretted tattoo Yang had peaking out from underneath. Below that was an open-front skirt that fell down to her mid-thigh, a pair of black mini shorts underneath covering anything from showing and a pair of yellow socks that stopped at her knees covered her legs. The outfit seemed like it was designed to show as much skin as it possibly could.

"Dunno what you're talking about," Yang winked and placed the tan jacket in her arms over the chair next to Weiss and leant down in front of her. "It's warm out today."

"Sure," Weiss grinned and finally succumbed to the eye roll.

"I can go cha..." Yang started to say with a smile before her eyes flitted over to Ruby who was very close to finishing her task of eating the pack of cookies, her eyes closed and oblivious to the world. "Weiss, please tell me you didn't let her just eat them?"

"Was I not supposed too?" Weiss asked hesitantly.

"Dammit," Yang groaned as she stood up fully and began to exude a new aura that Weiss had never felt from her before. "OI!"

While the sudden yell made Weiss jump slightly, Ruby practically threw the cookie in her hand across the room, somehow managing to land it exactly into the trash can, while shoving what little remained of the pack behind her back.

"Yang!" Ruby squealed, her eyes darting to Weiss apparently looking for help. "I-I wasn..."

"How many times do I have to tell you?" Yang interrupted her, the blonde's voice full of authority as she walked around the table and snatched the pack from Ruby's hand. "This is why you get stomach aches."

"I was hungry," Ruby said as her face fell and her eyes filled with sadness.

"You knew I was..." Yang sighed and threw the pack onto a nearby counter. "Just go and take your shower."
Weiss couldn't help but feel a little bad for the younger girl as she slid off the chair and slumped her way out of the room, a miserable look on her face. Once Ruby was out of the room, Weiss turned back to see Yang stood with one of her hands massaging her temples.

"I guess I wasn't supposed to then," Weiss whispered quietly. Despite not having been on the receiving end of Yang's berating, she still felt a little bad for having let the situation happen.

"Huh? Oh, sorry," Yang shook her head and took a deep breath as she sat down on the other side of the table. "It's not your fault, it's mine. I don't pay attention for a second and she'll eat herself full till she's sick. Now I'm likely gunna get called to her school once again because she doesn't feel well."

"Why you and not your dad?" Weiss asked cautiously. Ruby was his daughter so surely he should be the one to deal with the school.

"He has work," Yang said and let her head fall into her hands.

Seeing that Yang was distressed, Weiss reached out and took one of her girlfriend's hands. She was beginning to notice a pattern. Last night when they had come downstairs, Yang had immediately gone to the cupboard to help set up dinner, it had been Yang who had made sure Ruby had gone to bed; and even stayed behind to clean up, and it was now Yang who was making sure Ruby was awake and ready for school. While Tai certainly seemed like a good dad, it was clear to Weiss that Yang was the one who unfairly had the bigger burden.

After a couple of seconds, Yang lifted her head and Weiss could see the pain in her eyes.

"Are you okay?" She asked tentatively.

"Yeah," She sighed and raised herself from the side of the table. "I just hate being the one who has to tell her off all the time."

Not knowing what to say to that, Weiss sat there quietly and watched as Yang began to pull food from the fridge and turn on the stove.

"Anyway..." the girl said with a forced smile as she held up an egg. "Scrambled, sunny side up, or an omelette?"

"You don..." Weiss began to answer but one glaring look that harbored no place for argument from Yang cut her off. "Alright, I know how good your omelettes are already so I think I will try scrambled please."

"Perfect," Yang smiled began to sort everything out. "Now you just wait there and let your super sexy chef make you some mouth watering food."

"Oh? You called my family chef to cook," Weiss joked, understanding that Yang wanted to forget what had just happened with Ruby.

"Wow," Yang replied with a look of fake insult. "Burnt eggs it is then."

Weiss smiled at the girl and leaned back in her chair to watch her work. She had been around people who cooked and cleaned her whole life, but she had never seen one who did it with as nearly as much enthusiasm as Yang. While all the staff at her house treated it as a job, Yang seemed to genuinely enjoy the experience, and Weiss genuinely enjoyed watching her. The way she effortlessly handled everything almost like an extension of herself was a sight that Weiss found relaxing for some reason.
A couple of minutes passed in near quiet as Yang focused on what she was doing but a sudden loud ringing cut through the comfortable silence.

"Could you get that?" Yang asked quickly. "Little busy here."

"Sure," Weiss replied as she got up, but all she knew was that the ringing was coming from Yang's direction. "Where is it?"

"Back pocket," Yang grinned over her shoulder as she wiggled her hips a little.

Weiss scowled at the girl who stuck out her tongue as Weiss gently stuck her hand under Yang's skirt and grabbed the small device from the pocket of her shorts, rolling her eyes at the wink Yang gave her.

Her heart gave a little stutter as she opened up the device to see the background, only a small part of it covered by Blake's caller ID. Yang had already changed her background to the picture she had taken of them earlier. With a small smile at the girl who's attention had returned to the delicious smelling food, Weiss hit the answer button and held the device up to her ear.

"Good morning, Blake."

"Hello, Weiss," the faunus replied without a hint of surprise that it was her who had answered instead of Yang. "Tell Yang I'll be there in about five minutes."

"Blake is on her way," Weiss relayed to Yang as a loud horn blared in her ear.

"You want some food or have you eaten?" Yang replied and Weiss noted that she didn't even bother to raise her voice at all. "I think we've got some tuna."

"She said yes," Weiss relayed again as the Blake hung up.

"Awesome," Yang nodded as she continued to tend to the food.

Blake took a little longer than five minutes to arrive. In fact, by the time the tired looking faunus did arrive, Yang was already spooning generous amounts of creamy yellow egg onto a plate in front of Weiss; followed by a couple slices of toast.

"You look rough," Yang said to the raven-haired girl as she walked into the kitchen. "You feline okay?"

"Don't start," Blake sighed and dropped into a chair beside Weiss. "Dad's already given me a headache."

"What's he done this time?" Yang chuckled and got started on more food.

"The stupid store bell again," Blake said angrily through clenched teeth, her cat ears flattening against her head as her eyes narrowed. "He wants to put it back up."

With no idea what the two were talking about, Weiss put a forkful of the delightfully aromatic food Yang had made for her into her mouth. As soon as the velvety eggs touched her tongue, she had to suppress a groan. Just as always, Yang's food failed to disappoint. Despite them usually being rather simple dishes, the things Yang made were somehow more delicious than anything she had ever tried before.

"What did you tell him?" Yang asked as she opened a can of tuna she had pulled from the
"That if he put it up then I would rip it down and melt it," Blake snarled.

"Wait," Weiss asked, confused as to why Blake was so annoyed about a bell. "What is so bad about a store bell?"

"Faunus hearing," Yang replied quickly as Blake's eye head turned sharply towards her.

"Imagine having someone play the triangle right next to your ear every five minutes," Blake added vehemently.

"Oh, right..." Weiss said, a little guilty for not having thought about that. "Sorry."

"It's fine," Blake sighed dismissively. "It's not like it's something you've ever had to deal with."

"I guess," Weiss gave a short nod and went back to her food.

"So my morning started off shit," Blake shrugged as Yang handed her the can and a spoon after scooping a large portion into whatever Yang was cooking for the girl. "How was yours?"

Embarrassed by any answer she could give, Weiss turned her head away from the raven-haired faunus and busied herself with the food in front of her to avoid answering the girls question. However as Yang didn't reply either, Blake simply let out a loud scoff.

"So much for waiting," She said as she shoveled a spoonful of meat into her mouth as she grimaced slightly.

"No idea what you're talking about," Yang replied as Weiss blushed uncontrollably.

"Suuure," Blake dragged the word out in disbelief. "And this is good tuna."

"Oh be quiet," Yang tutted as she tipped an omelette onto a plate and handed it to Blake. "I've seen you eat multiple cans at a time."

"It's still tuna," Blake shrugged and turned to Weiss. "So, from what Ruby messaged me yesterday, I'm guessing Yang told you?"

The tone of Blake's voice was hard to make out but Weiss couldn't help thinking back to the first time she had visited the shop and asked the girl if it was okay to return.

"She did," Weiss gave the girl a nod.

"And?"

"While I am not fond of the complications it brings," Weiss replied shortly. "I trust Yang when she says that neither of you were part of anything more than basic delinquency."

"Alright then," Blake replied as she began to tuck in to the omelette, apparently satisfied with Weiss' answer.

Knowing that nothing else needed to be said, Weiss returned to her food as Yang returned to cooking.

"Speaking of delinquency," Yang asked as she cracked some eggs over the pan. "How was your night out with Sun?"
"Ugh," Blake rolled her eyes and stabbed her omelette. "He got called into work."

"Again?"

"Third time in the last two weeks," Blake grumbled and shoved more food into her mouth. "It's getting annoying."

"Where does he work?" Weiss asked curiously. "I can't imagine it is somewhere good if he being called in constantly."

A small silence filled the space as both Blake and Yang exchanged a look with each other.

"What?"

"It's nothing," Blake sighed. "It's just a warehouse."

"Then what was with the look?"

Weiss scowled at the girl as this time they seemed to specifically avoid each other eye after her question but it finally clicked.

"Please tell me it is not a Schnee warehouse?" Weiss said hoping that they would say no.

"Umm, sort of.." Yang said hesitantly but backtracked as Weiss glared at her. "Okay, yes. It's a Schnee warehouse."

"So why did you not tell me?" Weiss replied hotly. "I could have it fixed in an instant."

"I didn't want to make it seem like I was pulling favours," Blake replied with a shrug. "And you and Yang are still a secret, if you help Sun then people might ask why."

"Nonsense," Weiss argued and reached into her purse. "What warehouse is it?"

"The one by the docks," Blake hesitantly. "But really, you don..."

"For crying out loud," Weiss swore as she ignored Blake and pulled out her Scroll to begin a message to Ciel. "I am supposed to be fixing this mess Father has made of my grandfather's company but I cannot do that if I do not know things."

"You are in research and development, Weiss," Yang said and flipped over the egg she was frying. "What can you do?"

"Since what we develop gets stored in those warehouses, it is well within my jurisdiction to inspect them," Weiss replied as she finished up the message and hit send.

"Okay then," Yang whistled. "You know, you're kinda cute when you're mad."

As much as Weiss appreciated the compliment, she rolled her eyes at the girl's comment and returned to what was left of her food. She was almost finished when she felt something brush up against her and turned to see Ruby wrapping her arms around the shoulders of the raven-haired faunus.

Weiss couldn't help but notice a small smile that easily stretched itself across Blake's face as she looked to make sure Yang wasn't watching and pulled open one side of her jacket. With a satisfied grin on her face, Ruby put her hand into the inner pocket and pulled out a large packaged cookie.
Unfortunately for the both of them, Ruby had barely moved away from the faunus as Yang turned around and stopped dead, looking between the two suspiciously.

"Give it to me," Yang said as she held out her hand.

With a small pout, Ruby pulled the cookie from behind her back and handed it to her older sister before dropping down into a seat.

"You've had enough," Yang scolded the girl as she opened the shelf and placed the treat on the highest shelf possible.

"Sorry, Rubes," Blake whispered to the cookie fiend.

"Stop encouraging her," Yang said and placed a plate of food in front of her sister. "She's bad enough already."

"And she is in the room," Ruby pouted and started her food.

"Yes," Yang growled as she leant against the table. "And she is the one who is trying to convince dad that she can look after herself if we let you go to the dorms at college, yet I'm still the one making sure you don't spend the day in the bathroom offering your stomach to the porcelain god."

"Alright, alright," Ruby replied with a mouthful. "I'm sorry."

Weiss gave Yang a look of support as she saw the blonde breathe out a sigh of annoyance as she shook her head slightly. Unconvinced by the clearly fake smile Yang gave her as she once again moved back to cook more food, Weiss picked up her plate and walked over to the sink next to the stove.

"Thanks," she heard Yang say to her quietly as washed the plate, the girl clearly appreciative of the gesture.

Weiss gave a simple nod and quickly finished washing the plate. Placing it on the rack next to the sink, she turned around and leant against the counter.

"I am sure she understands," Weiss said quietly to her girlfriend as she watched Blake poke at Ruby in an attempt to cheer the girl up.

"I know," the blonde replied and flipped over the egg she was cooking. "I just want to be her sister, you know?"

Weiss looked at the floor quickly before turning to face Yang.

"Sort of," Weiss sighed. "You are kind of like my sister."

"That sounds a little weird," Yang said with her eyebrows raised.

"Not like that, you dolt," Weiss shook her head at the girl's misunderstanding. "I meant you are like Winter."

"Ohh," Yang replied slowly. "How so?"

"Well," Weiss paused, thinking how best to word what she meant. "Winter was the who looked after me. After my mother started drinking and with my father being... well..."

"A prick?"
"That works," Weiss chuckled at Yang's bluntess. "Even though both of those things affected her too, she always made sure I was okay. She was hard, strict, and there were times I hated her; but she was still always there. She could have just shut herself away and focused on herself but she didn't, and I love her even more because of that."

"But that doesn't mean Ruby will feel the same," Yang replied quietly.

"I saw how she was with you last night, Yang," Weiss said slowly and sidled up to the morose brute. "It may have only been one night, but I can see how much she loves you."

"I guess," Yang sighed as a loud laugh came from the subject of their conversation, Blake having finally teased the happiness out with some tickling. "It's just... it's still hard sometimes when I feel like I'm replacing mom for her. I wish I was the one who could sneak her cookies and stuff."

"I can't say it is not unfair that you have to," Weiss admitted, feeling a little guilty at bad-mouthing Tai after his hospitality. "But you are doing what you need to do right now, so stop being so hard on yourself."

"That's kinda my thing," Yang chuckled and scooped the cooked egg onto a plate. Before Weiss could do or say anything, an arm had snaked its way around her waist and pulled her close, Yang's hypnotic lilac eyes locking onto her own. "But thanks for listening."

The kiss that Yang placed on her lips was short, though Weiss still felt herself get lost in how genuine the emotions behind it felt. The kitchen fading away, Weiss's universe narrowed down to the beautiful girl holding her close.

"You listened to me at Beacon" Weiss smiled as Yang let her go. "It is only right I return the favour."

For a moment, Weiss could have sworn Yang was about to say something. The way the girl's eyes sparkled and how she bit her lip gently almost gave the impression that she was wrestling with her thoughts. However, it apparently wasn't that important is a second later, she gave her a wink and went to sit down at the table.

Shaking her head curiously at what Yang could have possibly wanted to say, Weiss went to join the small group. As she walked towards the table, she saw Ruby quickly turn her attention back to Blake, clearly the girl had been watching her interaction with Yang and Weiss couldn't help but blush a little at their blatant public display of affection.

"So what are you doing today until work?" Yang asked Blake as she shoved a forkful of eggs into her mouth.

"There is a book signing at Dust Till Dawn in an hour," Blake replied. "If you hurry up Rubes, I can drop you off at school on my way to pick up Ren."

Weiss watched as Ruby gave the faunus a nod and began to eat with much more gusto.

"Sounds..."

"Fun," Weiss interrupted whatever Yang was about to say as Blake's face immediately formed into one of scorn. "What book is it?"

Blake didn't answer straight away and her silence only intrigued Weiss more as instead of answering, she chose to fill her mouth with food instead.
"Oh my Oum!" Yang said, a grin quickly spreading across her face as if she had suddenly realised something. "You are going to get your porn signed, aren't you?"

Blake's face flushed red with embarrassment as she almost choked on the mouthful she had just taken. Weiss would have laughed at the girl reaction if she wasn't also shocked by Yang's sudden outburst.

"It is not porn!" The girl gasped as she took a deep breath.

"Riiight," Yang smirked happily. "Just like how a burger isn't a sandwich."

"What would you know?" Blake replied quickly, clearly on the defensive. "You don't even read them."

"I might not read them, but if they aren't porn then why do you hide them under your bed?"

"That's... I..." Blake stuttered unable to respond. Instead she threw Yang an indignant glare as she stood up from the table. "Are you ready to go, Ruby?"

"Huh?" Ruby asked at the sudden request. "Oh, yeah. Let me go get my bag."

Leaving a small amount of food behind, Ruby ran from the table into the living room.

"It was nice to see you again, Weiss," Blake said quickly, blushing even more as Yang broke into uncontrollable giggles.

"You too," Weiss smiled, trying her best to be respectful despite wanting to join Yang at the girl's evident embarrassment. "And I will resolve that situation with Sun for you."

"Thanks," She mumbled and began to walk out of the room.

"Don't be too fur-ward with the author," Yang giggled loudly as the girl picked up her pace and left the room as quickly as she could.

"You are horrible," Weiss tried to glare at her as she heard the front door open and close, though knew she was smiling too much for it to be effective.

"I know, but only to her," Yang chuckled happily and returned to her food.

While it had come at the cost of Blake's embarrassment, Weiss was happy to see the smile back on Yang's face and her heart gave another of those little flutters that had been happening pretty consistently for the last couple of days.

"So how long till you have to go?"

The question broke her out of the thoughts that once again threatened to take over.

"In thirty minutes," Weiss said regretfully as she looked at the clock.

She would have loved to stay longer but the journey from Yang's house to Beacon was almost an hour long.

"Damn," Yang replied and picked up her plate. "I guess if we haven't got much time left, might as well spend it on a comfy couch."

While she was certainly able to think of one other place she would rather spend it, she couldn't find
any reason not to move to the couch.

"Sure."

The pleasant smell of lavender filled Weiss' senses and brought on a blissful fog that enveloped her mind as she straddled the blonde's lap, a position she was pretty sure Yang was responsible for though the exact details eluded her. Unlike the earlier incident however, the kisses that were being placed upon her were far more measured and controlled, done simply to show affection instead of from a desire to start anything more.

"You know... I do have... to go... at some point," Weiss sighed happily each time their lips parted long enough for her to speak.

Weiss felt Yang's lips stretch into a smile as they pressed against her own again and couldn't help mentally rolling her eyes at her girlfriends clear amusement as the situation.

"You started this," Yang chuckled and Weiss felt the vibrations pulse pleasantly through her body. "And you're the one on top."

The chuckle quickly turned to a gentle moan as the vibrations made Weiss kiss the blonde a little deeper, the Yang's eyes closing as she enjoyed the feeling.

"And I would move..." Weiss replied as she backed off from the kiss, earning a small groan from the delectable blonde. "... If your hands were not holding me in place."

"Then prove it," Yang challenged her with a wiggle of her eyebrows, removing the hands that had been holding her waist and holding them up as if Weiss was aiming a gun at her.

Weiss wanted to prove it. She wanted to get up and wipe the smug grin off the blonde's face; but instead she slipped her fingers between Yang's own and pushed the girl back, pinning her against the back cushions.

"I hate you," Weiss whispered and claimed the girl's lips once again, this time however she took Yang's bottom lip between her teeth and applied a small amount of pressure, teasing another small groan from the girl.

"Oh really?" Yang replied as her lip was released.

Suddenly Weiss felt the girl's hand tense. A familiar rush of excitement surged through her as Yang used the well honed strength of her arms and legs to take control and easily flip her. Weiss couldn't help but let out a small laugh as her back gently came to a rest against soft cushions, the radiant boxer pinning her to the couch with a huge grin on her face as wild blonde hair cascading down to hide both their faces from anyone who might happen to walk in.

"Then why can't you keep your hands off me?" The blonde said tauntingly.

The girl's lips were so close that Weiss attempted to reach up and take them with her own, only to find that they were just a little out of her reach.

"Nuh uh," Yang hummed in amusement and raised an eyebrow.

Weiss knew the girl wanted an answer and there was already one Weiss wanted to give. Her brain kicked into overdrive and her stomach did a small backflip as she contemplated just saying it, telling the girl exactly how she felt, but that little remnant of sense that remained told her that it
was still too soon. Still too soon to be certain. No, she needed to find another answer to get the thing she desired.

She knew she had only been thinking for a couple of seconds but with her mind and heart racing, it felt like minutes. Minutes of staring up into those joyful lilac orbs trying her best to come up with something that didn't give away what she truly wanted to say. However, eventually she knew the silence had stretched on too long and that she had to answer.

"Because I need to keep checking if you are real," Weiss replied quietly, settling for a version of the truth.

Whatever Yang had been expecting, it was clear that what was said wasn't that as the huge playful grin on her face faded, and turned into a genuine smile that lit up her soft eyes. It was Yang's turn to stare silently at her now and Weiss was just beginning to feel a little awkward until the blonde lowered her head and pressed her lips gently against her own.

It was not the intense kiss that had been teased, but it felt so much better than Weiss believed the original would have. She had long since learned that Yang preferred to physically convey how she felt rather than verbally. While the girl always seemed to struggle to say things, the way she acted spoke volumes and this time was no different.

The gentle pressure that was applied to her lips made her heart flutter as she could feel just how much Yang appreciated her words. The way Yang released one of her hands, letting her own gently slide its way down Weiss' arm and finally brought it to her cheek only serving to accentuate the feelings that Weiss was already wrestling to contain. The kiss couldn't have lasted more than a few seconds but as Yang pulled back, Weiss was left breathless by just how warm and loved it had made her feel.

"Real enough for you?"

Weiss didn't need to say any words, instead she gave the blonde a small nod.

"Good, but you know," Yang said quietly and a small smile spread across her face. "You could've just called me sexy."

Weiss rolled her eyes at the girl, the moment clearly broken but the tender feeling still remained.

"And boost your already supersized ego?" Weiss joked with a grin.

"It's hardly egotistical when I do, in fact, look damn good," Yang stuck out her tongue.

"Mayb..." Weiss was cut off by the pinging of her Scroll and let out a groan. "That would be Hazel."

"Stupid question because I doubt that you would, but would you be willing to skip for once?" Yang joked as she released Weiss's other arm and sat up straight, the slight hint of hope evident in her voice.

"As little as I want to leave," Weiss replied, a slight blush creeping up her face. Laid back on the couch with Yang now straddling her waist, Weiss could easily see up the blonde's crop top and make out the yellow lace bra beneath it. "No."

"Wow," Yang laughed as she followed Weiss' eyes before pushing herself off the couch. "You are such a perv."
"Says you," Weiss blushed vehemently as she accepted the girl's hand and pulled herself to her feet.

"I'm just teasing," Yang laughed as they began to make their way to the door.

However before Weiss could reach out a hand to open it, she felt Yang's hand on her waist, a pleasant shiver running down her spine as the girl pressed up against her back.

"If you wanna look, go ahead," Yang breathed into her ear, the same wave of pleasure that had ran through her the last time Yang had done it, shooting through her yet again. "If you wanna see more, just ask."

"Stop teasing..." Weiss moaned and turned around to pull the tempting girl into a deep kiss, as her hand reached out behind her for the door handle.

She broke the kiss as she heard the click of the door opening and looked at the lust-filled eyes of her girlfriend. Before the girl could recover, Weiss stepped outside where she knew Yang wouldn't follow out of caution of the neighbours seeing.

"... Or I may hold you to it," Weiss smiled and stopped a couple steps away from the door, knowing it would torment the blonde that she couldn't follow.

"Feel free," Yang smirked and wiggled an eyebrow.

"Maybe next time," Weiss chuckled and turned around to walk to the waiting car. "Have a good day, Yang."

"Have fun at college."

With a final smile at the girl, Weiss slipped into the open car door and watched Yang slowly begin to slide away as the car started to move. Both her night and morning at Yang's had been some of the best moments of her life, topped only by the meeting with the blonde, and the warm feeling permeating her core persisted even as she drove away. However she knew the feelings were more than just happiness, and let out a sigh as she leant into the back seat of the car. It had only been two months but it was undeniable now. Tired of fighting it, she finally allow the thought to sit in her mind unchallenged for once.

I love her.
The Piano

Chapter Summary

Weiss redisCOVERs an old passion

Chapter Notes

Semi-important update at the end so please read if you are following.

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Updated with edits by ToxicExotic (25/12/2019)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Weiss Schnee

Why am I here? Weiss asked herself.

It had been fifteen minutes since she had entered the room and she still didn't have an answer. For some reason she had been compelled to enter as she walked past, but she still couldn't understand why she had yet to leave. Even more baffling was why she had taken a seat in front of something that she had barely been able to look at for years.

A beautiful grand piano sat before her. Its housing was carved entirely from white marble making it exceptionally difficult to move around, but since it never was, that was rarely an issue. The Schnee symbol was carved into the marble with exquisite detail, a snowflake so white that it drew the eye even against the shining milky marble it was set again. Under the lid the steel wires glistened, each one treated with so much care that they gleamed in the soft light of the room, connected to the pristine keys that seemed to be calling to her. Calling to her in a way they hadn't in so long.

Far too long, yet it wasn't only tempting her fingers; it also teased memories from the depths of her mind.

Sitting there, looking at the light glittering off the tiny diamonds she knew were embedded in the marble, she couldn't help but think back to her childhood. To a time where music frequently filled her life.

She remembered sitting on the very same stool watching her mother's fingers dance elegantly across the keys. How the beautiful sounds that issued from each gentle note she played would fill her with emotion. But mostly she remembered the smile. As she played, her mother would always smile and so would her music. Even as a child, Weiss could feel the happiness in each note, and she was always overjoyed whenever her mother would let her play alongside.

She was terrible, of course. The sounds she made were jarring against her ears in comparison to the
graceful melodies of her mother, but the older woman hadn't cared. Each time she would laugh to herself, patiently showing Weiss how to play as she did so that in time, even her flat tones began to sound somewhat pleasant.

But she also remembered when it had begun change, when her mother had stopped smiling.

It was around her tenth birthday. There had been a huge argument between her parents and her mother had locked herself away for days afterwards. When she had finally re-emerged, the smile that Weiss had loved was no more. Instead it was replaced by a fake one, the same fake smile she had seen on her sister's face countless times. She knew what it was now of course, but she had been too young to understand then. However, she did know that the music wasn't the same.

The joy that usually filled her notes was barely there, and what joy they did carry felt forced. But even that had eventually faded from them. The soft melodies that had been the backtracking to her childhood soon became hard and harsh. The soothing sounds giving way to anguished screams that etched themselves into Weiss mind.

They were so bad that she had to stop listening. Whenever her mother would go to the room, Weiss would move to the opposite side of the house, so as to not hear her mother's pain that she could do nothing about. However, it wasn't long before even those screams came to an end too. She had been almost eleven when her mother last played, and Weiss still hated herself for being glad the woman had stopped.

Because despite everything, despite the horrible sounds she dragged from it, despite still not being able to play as her mother had, she still loved the piano.

She didn't understand why her mother had grown to hate it so much when, for her, it was everything. Every spare moment she got, she would practice, her father even hired a tutor since her mother refused to teach her, and as time went on she improved. The keys slowly began to respond to her, just as they had for her mother, and once again her life was filled with the music she loved. Only she was the one who produced it, not her mother. She would even frequently hear small sounds outside the room as the staff listened to her play.

She remembered pondering on why her mother could no longer play. 'How could she turn away from this?' She would ask herself as her own hands caused the air to be filled with the beautiful sounds that carried her most beloved memories. She had wanted to ask her mother so badly at the time, but the woman was too far gone. Not long after she had left the music behind, she had turned to alcohol instead, and any conversations with her were short and confusing.

But the question was soon answered regardless. Following yet another argument between her father and her older sister, something that was a rather common occurrence, Winter had left the house and her name had become almost taboo. Even the slightest mention of Winter would cause her father to shout and scream, and many times Weiss had received punishment for trying to find out why.

She had been fourteen at the time, and it was then that she had begun to discover just why her mother had turned away from the piano.

Weiss loved Winter. More than anyone in the world, yet she was gone, not just physically but even in name. She had been the only one since her mother had begun to spiral, to treat her with any kind of love, and in her absence she had begun to realise just how horrible her home was. How little her father cared for any of them. How, even as a child, his influence on Whitley was evident, and how the shell that had once been her mother would simply sit at a table and slowly kill herself with increasing amounts of alcohol.
With all of those realisations and the added pressure of her father now pushing Winter's former role at the company onto her, she had noticed her own music becoming less joyful as time went on. Just like with her mother, each note seemed to struggle, and just as quickly they too began to scream. It was then that she received the answer to why her mother had stopped.

It was too painful.

The feeling of hearing her own screams echoing around her in the form of music she had once loved soon became too much, and no matter how much she tried, she couldn't change it. She tried to play something happy, and it would start off fine but it would always darken. Always revert back to the prior screams.

So just like her mother, she had stopped. Turned her back on the instrument she had adored, and hadn't entered the room since.

So why am I back here now? Weiss asked herself again.

Her home life wasn't any better. Winter was still gone, her father was still the same as ever, her brother now a pale imitation of him, and her mother was still a shell of what she once was.

So why? She thought to herself, racking her brain in an attempt to find something, when a single thought floated to the front. Yang.

It was the only thing that made sense. Since meeting Yang, Weiss had begun to feel like there was someone who actually cared about her again, someone who was there for her whenever she needed them. Of course she knew Winter cared, but she was all the way in Atlas while Yang was there. While she knew Winter would come to her if there was an emergency, she knew Yang would come for anything. Unless the girl was already busy with Ruby or Blake, Weiss knew Yang would race to be by her side if she ever asked.

The blonde also made her feel loved like she had never felt before, just being in her presence was enough to ease her mind; Yang's constant assurance and faith that she was indeed a good person helping calm the insecurities that had been built up by her father her entire life. It was never a question of whether she had earned the affection; instead, Yang treated her like she already deserved it.

With that thought in mind, she tentatively reached out her hand and stroked one of the piano's keys, the hard ivorite cold against her finger. As she traced the key, an energy pulsed through her, a feeling that was somewhere between revulsion and excitement. Do I really want to do this again? She asked herself.

She didn't know how long she had been sat there feeling the key, but it was long enough for annoyance to begin to grow. She hated indecision, it was a pointless state of mind that got you nowhere. With that annoyance driving her, she made her choice.

Taking a deep breath, Weiss closed her eyes and allowed her finger to gently press down.

**Willow Schnee**

It was the quietest of tinkling that woke her. So quiet in fact that she had thought it the remnants of a dream at first and had tried to shake it from her head. But even after, the sound had persisted. Though it wasn't unpleasant, the occasional sharp ping made her alcohol-induced headache send a wave of pain through her; so with a heavy sigh, she filled her wine glass with red wine and stood
from her chair to set off and find the source of the sound.

Between the echoing and the hangover, it took her a little while to find the source but eventually her head cleared enough to register exactly what it was. The piano.

*Is the maid cleaning it?* Willow asked herself. No, that couldn't be it as the melody was far too consistent. *Then who on earth would be playing that thing?*

It had been years since she had even heard it but much longer since she had heard anything so beautiful echo from that blasted room. A room that had once offered her so much reprieve, so many happy memories of the time spent with her daughters. But, just as he had with everything else, her bastard of a husband had torn that from her too.

*"The only care I have for you is..."

As the vile man's words assaulted her mind yet again, Willow shook her head and took a sip of her wine; in hopes that it would aid in dulling them as it usually did.

She couldn't help but think back on her life as she walked down the hallway towards the sound. Her father, Nicholas, had always treated her as a princess, she had never wanted for anything; yet he always made sure she understood that everyone needed to be treated with respect, for if they didn't show any, what reason would people have to show it to them.

The man was far from perfect but she still revered everything he did as she grew up. He had grown up with nothing, but after years of hard work and networking, he had built himself an empire. By the age of forty, he had completely dominated all kinds of markets. Technology, power, medicine, every field he turned his attention to was advanced simply by his interest. She remembered asking him as a young teen why he had chosen those three fields to be his main focus.

*"Willow,"* He replied with a gentle chuckle. *"I have chosen those fields because they help people. Medicine helps the sick, technology helps bring people together and power keeps everyone moving forward."

That answer had carried her throughout her teen years. In everything she did, she tried to mimic her father's way of thinking. She did her very best to treat every single person with respect, even those who she felt didn't deserve it, she studied the fields her father viewed as important to continue on his work. Her actions earned her plenty of her own recognition and, along the way, attracted many high-society suitors. Men would shower her with gifts and praise and she entertained many of them. She would frequently find herself on dates but it quickly became apparent that none of them understood her. None of them carried within them the same desire to make the world better but, instead, simply desired her name.

Then she met him.

Jacques. Oh how wonderful he was. Smart, funny and engaging. In just a few dates she knew that he was a man who understood her. Their conversations would frequently turn to each of their plans to make the world better, her through medicine, him through business. Their relationship had very quickly become something she cherished. But had she known the truth then, what he truly was, she would have run from him without a second thought.

Within the year they were engaged. Her father, always willing to believe the best in people, welcomed him as a son and gave him a place in his company, with the promise of more, and within two more months, they were married. It was then that things began to change.
Once they had moved into their own house, those conversations she had adored became less and less frequent and every time they did come up, he no longer seemed as interested. His interest in her seemed to fade also. With the exception of physical intimacy, he no longer seemed to care about spending time with her, every spare moment was spent at the company and when he was home he was distant and impatient, he would begin to shout at the slightest provocation. She had simply put it down to the stress of working so much; after all, even her father had those days but they came and went.

Jacques' however did not. Every day became worse and worse for her, he snapped more frequently and then came the day when he had done it for the first time. She remembered she had failed to show up for a dinner he had thrown for a client, and he was furious. For hours he screamed at her about how she had shown him up, her failure to attend a sign of disrespect, and that if he couldn't even control his wife then how could he control a company. The conversation ended with his hand slamming against her cheek as she tried to tell him why she was late; instead, she was to busy crying from the pain as she ran to their room to tell him the news that had made her so happy earlier that day.

She was pregnant.

Now what could she do. Her father loved the man, he was so ingrained in the company that he was preparing to take over, and now there was a child. If she left him now what would happen. Would she have her father's support? Or would he turn on her too? Would she and her unborn child be left with nothing? No. She couldn't allow that.

So she stayed. Told Jacques of her news the next day and for a while he was better. He was more attentive, more gentle and eventually she forgave him again for what he had done. People slipped up after all.

However, once Winter was born was when she began to worry again. Jacques temper had already returned in full force and by the end of her maternity leave, she no longer felt comfortable leaving her child alone with him. Even if it was just for a couple of moments. But little good did that do. The man still imposed himself onto the girl, doing his best to make sure she never disrespected him, and when Weiss came along he did the same to her. And the same with Whitley.

And then came that nightmarish argument. When he finally said it. Finally told her that everything she had loved about him was a lie to get her name. Every fear she had ever had came crashing down on her as she realised that she should have left long ago. But now she couldn't.

Her father had passed away just after Whitley was born, Jacques now ran his company and held all their accounts. She had nothing, Jacques would easily take the children from her in court, and then she would be leaving them alone with that vile man. And she couldn't let that happen. She loved them too much.

So she tried her best to divert his anger onto herself. If she couldn't leave, she could at least keep her children from as much pain as possible. Frequently she would argue with him behind closed doors so as to make sure the kids didn't hear; and just as frequently, the argument would end with her cupping her cheek in pain. After every argument she would have a drink and return to her beloved piano, but even there she would be reminded of her life. The music she played was dark and only served to deepen her displeasure; but the wine didn't. So more and more she turned to the latter. The more she drank, the less painful it was to be in the house. The less painful the strikes became.

But she also cared less. She frequently forgot things, and soon she even forgot to argue with the man. Instead, she often found solace listening to her daughter play the cheerful melodies she no
longer could. The girl was never aware that she would sit outside the room, proud of the fact that her daughter was happy, and that she had at least played a part in maintaining that for as long as she could.

But then Winter had left following a huge argument with Jacques and she quickly learned the truth. She had done nothing. She had played no part in Weiss' happiness.

Just like her own had, her youngest daughter's music had turned dark soon after her eldest left and Willow could no longer stand to listen. Gone was the happy music that had provided her some relief, gone was the only thing she could be proud of. Then the music simply stopped and the only thing Willow had was the wine, and the knowledge that she had allowed this. From one decision to not seek help when she could, she had allowed her children to suffer and now it was too late.

But the music she now followed didn't sound like that of suffering. There was no darkness to it. No horrible melancholy permeating every sound. Instead it was happy, every note filled with a hopeful joy that made her head swim with the memories of a better time. So it was with great surprise that she saw it was Weiss who was once again producing such joyous sounds.

Stopping at the door she watched from behind as her daughter's fingers quickly skittered across the keys playing a random melody, her occasional mistakes an indication of how rusty she was, but still only adding to the beauty.

And dear Oum was it beautiful.

Every note was filled with emotion that rang clear as a sunny day. Each strike of the keys gentle, like she was treating them with the same care she would treat whatever was on her mind. Willow didn't even need to see her daughter's face to know that the girl was smiling.

She knew the sound. She had made the same one many years ago. It was love. The girl's music spoke both of love and being loved.

Who? Willow asked herself.

The music clearly spoke of another. Someone who shone like the sun in the forefront of the girl's mind and Willow thought back once again. She had noticed a difference in Weiss lately. Even through the blissful haze that the alcohol provide, it was hard not to see. Quite often she would turn a corner only to encounter Weiss subtly smiling to herself. At dinner the girl had become more and more attached to her Scroll, checking it whenever she thought no-one was paying her any mind, and then there was the most obvious one. Her driver.

Never before had Weiss shown any care for them, they came and went and were simply there to take her wherever she needed to go; but lately she had begun to favour one above all the others. Every time she called for a car, she would request the man and now, Willow could easily see why. He was enormous and extremely intimidating to look at. Willow suspected that Jacques had also taken notice of Weiss' knew insistence on having the same driver, but she knew her husband was far too intimidated to try and gain any information from him.

But now, listening to Weiss play her heart out, it all made sense.

She had found someone. Someone who could make her happy once again.

Willow would have loved to have listen longer; but this was private. It was for Weiss alone and the sudden realisation that she was intruding hit her. She didn't deserve to be privy to her daughter's happiness when she had allowed her to suffer so much.
With an inward sigh, Willow turned to move away from the doorway and began to make her way back down the hallway only for the bottom of her wine glass to clink loudly against a nearby table. Her heart froze as she heard the music stop and she quickly picked up her pace, turning the corner in hopes that Weiss had not witnessed her spying on such an intimate moment.

In her rush however, she did not see the small portly man that was cleaning one of the garish statues that stood in the foyer and collided with him with enough force that she stumbled backwards, the remainder of her wine spilling onto her shirt.

"Oh!" The man grunted as she bounced off of him. "F-Forgive me, Mrs Schnee. I was in a world of my own."

"It's quite alright, Klein," Willow sighed and straightened herself up, not caring about the stain on her shirt. It was far from the first to be ruined in such a way. "I was also."

"From the same cause no doubt," The man said, some of the natural glee the man seemed to always possess returning to his voice. "It is so lovely to hear your little snowflake playing again."

"Mhm," she quietly hummed in agreement.

Willow liked Klein. The man had been with the family since before even Winter was born and she knew he was incredibly important to all three of her children. Though he definitely had his moments where his mood seemed to switch at random, he had always treated her children as his own, giving them the love and attention that neither her or Jacques could.

"Is everything okay, Mrs Schnee?" The man asked, the glee quickly turning into a look of concern. "You seem awfully upset."

How could she not be? She had once again been reminded of how useless she was. She had subjected her children to a monster for their entire lives, and worse of all she had chosen to abandon them in favour of something that had only helped for so long. The alcohol was a choice, not an addiction. Every bottle she opened was her deciding to drink, deciding to free herself in the only way she knew how.

"I am a horrible parent, Klein?" Willow asked the man, causing his eyebrows to furrow. "You may speak freely."

The man took his time to answer, obviously trying his best to find the right wording.

"I do not think so," He finally replied slowly. "I feel you have tried your best in a very unfortunate situation."

"Then clearly my best is not very good."

"But you tried," Klein insisted.

"I gave up."

"Maybe," Klein nodded, the slight twitch of his mustache indicting he was smiling. "But that does not mean you cannot try again."

Willow looked at the man's soft brown eyes.

"People try and fail at things all the time, Mrs Schnee" He continued gently. "But it is in retrying that we learn to be better."
"Thank you, Klein," she sighed after a couple moments of thought. She wanted to change, to be better, but she still wasn't sure how.

With a small bow, the man turned on his heel and began to walk away but Willow still had one more question for the man.

"Klein?" She called to the small man and he turned to her with a quizzical expression. "The person my daughter is playing for, are they deserving?"

The man gave her an amused look as he closed his eyes.

"I have not met them but I believe they are, yes," He replied with a gentle nod.

"Good."

With nothing more to ask him, Willow gave the man a grateful nod and went to change her shirt, determined to think on what he had said to her.

Chapter End Notes

So I have been wanting to put this chapter in somewhere for a while and this felt like a good place for it. I understand what it depicts is a difficult subject that I am lucky enough to have never gone through myself so I hope I did it at least some justice. And if anyone is reading this, either now or in the future, that is in this kind of situation, please know that you are not alone and that there is help out there.

SEMI-IMPORTANT UPDATE

So some things may be changing a little for the next two month or so and I wanted to be transparent about them... coz I love you peeps. While I love writing and am very passionate about it, I am also very passionate about video games and March is a big month for me in that regard. However I have been focus solely on writing for a while now and neglected my other passion but with DMCV (a game I have been waiting 11 years for) releasing TOMORROW at the time of posting this and Sekiro at the end of the month, I do intend to dive very deep into them.

As such you may notice that there may be a bit of a longer gap between chapters for a while and that the chapters themselves will be a little shorter. I have been wanting to shorten the chapters a little for a while now, since I know not everyone has the time to sit and read a very long chapter, and save the bigger ’10k word’ chapters for the really big moments so going forward, expect chapters to be around 3k-4k.

But yeah, that is the update and I hope you understand. I am certainly not abandoning this and will still be working on it alongside my deep dive into those game but if you EVER want a small update or just a small hint as to when the next chapter might be, my private messages are always open.
Weiss Schnee

Weiss was stood on her balcony, the crisp winter winds blowing gently through her hair causing her neck to tingle pleasantly, and thought on how quickly the end of the year had flown by. It was hard for her to believe that it was already December, already three months since her eighteenth birthday, two months since meeting Yang, and herself starting to take a more active role in the company. It was very rare for her to find herself wishing for time to slow down but for the first time in a long time, she was. The past two months had been the most amazing she could remember, mostly in part due to Yang. The mere thought of the blonde bringing a smile to her face as she looked out over the mansion's gardens and watched as the gardener tended to the rose bushes her mother had abandoned long ago.

How could it not?

Everything about Yang was perfect to Weiss. Her smile, the way it lit up her beautiful lilac eyes and always managed to tease one from her, no matter what mood she was in. The way she treated people, with so much effortless compassion that it inspired Weiss to try her best to be a good person too. The best thing however was how easy everything felt to Weiss when they were together. While previous relationships had always felt tense, Weiss' status as the heiress to one of the world's largest companies always ended up affecting how she was treated, but with Yang it never did. She asked about the company of course, and frequently made attempts to show some interest, but it was always when Weiss had bought it up. A vast majority of the time, Yang treated her as a normal girl. No special treatment, not like she was important because she was Weiss Schnee, but because she was Weiss.

And her work at the company, she loved every moment of that too. While Yang made her feel loved and supported, the company gave her purpose. She was now actively making a difference, actively making progress in returning the company to what her grandfather had started. The chip, while still a long ways off, was important to her for more reasons than she had told Dr Polendina. Sure she wanted it to be a turning point, something that showed she was breaking away from all the atrocities her father had done in the name of business, but she also wanted it to be a tribute to her grandfather. Though he had passed while she was still young, she still had fond memories of sitting on the man's lap and listening to his wondrous stories about his time at the company. She knew now that a lot of them were completely exaggerated but the sentiment was always the same. His stories always carrying the same message of their duty to help people and she hoped that, wherever he was now, the chip would make him proud.

With so much in her life finally beginning to change for the better, it was hard not to feel content in that moment. Even the buzzing Scroll in her pocket couldn't dampen her mood as she pulled it out and saw the caller was an unknown number. Normally that meant it was some tabloid journalist
who had managed to find her number and was looking for anything she could give. Just as she was about to hit decline and block the number, as she usually did, the call ended and seconds later a text message appeared on her screen.

'It's Blake.'

Within another couple of seconds, the device began to buzz again and Weiss quickly answered.

"Good afternoon, Blake," Weiss said and leant against her balcony railing, the back of her shirt's collar lifting up slightly to allow a small chill to run down her back.

"Sorry, grabbed your number from Yang's phone, I should've sent a text first," The faunus said from the other said of the call. "I can only imagine the people who call you."

"Believe me, you can't," Weiss sighed, the shiver that ran down her back having nothing to do with the wind as she remembered some callers who had been creepy enough that she had actually changed her number. "So what makes you call anyway?"

"Yang's fight is in two hours," Blake replied, her voice out a little halfway through and sounding breathy on its return. "You're still coming right?"

"Yes," Weiss replied suspiciously as a small commotion sounded on the other end of the call. "Ciel is covering my meeting."

"Alright then," Blake sighed, though Weiss recognised it as a sigh of pleasure rather than exasperation.

"Blake, please tell me you are not with Sun right now?" Weiss groaned, fairly certain of the answer to her question already.

"Uhh maybe..." Blake said quietly and let out a small yelp. "Look, just be at the Signal Gym in an hour so I can show you where to watch without people seeing you."

Without bothering to wait for an answer, Blake hung up and Weiss couldn't help but shake her head, an amused smile teasing at her lips. She was happy that, while she had yet to get to the work issues at her companies warehouses, Blake and Sun were at least getting some time together. The girl had seemed a little more down than usual from Sun constantly being called in so Weiss was happy they were still going strong because, as Yang had said, the boy really did make her smile.

However, while Weiss would have loved to stay on her balcony to enjoy the blissful winds a little longer, Signal was quite a distance from her mansion and she knew that there would be the usual hassle of dodging the press so with a small sigh to herself, she moved back into her room and closed the balcony doors.

She was actually rather excited to watch Yang's fight. While Yang had said it was only a friendly bout, she knew the girl had been training so much that since the night she had spent over that there had been almost no communication between the two. They still talk every night of course, but Weiss had been insistent on ending the conversations quickly so that the blonde could get her rest. However, this meant that she had been missing the girl terribly. It had been tough during their infrequent meetings in the previous weeks, but not seeing her at all and barely hearing her reassuring voice had left her feeling slightly empty all week. Quite often she had found herself thinking back to the night spent at Yang's house, letting the memory of how it felt envelop her and more often than not lately it was the memory of laying in her girlfriend's arms, hearing the gentle thudding of the girl's heartbeat in her ear as she rested her head against Yang's chest, that aided her
in falling asleep.

"You seem happy, sister?"

The completely unexpected voice caused her to let out a small, startled yelp as she turned to face the doorway where her brother Whitley was leant against the frame, the usual fake, obnoxious smile on his face.

"It looks good on you," He said, his voice sickeningly sweet.

"What do you want, Whitley?" Weiss asked as she squinted at the boy. Normally he would simply avoid her where he could, but occasionally he would attempt to get under her skin with vague insults.

"Hmm, just came to ask my dearest sister something," he replied, the smile remaining on his lips. "You see, things around here have been a little... odd as of late."

"How so?" Weiss asked cautiously, though she didn't hate her brother, pity being a more apt description of her feelings, Weiss' general dislike of him did often caused her to overlook that he was actually very observant.

"Well," The boy hummed gently as if he was enjoying the moment. "You have been smiling more, your attention is now glued to your Scroll during dinner and I couldn't help but overhear that you were playing the piano again."

"Do you always pay this much attention to me?" Weiss said condescendingly as she really didn't like where the conversation was headed.

"Only because I care," He said in a way that sent shivers down her spine. She had heard those words from her father countless times and she couldn't remember them ever being said honestly. "But it's not just you who has been so different lately."

"What do you mean?" Weiss asked out of curiosity, she hadn't noticed anything different about anyone else in the mansion.

"Well, I swear that when I saw Klein retrieve the usual wine bottle from our parents' room, that there was actually some left in the bottle," He elaborated in a thoughtful tone. "Now it could have just been a trick of the light, but I have never fallen for such a trick before. What do you think, sister?"

Weiss gave the boy a hard glare. He was right, the lighting that was set up in the mansion had been done in such a way that it never messed with their vision. That combined with the fact her mother liked red wine, which was always kept in green bottles that deflected quite a bit of light, meant that what Whitley had seen must have been true. And it was odd, usually her mother would never even leave a drop before falling asleep.

"She may have just fallen asleep early," Weiss said, though she knew her voice had been very unconvincing.

"Hmm, maybe," Whitley said, his grin growing at her tone and he pushed himself off her doorframe to stand upright. "There was one other thing too."

There was no mistaking the glint in his eyes as he said those words and Weiss felt herself straighten, know that his eagerness was never a good sign.
"Supposedly, there is a staff member telling these little stories about you," he said, his eagerness seeping into his voice now. "According to my ears among the staff, she was cleaning our town house early on Monday morning yet seems to swear that you were nowhere to be seen."

Weiss felt her blood freeze a little as she glared into her brother's eyes. The same shade of pale blue as hers yet the ice held within them was colder by far. She was certain that if he actually knew anything then her father would know already so she had to play it off.

"Then your ears must be faulty," Weiss said with as much confidence as she could muster. "Or she is simply getting her days mixed up, I do not remember any cleaner during my stay."

"Or she is lying," the boy said with an amused grin. "Or lazy, or just simply negligent, either way I think it would be prudent to fire her. After all, we cannot have misinformation about our family's ongoings being spread around now, can we?"

_Dammit_, Weiss thought to herself. She was stuck.

If she defended the woman then her brother would suspect something but if she allowed her to be fired, what would that make her? What would Yang say if she ever found out? She had been disappointed enough at the museum but this would be so much worse. Just imagining how Yang would look at her sent a pang straight to her heart and she knew instantly that she couldn't allow that. She couldn't try to build a life with Yang by destroying someone else's.

"I do not think that is necessary," Weiss said with as much authority as she could. "Give me her name and I will talk to her, maybe suggest ways in which she can improve before we take such an action."

"But why bother when we can just hire someone who already has the qualities we seek?" he said pompously, his hand sweeping to the side idly to express his disinterest. "There is no end to the commoners that are willing to serve us."

"If she is spreading rumours about me, then I will be the one who decides her fate," Weiss said, ignoring his last statement and taking a step towards him. "Now give me the name and I will resolve this situation myself, later on."

Whitley hesitated briefly, the smile that had been painted on his face making it hard to determine his thoughts. Weiss didn't know if she had convinced the boy that there was nothing to be suspicious about, and she doubted she ever would, but after a couple of seconds, he finally gave a brief nod.

"Very well, sister," he with a little bow. "I do believe it was a woman named Veela... or was it Violet? It is so hard to remember these days, what with there only being so many colours for people to use and all."

"Viola?" Weiss asked, she was certain her brother knew the name but she couldn't be bothered to play his games any more as she had better places to be.

"Ahh, yes, that was the one," he said with a slight chuckle, clearly regarding his own pomp as witty. "You were always so good with names."

"Yes, well, I have places to be," Weiss scowled as she grabbed her bag from her desk chair. "So will that be all?"

"I believe so," he said and turned on his heel to make his way out of the doorway. "Are you going anywhere nice?"
"I have a lunch that I cannot miss," Weiss lied, knowing that Whitley was likely to subtly drop the information to her father.

"Hmm, well have fun," he said insincerely and walked away out of sight.

The conversation with her brother had left Weiss feeling a little worried. Her brother was a pain at the best of times but he did have a tendency to make sure he knew everything that was happening around him; and if he suspected there was something her didn't know, he would do his best to find out. Unfortunately, Weiss wasn't sure if she had managed to convince him so with the thought in mind to keep an eye on him, she made her way down to her car to leave for the fight.

The smell of waxed wood was strong in Weiss' nose as she entered the building and scanned her surroundings. It was very large, easily the size of a basketball court and the lines on the floor showed that it was likely was often used as one on occasion but there was currently a boxing ring placed in the centre. She doubted it was an official one and more just one constructed for the public fight. High walls were lined with many different pieces of equipment, from ropes to folded away climbing ladders and on the other side were a long set of bleachers where people would easily be able to sit and watch.

She wasn't sure how many people there were going to be watching but from what Yang has said, it wouldn't be too many. If that really was the case, then she would be easily spotted and was therefore glad Blake had thought ahead. However, Weiss had no idea where to find the girl. She had expected her to in the main room, since that was the most logical conclusion, but obviously she was wrong as the girl was nowhere to be seen. Pulling out her Scroll, Weiss typed off a quick message to tell the girl she had arrived and began to walk around the room as something to do. Half a minute later, she felt the device buzz in her hand and looked at what the girl had replied.

'Corridor at the end. First left. Third door on the right.'

Looking to the end of the room, Weiss noticed a small corridor she hadn't noticed on her initial inspection as, even though the room was bathed in light, the entryway was shrouded in shadows cast from the lack of light above it and the bleachers blocking any of the other light from reaching it. Suppressing a shiver at the dark space, Weiss moved towards it and followed the direction Blake had given her until she came to watch she believed was the door and give it a soft knock. The faint sound of voices that had been on the other end stopped, replaced by the sound of footsteps drawing closer to the door as it quickly opened.

A girl she had never met before suddenly stood before her and a baggy brown t-shirt and a pair of black shorts. Brown hair, cut to frame her face, stopped just below her ears apart from one lock of orange hair that ran down to her chest. Dark brown eyes like chocolate quickly looked her up and down but they locked onto her own as her mouth formed into a grin of what Weiss assumed to be approval.

"Damn, I hope you're here for me?" she said in a flirtatious tone, her grin widening to show shining white teeth. "Love a girl in an expensive shirt. That's a Chloris hand-sown, right?"

"I-I... uhhh..." Weiss stumbled, taken aback by the girl's brazenness but also impressed by her ability to correctly identify her shirt.

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"You love anyone in anything, Coco," Said the tired voice of Blake from behind the girl who was still grinning at her. "I doubt a trash bag would turn you off."

"So long as it's well made," the girl replied happily as she leant in a little closer and lowered her
Though generally, I prefer people in noth..."

"Will you please stop flirting with my girlfriend," Came Yang's voice from somewhere in the room too, the slightest hint of annoyance present in her tone. "Come in Weiss, and ignore Coco."

"Wait, girlfriend?" Coco said, her tone now much more intrigued and she moved aside to let Weiss enter. "Wow, how did a barbarian such as yourself land someone like this?"

"I don't think even she knows," said Blake who was sat on a small bench by the wall, a book in hand but her eyes peering over the top.

"Very funny," Yang pouted as she stood up. Just like the girl they had called Coco, Yang was wearing a pair of shining shorts and a baggy t-shirt, though hers were yellow instead of brown. "Shouldn't you get back to your own dressing room?"

"Right, guess I will see you in the ring," Coco nodded, flashing yet another smile in Weiss' direction. "I'll try not to mess her up too bad, I know her looks is all she's got."

With one last wink, the brunette slipped out of the still open door and left it to close behind her as Weiss felt a hand slip around her side and pull her close. Her eyes met the preferable lilac of Yang's and she couldn't help but feel a wave of relief rush through her as she once again found solace in Yang's arms.

"We are supposed to be a secret, Yang," Weiss scolded the girl, though the scolding was half-hearted at best. "There are enough people who know already."

"I know," the blonde's eyes saddened slightly as she spoke. "I just didn't like seeing Coco flirt with you."

Weiss narrowed her eyes a little. She couldn't really judge Yang as she herself had been jealous a couple of times but with potentially having Whitley's attention turned their way, she couldn't help but be a little more on edge about people knowing.

"I missed you," Yang said cutely, her bottom lip sticking out slightly and Weiss felt what little annoyance she had been feeling melt away.

"I missed you too," Weiss smiled and gave the girl a quick peck on the lips. "But please, no matter how jealous you get, no-one else can know."

"Alright," Yang nodded and smiled gently as her hand dropped from Weiss' back.

"I'm sorry," Weiss sighed, the guilt of them having to be a secret because of her once again surfacing. "Just..."

Weiss cut herself off. She wanted to tell Yang about her brother but she also didn't want to give the girl something to worry about before her fight.

"Never mind, I will tell you later," Weiss said pointedly, receiving another nod from her girlfriend.

"Alright, well I gotta get ready," Yang smiled and turned to Blake who had clearly returned to her book, uninterested in their conversation. "You wanna show Weiss where she can watch from?"

"Sure," the faunus replied, shutting the book and putting it inside her jacket as she stood up.

"Good luck, Weiss smiled, and made to follow Blake out of the door only to feel a hand take her
own and pull with enough force to spin her around.

She closed her eyes and smiled in anticipation while she span as she knew what was about to come; and sure enough, she wasn't disappointed. Yang's lips claimed her own in a deep kiss and the girl's other hand gripped her waist to keep her close, Weiss replying by slinging her free arm around the blonde's neck and pulling her closer. After a week of no contact, the feeling of her lips pressed against the blonde's, the slight smell of lavender filling her nose, was heaven for Weiss. Unfortunately, while she would have loved to have stayed in the embrace for a while longer, Yang pulled back, a shivering breath escaping the girl's lips as her eyes opened.

"Luck?" Yang smiled cockily and released her grip. "I'm pure skill."

"Then you had better show me some," Weiss replied, rolling her eyes and flashing the blonde a smile as she turned and followed Blake out of the door.

As It shut, Weiss watched as Yang stuck her tongue out at her and gave a wink. Knowing what was going through the girls mind, Weiss shook her head free of those thoughts and turned around to see Blake waiting for her. Without a word, Blake began to walk down the corridor and Weiss quickly took after her.

Silence followed them as they walked, a common occurrence Weiss had noticed whenever she was alone with Blake. Without Yang, almost every time Weiss had entered the store to get her coffee for the past week there had been almost zero conversation. While she had got used to that feeling at home, with Blake it had been a rather stark contrast to their normal interactions. It had even concerned her enough to ask Yang about if Blake actually liked her but the blonde was quick to reassure her and just say that's how Blake was normally.

"So what took you so long to get here?" Blake asked dryly, her form starting to fade into the darkness as they walked down a windowless hallway that was only partially lit.

"The press," Weiss groaned at the faunus as they turned into a door that led to a set of stairs, thankfully much better lit than the hallways so she didn't have to worry about tripping.

"It took you over an hour to lose them?" Blake asked with a raised eyebrow as they began their climb.

"No," Weiss shook her head. "I just needed to be a little more cautious today, is all."

"Oh, how come?" Blake asked slowly.

"Well, there may be a chance that my brother suspects something," Weiss sighed as they reached the top and took a left turn. If her mental mapping was correct, they were now heading back in the direction of the main room.

"I'm assuming that would be bad," the raven-haired girl hummed.

"Very," Weiss confirmed. "If he finds out then my father will know immediately."

"So still no plan for telling him then?"

"No," Weiss sighed.

"You do realise it only takes one person to successfully follow you and then the decision is taken out of your hands, right?"
"I know that," Weiss argued.

She knew Blake was right and she had been trying to think of ways to tell her father but every situation she devised just ended badly in her mind. No matter what she thought up, she couldn't find a way where her father's anger wasn't cataclysmic.

"So? What will you do if that happens?" Blake asked, her tone hard and it was clear to Weiss the girl expected an answer.

"You are worried I will leave her?" Weiss replied quietly.

"Yes," Blake answered flatly as she stopped in front of a door. "I know you like her but I have seen you go out of your way to not be followed, not come to the store because you ran out of time trying to lose them and even today, you were almost late because your brother might suspect."

"Bla..."

"Yang may not have shown anything obvious, but when I told her you had texted me that you were here, I definitely saw relief in her eyes."

"I do not know what I will do if that happens, Blake," Weiss admitted as she looked into the girl's amber eyes. She knew Blake was only asking out of worry for her best friend so wasn't at all annoyed by her doubts. "But I do know that I will not be leaving her."

Blake's eyes locked onto her own, her amber orbs searching for any sign that she was lying and Weiss did her very best to make her see just how serious she was. After a couple of seconds, she squinted a let out a short sigh.

"What will you do if he sends you to Atlas?"

Weiss blinked. She had not been expecting that. She had certainly thought of that possibility and even though it was small, it was still a very real one. One that she had no idea how she would handle. She had money put away, more than most people would make in a couple of years, but if her father tried to send her back to Atlas and Weiss used her savings to stay, she would be saying goodbye to the company permanently. That was the worst case scenario and one she had not told Yang about.

"I see," Blake nodded as she twisted the handle of the door behind her, her face completely unreadable. "For what it's worth, I can see how much you care about her and I really hope it doesn't go that way."

"Thank you," Weiss said gently. After asking Yang why Blake was always quiet towards her, she now found herself wishing the short walk had been one of silence.

"You can watch her from here, she should be coming out in around fifteen minutes."

Weiss gave the girl a nod and stepped into the room as Blake flipped the switch on the wall. From what she could see, it looked like an unused office, the only furniture a small desk and a couple of chairs. On the far end was a window and Weiss walked over to it to see that it had a perfect view of the gymnasium where a couple of people were already sitting in the stands. While she would have loved to have sat down there with them to cheer her girlfriend on, she was at least happy that she would have just as good a view from the window.

"Do you hate me, Blake?" Weiss asked as she looked out of the window, sensing that the girl was still behind her. It was a question she had to ask after the uncertainty she had just admitted through
her lack of an answer. "For forcing Yang to worry like that?"

Blake didn't reply straight away but since there was no sound of the door closing, Weiss knew she was still there. The question hung in the air for what must have been a whole minute of unnerving silence; but eventually, she heard soft footsteps approach from behind her and saw Blake appear at her side, her amber eyes looking thoughtfully out the window.

"Had you asked me that question last month, I may have said yes," Blake admitted and Weiss turned to look at the girl properly. There was always a hardness to Blake's eyes that made looking into the slightly jarring, like you were being judged, and this time was no different.

"You're a Schnee," Blake sighed heavily. "During my time in the White Fang, I was made to believe your family the worst of all the bigots, that you all despised the faunus simply because you thought us lesser, and the actions taken by your father only enforced those beliefs."

Weiss could hardly argue with that. Over the years her father had done many deplorable things. Most were swept under the rug, but even the few that were publicly known had been quickly twisted in ways that would make anyone believe they were lies. Hell, for a time, even Weiss had believed they were.

"So when you started coming into my shop, a shop run by faunus, and began to flirt with my best friend, all around the time a new controversy about your company had arisen, I couldn't help but be suspicious," Blake continued slowly. "So I watched you carefully, every time you came around I would keep you in eyesight or listen closely to everything you said and because of that, I saw something that I didn't expect."

"Which was?"

"You were kind," Blake answered easily. "A little rough around the edges, but you never showed any hate towards me; and even more, you seemed to genuinely like Yang. I was still a little sceptical of course, but as time went on, and the more Yang talked about you, I began to see that you were nothing like your father."

"So no, I don't hate you," Blake said, her voice filled with certainty. "I don't like that Yang might be hurt at all, but sometimes life sucks and there are things that we just cannot prepare for, even if we know that they may happen. I can see that this is a difficult situation for you too, and that you will do whatever you can to prevent that from happening."

"I will," Weiss confirmed, wanting to make sure Blake knew she was right on that. "But I don't know what to do if he does try to send me away. Yang knows that I am going to lose the company for a while, but I have not told her that I could lose it permanently if I stay when he wants me to go."

"You're scared she will end it?"

"Would she?" Weiss asked, hoping that the girl who knew Yang better than anyone would say no.

"Most likely," Blake said with a slight nod. "Even I often feel she is too selfless for her own good."

"So what do I do?"

"I'm not sure," Blake sighed and rested her hands on the window's ledge. "This may not be may place to ask but... Do you love her?"

Weiss paused and watched as Blake turned to look her in the eye.
"I do," Weiss admitted after a second, as she looked into Blake's glowing amber eyes. She had been thinking on that question all week and had finally accepted that she did. While she knew that it was very soon, her visit to the piano room had provided the clarity she needed to stop doubting it.

"Then I would suggest that you wait it out," Blake said, her voice softer than before. "Take the time to figure it out and then you can work on trying to make sure it doesn’t happen. But you will have to tell Yang the truth at some point."

"I know," Weiss groaned. "I would just rather wait until we have a plan on how we are actually going to tell my father first."

"Well that is for you and Yang to figure out," Blake said as she returned her hands to her pockets and straightened herself up. "Speaking of which, I should get back downstairs."

"Of course," Weiss said with a nod. "Thank you for being honest, Blake."

"Yeah, well, like how I think Yang is often too selfless, Yang often thinks I’m too honest," Blake shrugged.

"Well it is an admirable quality to me," Weiss smiled as she turned back to see more people sitting on the bleachers and managed to pick out Tai from the crowd. "It is a rare thing in my life for someone to be so."

"I really do hope things turn out for the best, Weiss," Blake said with a small smile. "I may not have known what to think of you at first but now I consider you a pretty decent person who really does deserve someone like Yang."

"Thank you," Weiss replied, feeling a little warm inside. After her doubts of whether Blake even liked her, it was good to have them put to rest.

"No problem," Blake nodded. "Anyway, I really should go. Enjoy the fight, Coco is pretty tough so it should be a good one."

With a short wave, Blake made her way out of the door and shut it behind her, leaving silence in her wake. Returning her gaze back to the window, Weiss thought about the conversation she had just had as she waited for Yang to come out. She felt Blake had been fair in everything she had said, and knew that the girl was right in saying Weiss had to tell Yang.

After minutes of thinking on both how she could tell Yang the truth and how they could go about telling her father, she saw Yang emerge from the dark hallway she had walked through earlier and as she walked over to Blake, who had already taken her seat next to Tai, the blonde raised a hand to her mouth and blew a kiss in Weiss’ direction. Feeling a smile pull at her lips, Weiss decided that she was finally going to have to do something drastic if she was going to figure out a solution to her problems.

Pulling her Scroll from her purse, she found the desired recipient and typed off a short message.

'Dear Winter,

I know you are quite busy and that you said this number was solely for emergencies, but a lot has happened in the short few months since you last visited and I am genuinely unsure about what to do. Your advice has always been of great value to me and now I could use it more than ever. I am not asking for you to time time away from your busy schedule to visit, but I please ask that you call me when you have a moment to spare.
Your sister,

Weiss.

Taking a deep breath, Weiss gave the message a once over. She knew Winter would reply rather quickly if Weiss sent a message to the number she had chosen but did she really want to use it? Winter had made it clear that she could, that the number was one that only Weiss had, but she knew her sister was incredibly busy. Unfortunately though, she needed the help. Never before had she been so torn on how to do something, so it was with a shaky finger that she clicked send, determined to enjoy her girlfriend's fight while she waited for a reply.

Chapter End Notes

So I originally started uploading here to get a little more feedback and I can wholeheartedly say that I am so happy that is what I have received. I am so grateful to every single one of you who takes the time to read and even comment so thank you so much. It may sometimes take me a while to get there since I am a little busy this month and they generally left while I am asleep but I do try my best to get back to each of you.
Weiss and Yang spent a little time together after Yang's boxing match.

"Could I get a custard doughnut, please Amber," Tai said kindly as they approach the store's counter. "And whatever the girl's want too?"

The small dessert parlour they had walked into was actually rather nice. Nestled between to shops, the space was only really big enough for three table, four chairs a piece, but the overall feel of the shop was very comforting. Each wall was painted a soft blue with white, pink, and brown streaks running through their centre. Dotted around the walls were pictures of desserts, from ice cream to gateaux, all of them detailed enough that Weiss wouldn't be surprised if she developed diabetes just from looking at them.

"Oooo!" Ruby cooed as she approached the brown-haired cashier who's name tag read Amber. "I'll have the deluxe cookie-dough cheesecake with strawberry ice cream and chocolate sauce."

"She'll take a regular," Yang objected, earning a slight nod from the cashier and a small pout from the younger girl. "Strawberry sundae for me..." Yang paused to look at Blake who had already taken a seat by the window, her nose planted firmly back into her book. "... and a slice of black velvet cake."

"What about you, Weiss?" Tai asked as he dug around his pockets.

"Do you have a plain sponge cake?" Weiss asked the woman behind the counter as she reached into her purse and pulled out her card, receiving a confirmatory nod in response. "A slice of that, please."

As she reached out to hand the card to the cashier, she felt Yang's fingers close around her wrist and turned to look at her girlfriend.

"What are you do..." Yang began but Weiss cut her off.

"I am paying," Weiss said resolutely as she gave Yang a pointed look. She could see the thoughts rushing behind Yang's eyes and, knowing what the blonde was thinking, gave her a gentle smile. "I want to."
After a brief moment of hesitation, Yang released her wrist and Weiss handed the card to the woman who swiped it and gave it back.

"Consider it a reward," Weiss smiled as she placed the card back in her purse and made her way to the table Blake was sitting at with Yang in tow.

"But I lost," the blonde replied with a sullen grimace.

"True," Weiss said softly as they sat down at the table, Blake shifting over to make room for them. "But you fought well... at least it looked to me like you did."

"She did," Blake said, her eyes peeking over her book. "Coco's got a nasty right cross though. How're you feeling?"

"I hurt all over," Yang groaned as she placed her hands on the table and rested her head on top of them. "I'm so not looking forward to tomorrow."

"What's tomorrow?" Weiss asked curiously.

"Recovery," Blake chuckled as Yang once again groaned at the word. "The day after is always the worst."

"It hurt to even breath last time," Yang whined and raised her head to look at Weiss. "Don't suppose I could get taken care of by an extremely attractive nurse could I?"

Weiss felt a smile stretch across her lips at Yang's jokingly hopeful face. Even though she was clearly in pain, she still found time to flirt and make jokes.

"You know I would if I could," Weiss grinned at her.

She really would have. The idea of spending another night with Yang, was more than tempting. After a week of not seeing her, just the short drive to the dessert parlour cuddled up in the back of Tai's car had felt so nice; and even though her earlier conversation with Blake was still on her mind, the feel of Yang's hand in her own was more than enough to at least let her relax for a time.

"Looks like you'll have to settle for me," Blake chuckled and placed a hand on Yang's shoulder.

"Greeeat, as if the day wasn't going to be bad enough," Yang said with a shiver, earning a raised eyebrow from the faunus. "No offence Blakey but you know your bedside manner sucks, right?"

"I guess you can take your tired, bruised body downstairs for your own drinks then," Blake scowled indignantly and placed her book on the table.

"Hey now, I said it sucks, but it still beats getting out of bed."

"Yeah well, keep talking and you will be walking."

"Yaang," Weiss heard Ruby say as she walked up to the table with a small tray of desserts and sat down beside Blake. "Stop being mean to Blake."

"I'm not being mean," Yang scoffed and placed her hand on her chest in fake insult. "Just you wait until she takes care of you when you're sick."

"Ruby isn't a drama queen," Blake dead-panned and pulled the slice of black velvet cake towards herself. "And I actually like her."
"Excuse me," Yang whined as Ruby stuck out her tongue at her. "One, I am appropriately dramatic; and two, you don't like me, you love me."

"You'll have a hard time proving that," said the girl as she shrugged and took a bite of her food.

Reaching for her own plain sponge cake, Weiss watched as the three girls laughed and joked with each other. She was still new to having friendships like those with Blake and Ruby, and even newer to relationships like the one she had with Yang, so it was still a little hard for her to engage in what seemed to be standard conversation between the group. Fortunately, Yang always tried to bring her into the discussion.

"I have years of pictures," Yang said smugly as she spooned some ice cream into her mouth. "Explain them."

"Photoshopped," Blake shrugged, earning a giggle from Ruby.

"I hate pho..." Yang began but simply gave a sigh and shook her head. "You're an ass."

"You're a bigger one," Blake countered as she picked her book back up and disappeared behind it with a cheeky smile. "Have a bigger one too."

Weiss couldn't help but chuckle at the final statement as it had been said in a quiet mumble, yet it was clear that Blake had still intended for everyone to hear. Almost immediately, Ruby's giggles became full on mirthful laughter and Yang grabbed her spoon to point it at Blake.

"My ass is great but I will gladly accept the consequences of shoving this up yours if you insult it again."

"I am certain the store will not let you back if you do that to their cutlery, Yang," Weiss chuckled at her girlfriend's reaction.

"You ain't got a problem with my ass, have you Weiss?"

"I cannot say I have paid too much attention to it," Weiss lied, trying to suppress a blush as she felt heat rush to her face. However, seeing the playfully disappointed look on Yang's face, Weiss quickly changed her answer. "I mean... it is nice, I just pay more attention to other areas."

"Oh... I noticed," Yang grinned mischievously.

"I meant your face," Weiss quickly rectified, knowing that the blush she had been trying to suppress was now clear as day.

"Mhm," Yang hummed, her smile wide enough to show her perfect teeth. "Whatever you say, beautiful."

"You know what?" Weiss replied teasingly. "I think I am going to side with Blake here."

"Ha!" Ruby exclaimed loudly, pointing her spoon at her sister. "Even your girlfr..."

"Ruby!"

The younger girl's eyes widened as Yang's scolding hiss quietened her and Weiss felt another wave of guilt run through her. Yang had just told her sister off because the girl had been so happy that she had forgotten it was a secret. Seeing the girl who had been smiling only a second ago now looking sadly at her lap, Weiss hoped that Winter would get back to her soon so that she could start taking
steps to make sure things like that didn't happen again.

"Sorry," the redhead pouted. "I forgot."

"It is fine, Ruby," Weiss said as she tried her best to put on a smile for the girl. "No-one is around anyway."

"Just try not to slip up again please, Rubes," Yang said, the remorse in her voice sending yet another stab of guilt through Weiss.

"Besides, even they slip up on occasion," Blake said from behind her book and Weiss watched as she pushed the remaining half of her cake towards the girl.

"Yeah, don't beat yourself up, Rubes," Yang smiled at the girl who had taken a sullen bite of the black and white cake. "Also, where's dad?"

"Outside," Ruby replied glumly, though the new cake seemed to have at least removed the sadness from her eyes. "Said he didn't wanna be that old fart hanging out with teenagers."

"Sounds like he's finally learning," Yang smirked and she spooned ice cream into her mouth. "So how long before you gotta head into work, Weiss?"

"I am free for the next few hours," Weiss replied. The only meeting she had planned was covered by Ciel so there really wasn't a lot of reasons for her to hurry. "I just have to go in to organize some paperwork but that will only take an hour or so. Why do you ask?"

"Well..." Yang dragged out the word cautiously as she played with her ice cream. "... I was wondering if you wanted to swing by my place for a bit? I have something to show you."

Weiss eyed the blonde suspiciously as she thought on what the girl could mean. It wouldn't be the first time Yang had used an excuse to drag her into a make-out session and though Weiss would definitely not be opposed, Yang's house was rather out of the way. If she did go, she wouldn't be able to stay long or she would risk being late.

"Show me what?" Weiss asked cautiously, looking for any sign of mischief in her girlfreind's eyes.

"Nothing like that," Yang grinned as she clearly understood Weiss' hesitance.

"Liar."

"Shut it you," Yang fired back to Blake, who's smiling face was now visible as she had turned her book slightly sideways for Ruby to be able to read it too. "I mean... it's just something I wanna show you is all."

"I cannot stay long," Weiss said softly. While she knew she would be cutting it close, the intrigue at what Yang clearly wanted to show her, along with the desire to spend more time with the blonde, was enough to convince her that it was worth it.

"That's fine," Yang smiled, her beautiful lilac eyes lighting up with happiness. "It won't take too long."

Out of the corner of her eye, Weiss saw Blake and Ruby share a look before snickering quietly to each other, earning a scornful look from Yang. Feeling heat creep up her cheeks as she realised what they were snickering at, Weiss was about to defend herself but the slight buzzing of her Scroll caught her attention. Pulling it out, she felt a rush of excitement as she read her sister's name
on the caller ID and stood up from the table quick enough to earn a surprised look from all three of the girls.

"Sorry," Weiss rushed out, unable to contain her excitement. "I really have to take this."

Lingering just long enough to see Yang give an understanding nod, Weiss rushed towards the door and quickly stepped outside. Fortunately, despite it being slightly chilly, her small jacket she was wearing over her shirt was enough to stop most of the wind-chill. Taking a deep breath, Weiss pressed the accept button and raised the device to her ear.

"Good afternoon, Winter," Weiss said excitedly as she answered the call, only to remember that Atlas was four hours ahead of Vale and would just be turning night-time. "I mean evening."

"I do not have long, Sister," Winter sighed from the other end. Despite Winter's tone, Weiss knew she would not have called anyone else back so soon. "These changes you mentioned in your message sounded important. What has Father done this time?"

"Nothing," Weiss quickly clarified. "But he is involved."

"Explain."

"Well..." Weiss hesitated. She honestly didn't know how Winter would react so decided to keep the admission simple. "I have... begun to date someone."

Weiss paused, waiting to see if Winter would reply. However, after nothing but silence met her, except the sound of voices drifting from the alleyway next to her, she continued.

"And it is with someone that Father will very much not approve of."

As she finished her sentence, she heard a loud sigh issue from her sister and a new nervousness ran through her. She had been so certain her sister would help, so certain she could turn to her that she had never even entertained the idea that Winter could be just as against it as their father.

"I know it must be serious if you are telling me, but how serious?" Winter asked, her tone even and hard to read. "How long has it been?"

"Two months," Weiss whispered nervously.

"How serious, Weiss?" Winter repeated, but this time Weiss definitely picked up on the knowing tone in her voice.

"I... I love her," Weiss mumbled. "I know it is sudden and I cann..."

"Enough," Winter said firmly. "This is complicated, Weiss."

"I kn..."

"Too complicated for the discussion to take place over the phone," Winter interrupted. "There is much you do not know, and to explain fully would take longer than I have right now."

"Oh," Weiss replied a little sadly. She had hoped that when winter called she have time to help, but at least she was willing to help another time. "Well, we can arrange a time that works better for you."

"No," Winter said firmly. "I will discuss a short leave with General Ironwood, I am owed time away, and I am sure he will understand if I take it now."
"Y-You are coming to Vale?" Weiss asked. It had been almost a year since she had seen her favourite family member so the idea of Winter coming to Visit was an exciting one.

"Yes," Winter replied shortly and Weiss heard other voices off in the distance, both on her end and on Winter's. "But I must be going, I will message you the information when I know it."

"Of course," Weiss smiled, the sounds on her end growing louder and she swore she recognised one of them. "Goodbye, Winter."

"Farewell sister."

As the end call tone sounded, Weiss breathed out a breath of relief. Not only was Winter going to help her, she was coming to Vale. She was finally going to see her sister for the...

"... gods sake, Tai."

The sound of Tai's name cut through her thoughts and Weiss couldn't help but turn her attention to the heated voices she had heard since stepping outside.

"Look, I will tell her soo..."

"Soon? You have had a month."

"And you've had eighteen years, Raven," Weiss heard Tai fire back. "Why now?"

"I don't owe you an explanation," The woman spat back. "I owe her one. Now either you tell her, or I will go about things my own way."

"She is my daughter, Raven," Tai said back, anger sleeping into his voice now. "You're the one who left."

A slight silence followed that that question but was eventually broken by a low, angry growl.

"Don't you dare," The woman Tai had called Raven replied, the growl enough to send a shiver through Weiss. "Just because my pathetic brother puts up with you, does not mean I will. You are the one who made a mess of everything."

"I didn't me..."

"Yes I took my time, but unlike you, I own up to my mistakes while you cower and make excuses," Raven interrupted bitterly. "After everything you did, I do not owe you a damn thing. Now you have a week, maybe having a deadline will make you regrow that sack you apparently used to have."

As soon as the sentence was finished, the sound of scraping followed by footsteps heading towards her alerted Weiss to the fact that whoever Tai had been talking to was headed her way. With barely enough time to cover that she had been listening, Weiss took a step away from the alleyway just in time to see a woman dressed in heavy, black leather with red accents walk onto the street. As she met the woman's eyes, she was taken aback by what she saw.

Though they were blood red and slightly harsher, they were undeniably Yang's. Weiss had stared into her girlfriend's eyes enough to know them on sight, and as she looked over the woman's face, the similarities only increased. The woman's pitch black hair that flowed over one shoulder had every curl that Yang's did, curls that Weiss herself had ran her hand through. The woman's face was slightly lined around the eyes but Weiss knew that if the woman was younger, she could easily
pass as Yang's twin.

Suddenly everything made sense to her. Why Yang looked nothing like Summer and Ruby looked identical, Tai and Yang's uncle's argument, Blake's reaction when she mentioned it, the conversation she had just heard. It was clear to Weiss that Summer had obviously not been Yang's birth mother, this woman was.

Unable to take her eyes away from the woman, Weiss watched as she walked further down the street and pulled a motorcycle helmet over her head while stepping over what looked to be a red and black bike that matched her leather perfectly.

"Weiss?"

The sound of her name made her jump slightly and as she heard the distant rumble of the woman's bike fill the air, Weiss turned to see Tai standing right in front of her. Shock and shame filled his blue eyes as he looked at her, and Weiss couldn't bare to look into them.

"I guess that answers whether you heard or not," He sighed and ran a hand through his dirty blonde hair as he glanced where Weiss' eyes had been looking.

"Sorry," Weiss apologised, a little ashamed herself at having been caught listening to a private conversation. "I was taking a call and could not help but overhear."

"It's fine," Tai shook his head sadly. "Can I ask you to please not mention this to the girls? I'm going to tell Yang, it's just that Raven is a touchy subject with her."

"This is a family matter," Weiss smiled gently. She wasn't happy about keeping another thing from Yang, especially not something as big as the girl's mother, but she was still new to Yang's life. As close as they had become, the call was not hers to make.

Before Tai could answer, Weiss heard the door to the shop open and turned to see Yang looking at them both with a wide grin. Looking at her, Weiss could definitely see that she was right in her conclusion.

"Wow," Yang grinned and leant against the door frame. "So you would rather hang out in the cold with this old fart than me?"

The smile Weiss gave Yang was only slightly forced, the new secret added to the already growing pile that was Weiss increasingly open to the idea of just letting a reporter see them and be done with the secrecy. *Well, maybe not that drastic*, Weiss thought to herself.

"Well, your father is not threatening to put spoons up peoples behinds."

"I'm just going to hope that behind is Blake's and not your sister's," Tai said with a raised eyebrow at his daughter.


"Sure," Weiss smiled and followed Yang and Tai to the small car that they had driven in. Though Hazel had driven her to the boxing match, Weiss had decided to travel with Yang and Tai for the day as her car was too easy to spot and, in all honesty, Weiss felt Hazel needed a break.

With a cheeky wink, Yang opened one of the back doors for her and Weiss quickly took her seat, Yang slipping in beside her as Tai got in the front. Almost immediately, she felt Yang's hand pass
over her own as the blonde's fingers slipped between and held her hand warmly. Feeling a genuine smile stretch across her face this time, Weiss let her head fall back into position on Yang's shoulder, the same position it had taken on their drive to the parlour. However, she knew this drive would a little longer than the previous one, and therefore had more time to enjoy it.

"Are you ready for the first thing?" Yang asked with a wide smile on her face.

Weiss was stood in front of a door inside Yang's house that, if she had the building mapped out in her head properly, should lead to the garage. She had a fairly good idea of what it was Yang was so excited to show her but due to that, she was struggling to summon the same kind of excitement; so it was with caution that she gave Yang a short nod. The fire that ignited behind her girlfriend's eye did tempt a small smile from Weiss, but she did her best to look passive until she had seen the deathtrap Yang was about to show her.

"Say hello," Yang said proudly as she twisted the handle and threw the door open while flicking the light switch. "To Bumblebee."

As the door opened and the light came on, Weiss was met with the sight of a motorcycle sitting in the middle of the garage. If she could call it that. Weiss wasn't an expert of any form of vehicle by any means, but even she knew that what she was looking at was not street legal.

"I sure hope you are not going to be riding that anytime soon," Weiss scowled at the machine that she was almost certain would be the cause of her girlfriend's death.

"Hey hey hey," Yang hushed as she dashed into the room and stood between Weiss and the stripped down grey deathtrap. "She'll hear you."

"She has no ears," Weiss smiled as Yang pouted at her. "I am pretty sure they fell off at least thirty years ago."

"She's actually in really good condition," Yang laughed and ran a hand along the dull grey frame. "I could take her for a drive right now. But I won't!"

The final words were only spoken after Weiss had raised an eyebrow at the girl. As much as she liked that Yang was so excited, she couldn't stop being nervous, since the bike looked genuinely unsafe to her.

"Good," Weiss scowled at the girl and walked over to stand beside the blonde. "So I assume you are going to be fixing it?"

"Yup," Yang grinned and sat on the seat of her new bike. "With dad and Ruby; but like I said, it's in pretty good condition so it really won't take too long."

"And a qualified mechanic, I hope?"

"Of course," Yang laughed and Weiss felt a hand close over her own and pull her closer. Coming to a stop between Yang's legs, Weiss found herself looking into her girlfriend's joyful eyes. "I get you are worried, but we know what we're doing."

"I know," Weiss replied and snaked her free arm around Yang's waist, pulling herself into the warmth the girl seemed to perpetually generate. "I just don't want to lose you to... this."

"I promise you won't," the blonde said gently. Despite her smile, the tone behind it was clearly serious.
"Good," She sighed. Pressing her lips gently against Yang's, Weiss let the reassurance wash over her and let herself sink in a little further.

"You know," Yang smirked as she pulled back and bit her bottom lip. "I had this dream the other night, when we got this delivered."

"Oh?" Weiss replied, stealing another small kiss. "And what was that?"

"Weeell," Yang grinned and wrapped her own arm around her Weiss' waist. "We were on Bumblebee..."

"I am never getting on this thing," Weiss interrupted with a playful scowl. "But continue."

"I will get you on it," Yang laughed. "But... We were riding along this cliff-side that I remember in Patch, and we stopped at this spot I know that had, just... The most amazing view of the island. And you were sitting on the back of Bumblebee..."

Cutting herself off, Yang placed a quick, purposeful peck on Weiss' lips and electricity tore through her body.

"... And we were kissing..."

Another breathtaking kiss was placed upon her.

"Then you pulled away and gave me this look," Yang paused and the look in the blonde's eye made Weiss' heart skip a beat. "Like I was the only person in the world."

It was Weiss' turn to kiss the girl she loved. While she knew it was how she felt, the timing still didn't feel right to say it, so she hoped that the gesture was enough to convey how right Yang was. Pulling back, Weiss tried her best to look at Yang how she imagined she had in the girl's dream.

"Kinda like that," Yang whispered and Weiss was glad that Yang had understood. "But I woke up feeling so lucky just to have you in my life, to know that dream could be a reality one day, so...I've almost finished something I have been working on for a while."

"And what is that?"

"That..." Yang smiled happily, recovering from the gentle atmosphere that had surrounded them. "... Is the second thing I wanna show you. And I think you will like this one much more."

"Not very difficult," Weiss grinned, earning a raised eyebrow.

Once again, Yang pulled Weiss into a kiss but this time she stood up as their lips met and exhilaration pulsed through her at the sudden height difference. While she would have liked it to continue longer, Yang pulled away rather quickly and began to pull her back towards the main house.

"I'll just go grab it," Yang smiled as they reached the hallway and made her way up the stairs.

Smiling happily to herself, Weiss walked to the living room and sat on the couch. Yang's dream had sounded nice, and she decided she would love to make it a reality one day. Maybe without the motorcycle though. However, she was now very curious as to what Yang could be getting that she would enjoy. Fortunately, it didn't seem like she would have to wait too long as she heard Yang's boots on the stairs and after a couple of seconds, the blonde reappeared holding what looked like a small drawing pad in her hands.
"Okay," Yang breathed as she sat down and fiddled with the edge of the notepad, seemingly looking for a specific page. "It's not entirely finished but it's close."

Weiss watched Yang pull open the book, a slightly nervous look on the blonde's face as she passed it over to her. Weiss wasn't quite sure what she was looking at at first but the image of Yang in a crop top suddenly came to her head as she recalled the black, flaming heart that had been on it, though the one in the book seemed much more detailed. Instead of solid black, the majority of it was now a mix of yellow and orange. The yellow fire swirled at the bottom into the shape of a heart, slowly turning orange as it reached the actual flames that rose gently from the top. Around the entire thing as a black outline, the black reaching down between the flames to make the heart shape itself more abstract and require a second glance.

"This is nice, Yang," Weiss smiled as she surveyed the work. It really was. While it looked rather simple, the subtle design and blending of the colours worked really well together to make the page feel like it was actually beginning to burn. "But why would I like it?"

As she asked, she feared the answered was something that should have been simple, that she was missing something that she should have noticed; but thankfully, Yang's smile widened a little.

"Well," Yang said quietly and moved a little closer. "The dream made me realise how badly I want everything with you. I want that day, I want that look forever and, most of all, I want us to have a future."

Yang paused and tapped the drawing in Weiss' hand.

"But I have a past," Yang continued. "And that past left a mark that I know you can't stand to look at. So I wanna get it covered."

"Yang," Weiss sighed and reached out to take her女朋友's hand. "I really appreciate the gesture, but you don't have to."

"I know," Yang smiled. "But I want to. I've wanted to cover it for a while and now I actually have a reason."

Weiss didn't know what to think. She was still reeling from Yang's admission of wanting to have a future with her, but to permanently scar her body just to make sure Weiss didn't have to see those slashes. Taking another look at the drawing, Weiss couldn't argue that it would be a better sight than the bitter reminder of regret.

"What does it mean?" Weiss asked carefully. Artists always had a reason for what they drew and she wanted to know what made Yang's.

"Ruby and Blake sort of made it," Yang replied fondly as she traced the outline with her free hand. "I mean I improved it, but they made me heart-shaped cookies for one of my birthdays, Ruby's idea, and used yellow icing to decorate them. They said I was a dragon with a heart of gold."

"That's sweet of them," Weiss smiled as the story. "Lóng is Dragon in Mistralian, right?"

"Yeah," Yang grinned happily. "The basic shape of it kinda stuck with me."

Taking one last look at it, this time knowing just how much it meant to Yang, Weiss knew she could definitely grow to love seeing it.

"Sooo? Do I have your approval?"
"You don't need my approval, you brute," Weiss said and looked up to meet her girlfriend's eyes, eyes that were full of hope. "But... Yes, I do quite like it."

"Told ya you would," Yang laughed as she pulled the pad out of Weiss' hands and placed it on the table. "Buuut..."

Weiss rolled her eyes as Yang leant in and gently pressed their lips together. Weiss knew that, despite what Yang had said in the store about not asking Weiss over to fool around, there would definitely be some. She was also certain that if Yang hadn't started it, she definitely would have.

Slinging an arm around the back of Yang's neck, Weiss gently pulled her girlfriend deeper into the kiss, the gently fluttering kiss quickly becoming more heated as she felt Yang's hand softly grip her waist. With a soft groan at the feeling, Weiss let herself begin to lean backwards. If her own dreams had told her anything, it was that she really enjoyed when Yang took control, so it didn't surprise her at all that she felt her breath hitch a little as Yang understood; rising to her knees from the sitting position she was in and carefully positioning herself over Weiss. Smiling inwardly, Weiss reached out her arm out to grab Yang's t-shirt but felt the blonde flinch slightly as she grazed the girl's ribs causing her to let out a muffled hiss into her mouth.

"Sorry," Weiss mumbled guiltily. In the moment, she had completely forgotten Yang had just spent 5 rounds getting punched all over.

"It's fine," Yang breathed and reached down to move Weiss' hand down. "Just... a little lower."

"You wish," Weiss grinned mischievously causing Yang to chuckle.

"You have no idea."

Weiss was about to reply but Yang once again pressed her lips hard against her own and Weiss followed her girlfriend's request and placed her hand on the girl's hip. Taking in the scent of lavender that permanently surrounded Yang, Weiss pulled her in closer and felt Yang's teeth gently nip at her bottom lip. As she felt a jolt of electricity make its way down her spine, she used her thumb to trace the waistband of Yang's jogging bottoms, earning a small groan from the blonde that only encouraged Weiss further. Feeling a little more courageous, Weiss hooked her thumb under the elastic and pulled gently before releasing it, earning a loud groan from Yang. Further emboldened, she grabbed the band again and pulled a little lower before one again letting it snap back up. However, that time there was no groan and Weiss felt Yang's lips stretch into a smile.

"And you say I'm a tease," She breathed and Weiss felt Yang's hand slide from her waist to her stomach.

Before Weiss could reply, she felt Yang's fingers slip through the holes between her buttons and pop open the bottom two with practised ease. Since their relationship had begun, Weiss had had her hands beneath Yang's tops multiple times. But for the first time, Weiss felt Yang's fingertips brush against her bare stomach as she pushed the fabric aside to expose Weiss' stomach and lower ribs.

"Wanna continue teasing me?" Yang chuckled and Weiss felt a hand touch her, the touch so light that felt like wind skittering across her skin.

However, the touch was still enough to make Weiss gasp a little. She knew Yang was always warm but the hand that was touching her stomach felt like fire, its heat instantly radiating out across her body. Wanting to feel it properly, Weiss grinned at the girl whose face was hovering inches above her own, lilac eyes filled with challenge and affection, and moved her hand upwards, just high enough for her fingertips to reach the waistband. Seeing Yang bite her lip was all the
encouragement Weiss needed to slip her hand beneath the bottoms, her fingertips grazing against plump flesh.

"You said you wanted my hands lower," Weiss giggled at Yang's surprised face.

"You are..."

Weiss would likely never hear what she was as the feeling of Yang's hand firmly placing itself on her, its index finger tracing her ribs, caused her to pull Yang into a deep kiss. As she felt Yang's hand glide gently across her stomach, Weiss allowed the tingles to overtake her for a moment.

All week since she had spent the night with Yang, she had been dreaming of that morning, of how it had felt, how safe she had felt, and now once again back in Yang embrace, she had to remind herself that they were waiting. If she was honest with herself, that rule was one she was wanting to break more and more. Every time she was with Yang, it just felt right that she struggled to care; but, of course, that was why she had the rule. Because she cared. She never wanted Yang to feel used, she didn't want things to happen only to have to rush off straight after. So it was with a deep sigh, that she knew Yang had felt, she pulled her hand from Yang's bottoms and gently reach up to move Yang's hand away from her stomach.

"Sor..." Weiss began but was cut off by a raised eyebrow.

"It's fine, Weiss," Yang smiled and leant back into a sitting position as Weiss re-buttoned her shirt.

"I should not be teasing you like that," Weiss shook her head and looked at Yang trying her best to keep the longing out of it.

"I like the teasing," Yang chuckled and stuck her tongue out.

"That is not the point," Weiss smiled at her girlfriend's behaviour.

"I know," Yang grinned. "But at least I know once we are out then we won't have too many issues getting things going."

"True," Weiss chuckled. Even when disappointed in her own actions, Yang somehow dragged smiles out of her. "That is actually something I need to discuss with you about that?"

"When we have se..."

"No," Weiss interrupted with a roll of her eyes and took her girlfriend's hand. "I meant us telling my father."

"If it means I get to brag about you openly, I'm all ears," Yang smiled, though it was clear from the look in her eyes that she was paying full attention.

"Well, I spoke with Blake before your fight," Weiss admitted, earning a raised eyebrow in response. "And she made it clear that we need to start seriously thinking about it before we don't have the option to do it on our terms."

"I guess she has a point," Yang agreed with a nod. "She usually does."

"I thought so too," Weiss smiled a gave Yang's hand a squeeze. "That is why I contacted my sister?"

"Winter?"
"Yes," Weiss confirmed. "She has more experience handling Father than I do, and I was hoping she might be able to help us."

"I guess that makes sense," Yang said hesitantly. "Was that who called you earlier?"

"Yes," Weiss said nervously. "She said she is coming to Vale soon to talk about it properly."

"Does that mean she's going to wanna meet me?"

"Most likely," Weiss smiled. In truth she was nervous about Yang meeting Winter as she knew her sister could be a little harsh, especially when it concerned her.

"I should practise speaking properly then," Yang joked but the way she was playing with her boots gave away her anxiety. "When is she coming?"

"She said she will let me know," Weiss answered as she watched Yang pull at her laces. "Are you okay with that?"

"Yeah," Yang said unconvincingly and Weiss tried her best to meet the girl's eyes. "Just... Worried she won't like me. I know your father isn't gunna like me, but this is your sister. I know you love her like I love Ruby, and I'm not exactly in the same league as your family."

"True," Weiss said quietly as she reached up to cup Yang's cheek and finally meet her eye again. "You are so much more. My family may have money but Winter doesn't care about that, and neither do I."

"But what if she doesn't?"

"Then she doesn't," Weiss shrugged. "But even if she cannot see in you what I do, I doubt she will try and stop us. She has always tried to make sure I take my own path, so I do not think she will change that."

"I hope you're right," Yang smiled shyly and Weiss placed a small kiss on her lips. "But don't you have to go?"

She really did. Weiss knew she was already cutting it close, but she didn't want to leave Yang with doubts so she shifted herself a little so cuddle up against her girlfriend, her head resting against Yang's shoulder.

"I think I can take another ten minutes," She sighed happily, pulling out her Scroll to tell Hazel when to arrive to pick her up.

Chapter End Notes

Wanted to get the chapter out for you all a little faster since Sekiro releases tomorrow (as of posting this) and my dive into DMCV will be nothing compared to how hard I binge Sekiro. So yeah, the next chapter wont be for a little while and I apologize for that, but I do already have it planned. Anyway, I'm in a bit of a rush today so I hope you enjoyed and I will see you again when I return from whatever beautiful world From Software has made this time.
"Wait wait wait," Yang said in confusion. "The last time I watched this, Sky was madly in love with Crystal, why is he now sneaking into Pitch's room?"

"Crystal slept with Azure while they were dating."

"His brother? I thought he was gay."

"No that's Dusk, Azure is the oldest that leads the Shinji Tribe."

"Ohhhh... right," Yang hummed as she watch a man dressed in all black climb through the topmost window of a house, a woman with hair darker than a starless night sky sitting on a small table in front of a mirror turning to look at his as he entered. "This show's weird."

"It is not," Blake huffed indignantly as they watched the woman stand up and walk over the the man, her hand running down the seam on his ninja top. Blake had told her the name of it once but that information had long since left her brain. "You just haven't been keeping up."

It was true. Despite Ninjas of Love being one of Blake's favourite shows, Yang just couldn't get into it; which was surprising since she was pretty sure half of the show's runtime was just sex. Though it wasn't the good sex, with nudity and decent acting; but bad, awkward, television show sex where the actors just dry-humped in their underwear.

"That's because its so cheesy," Yang laughed as the characters fell back onto the bed. "They are supposed to be finding the six lost justsu scrolls, but all they do is make-out and have sex."

"Sounds like you in high school," Blake replied, chuckling as she ducked out of the way of the small piece of candy Yang threw at her. "But the story was actually really good last season."

"Mhm, I totally believe you were paying attention to the story," Yang joked in amusement as she watched the raven-haired woman strip the top of of the ninja and throw it to the side. "Just like how you read the books for the story."

"I am perfectly capable of enjoy the story as well as the... other stuff," Blake laughed and tossed some popcorn back in response.
"Oh I bet you are, you little nympho," Yang teased as the show began to fade to black for an ad-break, her laugh quickly becoming a pained groan as Blake gave her still aching arm a little shove and climbed out of the bed.

"Takes one to know one," Blake replied light-heartedly and picked up the drinking glasses that sat on the night-stand. "Water or orange?"

"Think I'm gunna need some whiskey if you're gunna make me keep watching this," Yang joked earning a disapprovingly raised eyebrow in return. "But I guess Orange juice will work too."

With a small nod, Blake turned and left the room to get the drinks; and though she was still in pain, Yang couldn't help but feel content. It had been two days since her fight and both of them had been spent laying in bed with her best friend, watching garbage television and eating junk food. Between training, practising her art, work, and spending time with Weiss, she had forgotten just how much she had missed hers and Blake's alone time together.

"Hey Yang!" she heard the aforementioned girl call up the stairs. "Ruby's going to the store for me, you want anything?"

"Chocolate," Yang replied, not bothering to raise her voice as she sifted through the massive amount of junk food her and Blake had left only to find they were woefully low on said chocolatey goodness. "And more of those strawberry laces."

"Alright!"

Relaxing back into the bed with a groan, Yang pulled her Scroll form under her pillow and opened it, the picture of her and Weiss kissing greeting her and causing her to smile. So far, it was one of her most treasured possessions; not because she was kissing Weiss, or because they were smiling, but because it was clear Weiss hadn't taken a selfie before. The angle was awful, light almost obscuring one half of Yang face and the top of her head cut off; but Weiss had taken it solely for her, to prove that she cared and while Yang didn't need the proof, she had found herself opening her Scroll to look at the picture on more than one occasion just to remind herself how lucky she was.

With one last smile at the picture, she pulled up Weiss' contact info and typed out a quick message to her girlfriend.

'hey beautiful, blakes got me watching her weird ninja show, whatcha up to'

Clicking send and shoving the device back under her pillow just as Blake walked into the room, Yang reached up and gratefully took the tall glass of orange juice. Taking a small sip while Blake hurriedly got back under the covers, she breathed a sigh of relief and placed it onto her table.

"It's so cold down there," She with a slight shiver as she raised the covers back up to her chest.

"Should've put your pants on then," Yang chuckled and pulled her friend into a hug to warm her up quicker.

"Then I would have to take them off again or be too hot under here," Blake countered. "Pass me the gummy fish."

"True," Yang acknowledged while turning to dig out Blake's desired treat and passing them to her.

"You do know if you ate healthier you would recover quicker, right?" the faunus asked as she opened the pack and popped one into her mouth.
"What d'ya mean?" Yang scoffed. She knew Blake was right of course, but she didn't wanna spent her recovery days in bed eating boring apples. "I've been drinking orange juice."

"There is more sugar in that glass than in this pack of sweets," Blake laughed, her shivering finally stopping.

"But still one of my five-a-day."

"And the entirety of your weekl..." Blake began to counter only for her attention to snap back to the television. "Shush, shows back on."

"Pretty sure we can still see them fucking," Yang teased earning a sideways glance from her best friend.

However, as the show started back up on different characters beginning what looked to be a serious conversation, Yang simply laughed and nestled back into the bed. Knowing how much Blake loved the show, she was more than happy to let her watch it in peace.

"What!" Yang cried indignantly as she reached for the control. "How could they leave it there? It was just getting good."

"It's called a cliffhanger, Yang," Blake chuckled and passed her the remote.

"A cock-tease is what it should be called," Yang huffed and pressed a button on the remote to bring up the guide, only to be met with the usual slow loading time that her cable box had acquired over time. "Spent twenty minutes on trash sex scenes then end it right before a big fight."

"It's a catch-up day," Blake laughed while Yang waited for the stupid box to load. "It will back on after the news blast."

"Bloody mandatory news blasts," Yang sighed and threw the control back onto the bed after exiting the menu, which of course worked immediately. "Oh well, at least Lavender is hot."

"You're still on that?" Blake guffawed. "She's like twice your age with a couple more years left over."

"And still hot."

"You got issues."

"Purr-lease," Yang scoffed and shoved her friend slightly, Blake rolling her eyes in amusement at the pun. "You just spent an hour drooling over a two-hundred year old ninja."


"Yeah, yeah," Yang replied, it being her turn to roll her eyes. "I know, and now he needs the scroll of death to remove its effects so he can finally be free to live his life to completion. Which honestly, I don't get."

"Why?"

"Well, he's spent the last two-hundred years banging exceptionally hot girls," Yang laughed at the shows stupid premise. "Who would give that up just to die?"

"You're telling me you wouldn't give that up for Weiss?"
"Nope," Yang admitted and stuck her tongue out at Blake. "I'd give her the life scroll so we could live together forever. An eternity with Weiss seems pretty damn good to me."

"Ha," Blake said victoriously. "See? You are such a sap."

"Not as bad as you?" Yang retorted, not bothering to deny Blake's claim but putting on a fake pout and imitating Blake's moody voice. "Ohhh, my boyfriend is never free so we can't play ninjas of lurrrv."

"Shut up," Blake laughed and threw her last gummy fish at Yang. "I do not sound like that."

"You totally do," Yang grinned, picking up the sweet and popping it into her mouth.

"Oh really? Well at least we can control ourselves," Blake smirked mischievously and put on her best Yang voice. "Oh Weiss, put your hands lower."

"Oh my Oum! You totally perved on us."

"You should be happy, Ruby almost walked in on you two."

"I'm sure that's the only reason you were listening."

"You are not that alluring, Yang," Blake scoffed.

"Then why are you dating a male version of me, huh?"

"Sun is not..." Blake began but cut herself off with a small shake of her head. "Okay maybe a little."

"Ha!" Yang said and stuck out her tongue. "The only thing I was missing all those years ago was a..."

"Oh be quiet," Blake laughed happily. "Or I will tell Weiss you're fantasising again."

"You wouldn't dare," Yang chuckled. Yang was aware that Weiss had a little bit of a jealous streak born out of guilt over their secrecy, so she was thankful that she knew Blake wouldn't ever say such a thing to the girl.

"True," Blake smiled and reached for some more snacks. "Mainly because you're finally serious about someone."

"I've been serious before," Yang objected and plucked the pack of sour patch kids out of her hands and shaking some into her hands.

"It's been a while though," Blake countered. "I haven't actually seen you this serious since Arslan. And even then."

"I know," Yang hummed, turning the volume down on the television since the news was always pretty depressing to watch. "There's just something about her, you know."

"I don't," Blake grinned and took the packet of sweets back. "But you seem happier than when you were with Arslan."

"I am," Yang admitted with a smile at her best friend. "Don't get me wrong, I liked Arslan a lot but I always felt like I had to be fun, and if I didn't she would get bored."
"And with Weiss?"

Yang took a moment to think but it didn't take too long since she already knew the answer.

"I can be me," Yang grinned. "She doesn't expect me to be super spontaneous, or happy-go-lucky, I can just be the real me. All my flaws, my doubts, she accepts them all because she cares about them all; and for the first time ever... I can actually see a future."

"You really do love her, don't you?" Blake asked gently.

"I do," Yang replied honestly, not a single doubt in her mind as she said it.

"Then once again," Blake replied and shoved a sweet into her mouth. "You just proved my point that you are, in fact, a huge sap."

"Remind me why I talk to you again?" Yang pouted and reached into the drawer with all the snacks and pulling out a random one.

"Because you don't know how to stop talking," Blake teased in return.

"Oh I do," Yang replied and poked her friend in the side. "But I like to think my angelic voice inspires you to use yours more."

"I speak plenty, thank you," Blake said with a shake of her head.

"To me," Yang replied with a small chuckle. "With customers it's mainly mumbling."


"I guess your..." Her reply was cut off by a soft knock at the door.

Turning her head to look who was there, Yang found herself looking into the silver eyes of her sister and gave the girl a smile.

"Oh, hey sis," Yang greeted her and motioned for her to come in. "What took you so long?"

"Basyl said he had an old DVD player I could have," Ruby smiled happily, holding out a small see-through bag that Yang could see was filled with chocolate and sweets. "Took him a while to find it."

"Well he better have threw in an extra chocolate bar too," Yang replied, eagerly reaching out to take the bag.

"Nope, just the DVD player," Ruby grinned and dug around in her pockets to pull out a few more chocolate bars. "I got these dairy-free ones for you, Blake. Left them outta the bag so Yang doesn't steal them."

"Thanks rubes," Blake smiled and took the candy cars from the girl.

"No problem," Ruby replied with a wide smile and turned to head out of the room before stopping and turning back around. "Oh, also, I don't suppose I could get some help with my history homework, could I?"

"I thought I told you not to keep leaving it till the last moment?" Yang interrupted.

"It's on the Faunus War," Ruby sighed with a small pout. "I hate reading about all those generals
"and the gross things they did."

"I don't mind helping," Blake said with a small smile. "But that won't make them any less gross."

"Great, just knock whenever you're..."

"Bring it in here," Blake replied and shifted over a little in the bed to make room for her. "Your sister could do with some studies too since she failed history."

"Hey, I did not fail," Yang argued with a shrug.

"You didn't even turn up for the exam," Blake replied.

"Exactly, technically can't fail if you don't take the test," Yang countered by pointing a chocolate finger she had just pulled from her bag of goodies at her best friend, quickly turning it to point at her sister. "An example of mine that you will not be following."

"Don't intend to," Ruby smirked. "I'm gonna just go get my books."

"Well at least she's smarter than me," Yang smiled as she watched her sister exit the room.

For as much as she had to push the girl, Ruby very rarely failed to make her proud. While it often seemed like she naturally excelled at everything, whether it was in how she treated everyone with kindness, or how her grades were so good that she was graduating a year early, Yang knew just how much work her sister put in. Sure, she often left things till the last minute but it was quite frequent that Yang would enter the girl's room only to find her slumped over her desk with papers everywhere. Yang was also thankful that Blake was around to help her with the one subject that gave Ruby trouble since, though Yang tried her best, she was never much help when it came to homework.

"Ugh..." Blake groaned once Ruby was out of the room and bit moodily into one of her own chocolate bars. "The Faunus War."

"Sorry," Yang sighed since she knew that it was Blake's least favourite history subject to cover. "I really do appreciate it though."

"Yeah well, I wouldn't suffer it again for anyone other than her," Blake replied quickly as they heard Ruby returning.

"I know," Yang smiled as she lowered the television volume further and turned on subtitles so that the two could focus better.

"See, rubes," Yang heard Blake say to her side as Ruby closed her laptop and let out a relieved sigh. "You already know most of this."

"Yeah I know," Ruby replied and took the packet of crisp Yang offered her. "But I suck at remembering the finer details and that's where all the marks come from."

"That's true," Blake said as she stifled a small yawn.

"Thanks for helping me again," Ruby smiled and stretched her arms out. "Sorry I made you miss your show."

"You do realise she's probably seen these episodes, like, four times each already, right rubes?" Yang interrupted with a small chuckle as she put an arm around her sister and pulled her in close.
"Twice," Blake corrected her and grabbed the control from the bed to turn the television up. "But a third doesn't hurt."

"You maybe," Yang grinned and moved her hand to cover Ruby's eyes causing her to squirm a little. "But little sis here is too young for such things."

"Yaaang," The girl whined and tried to pry the fingers that were blocking her vision away from her face. "Lemme go... I've seen more."

"I sure as hell hope you haven't," Yang said quickly, though she was unable to keep the amusement from her voice.

"I... I did..."

"Relax, little bud," Yang laughed while she removed her hand from her sisters face and pointed a finger at Blake. "Pretty sure the dirtiest thing in your search history is her fanfics."

"Excuse me," Blake said indignantly as she leant back against the headboard. "My stories are not dirty. Even the author of the series said he likes my work."

"Of course he does," Yang replied with a scoff that quickly turned into a grunt as Ruby's wiggling finally made her already aching body scream. "His stuff is worse than yours."

"Forgive me if I dont listen to you on what a good story is," Blake said with a raised eyebrow. "The last book you read was in middle school."

"You're probably right," Yang shrugged and finally let Ruby go, the girl instantly scooting closer to Blake as if the girl would protect her. "Actually, I think I still need to finish that one."

"Shouldn't be too hard," Blake replied as she reached down to tickle the young redhead, earning a small giggle in response. "It was most likely a picture book."

"Oh it definitely was," Yang countered with a wink. "Bunnies of Vale, I think it was called, more cats than rabbits though, if you catch my drift."

"I think anyone could catch your drift, Yang," Blake replied with a roll of her eyes.

"I cant?" Ruby replied in confusion.

"It means your sister is a perv."

"Blake..."

"Ohhh! Yeah, I knew that."

"I ain't asha...," Yang began to reply but was cut off by the feeling of a short buzz under the pillow her back was resting against.

Quickly twisting around to grab the device, earning a short amused laugh from her best friend in the process, Yang pulled the Scroll free and opened it to see a respond from Weiss.

'Sorry, I just finished a long meeting and am about to start another in a minute. How is your recovery going?"

'not bad. still think i could use a visit from a beautiful woman who can nurse me back to health tho'
"How's Weiss?" Yang heard Blake ask courteously as she tapped the device against her knee.

Just before Yang could answer, her scroll buzzed again.

'You know I would if I could but I do have to go. I will call you tonight. x
Also, please tell Blake that I have an inspection of the warehouse Sun works at on Tuesday, so things should be sorted by then but she should expect him to be called in for it.'

"Busy," Yang sighed and shoved the device back under her pillow, unable to help the disappointment that she felt. "She said Sun will likely be called in on Tuesday for her inspection though."

"I'll let him know," Blake said with a nod as she passed over a pack of strawberry laces. "Sorry I gave her more work and cut into what little time you have."

"It's fine," Yang shrugged and ripped open the packet, the sweet smell of artificial strawberry flavouring greeting her nose and making her mouth water. "At least we're finally talking about telling her father now, so hopefully we can be more open soon."

"You realise it's still gunna be difficult when you tell him, right?" Blake replied as she twirled a few strands of Ruby's hair around her fingers, the younger girl happily enjoying the feeling with her eyes closed.

"I know," Yang admitted. She was under no illusion that once they told Weiss father that everything would simply be easy. "But at least we won't have to hide."

"I suppose," Blake hummed while undoing the plait she had just finished, knowing that while Ruby liked her hair played with, she hated it as anything other than straight. "Just like every other plan you've ever had."

"Generally works out for me though," Yang replied with a small smile.

"That it does," Blake shook her head. "But this isn't like all the other times, Yang."

"I'm aware," Yang groaned as gently began to massage her arm muscles while she shove a strawberry lace into her mouth. "But what can I do? I don't have any idea how her father will react other than being very mad, so I can't really make a plan yet."

"Good point," Blake said with a slight nod and wrapped an arm around Ruby and pulled out her own Scroll. "So are you worried about meeting Weiss' sister? Her name's Winter, right?"

"Yea... Wait are you looking her up?"

"You want to make a good impression, dont you?" Blake asked with a raised eyebrow. "Do you even know what she looks like?"

"I... well I remember that she looks something like Weiss," Yang replied cautiously, trying her best to think back to the last time she had even seen a picture of Weiss' older sister in a magazine. "But she hasn't exactly been in the news for the last few years."
“Wow,” Blake said suddenly, her eyes widening slightly as she looked at her Scroll. "I think you are in trouble."

“What!” Yang scowled and reached to snatch the device to see what her best friend was looking at. "What do you mean? Show me."

“I dunno if I should,” Blake said cautiously and showed the screen to Ruby who let out a small giggle. "I know you have a thing for sisters."

“That was one time and it was an accident,” Yang argued, trying her best to squash the memory of the time she had accidentally mixed up her short-term ex-girlfriend, Melanie with her identical twin sister Militia. "Just show me will you."

“Alright,” Blake said with joking hesitancy and passed the phone over.

Taking the phone from her, Yang was immediately greeted by the image of what was definitely an older version of Weiss in Atlas military-style clothing, though there were definitely differences between the two. Obviously, the woman in the picture had no scar over her eye, but there was also the fact that her hair was tied into a bun with exception of a long fringe that ran down to just below her chin and partially covered her left eye. Quite simply, the woman was stunning.

“Damn,” Yang whistled as she looked at the woman, a small shiver running through her from the hard look the woman was give the photographer. "I mean, I prefer Weiss but there's no denying the Schnee women are gorgeous."

"Not going to lie," Blake replied as she retrieved the Scroll and began to scroll down. "She seems pretty intimidating. Joined the Atlesian military at nineteen, rose to specialist in four years, honoured by General Ironwood and now serves as his personal bodyguard after she..."

“What?” Yang asked, slightly unnerved that even Blake found the woman scary and therefore worried about what she had read that had caused her to cut herself off. "What's wrong?"

"... Personally led the team that wiped out the entirety of the White Fang terrorist cell in Atlas two years ago following the attack on the Schnee Company's Vale headquarters," Blake finished quietly.

"Shit," Yang groaned, running a hand through her hair at the prospect of Weiss' sister hating her on sight. "Guess I am in trouble, huh?"

"Doesn't look good," Blake replied, this time her voice lacking the joking tone it had the last time she had said it. "Any chance Weiss wouldn't tell her?"

"I doubt it,” Yang sighed at the newest complication in what seemed to be never ending list of complications. "Even if she didn't, you really think Weiss' father, or the media for that matter, aren't gunna find out I'm ex-white fang and spread it everywhere once we reveal we're together?"

"I suppose," Blake responded with a downcast look. "Guess that's my fa..."

"Don't start with that again," Yang quickly interrupted. She was all to familiar with Blake's self-blame spirals and was eager to avoid them where she could. "It was my choice to join, you didn't force me into it."

"I know,” Blake sighed sadly and rested her chin on on Ruby's shoulder, the younger girl looking between them with a worried expression, clearly not wanting to interrupt. "But you wouldn't have joined if I hadn't."
"Yeah, well we can't change that now," Yang said firmly and reached out to poke her sister playfully in hopes that it would cheer the girl up a little. "Guess I'm just gunna have to deal with the likelihood of my girlfriend's sister hating my guts and hope she doesn't make Weiss leave me."

"I don't think she will make Weiss leave you," Ruby said with a soft smile, a small amount of hope in her voice.

"And what makes you say that, little sister?"

"Well, it's obvious how much you two care about each other," Ruby replied nervously. "And you're my sister. Even if I didn't like Weiss, I wouldn't tell you to stop seeing her because all I would care about is that she makes you happy."

"Aww, well ain't you just the best sister ever," Yang cooed after a couple of seconds, having been taken aback by the girl's words, and wrapped her arms around the girl, making sure to get Blake in the hug too as she was starting to look a little mopey. "I think you deserve a good old sandwich hug for that one."

"Uuugh."

As Ruby let out a small noise from the combine pressure of both Yang and Blake hugging her, Yang gave her best friend a smile and a small kiss on the tip of her nose.

"Cheer up," she mouthed silently to the sullen girl, giving her a small smile.

"I'm fine," she mouthed back and returned the smile, though Yang could tell it was half-hearted at best.

"Hey rubes, isn't it time to feed Zwei," Yang said upon seeing her friend give such a weak smile.

"Dammit, you're right," Ruby whined and immediately stood up, just as Yang expected. "Poor boy."

Yang watched the girl leap off the bed and quickly run out the door before turning to Blake and giving her a gentle but firm look. She had learned very early on that if she didn't take a firm stance when dealing with Blake's sullen moods, she would likely keep it up for weeks.

"What's on your mind?"

"Nothing."

"Don't lie," Yang cut her off.

"Fine," Blake sighed after a couple of seconds with the tips of her cat ears folded slightly, the most obvious sign Yang had learned to look for over the years to tell if she was sad or not. "It's just, you followed me into the White Fang, you helped protect me against Adam when we left and that led to you getting stabbed because of my choices. Now everything you did to help me might hurt your relationship and here I am just taking up yours and Weiss' rare time together by asking her to help with my problems when you two have enough of your own."

"Blake, we've talked about all of that already," Yang sighed and took her friends hand. "I may have followed you into it but that was my choice. I chose wrong and should have pulled you away like you did with me when I fell in with Cinder and her group, but I indulged it. That and everything that's happening now is on me, not you. And as for Adam, you know I've never blamed you for that."
"Bu..."

"But nothing," Yang interrupted firmly. "If I could go back and change that night, I would take that blade a thousand times over before I ever let him hurt you. If I am proud of anything I have accomplished in my life, it is that I stopped you from having to deal with that pain, okay? So stop blame yourself for that."

"You shouldn't have had to," Blake sighed and slumped back against the headboard now that her human resting post was gone.

"That is true, but still not something that is your fault," Yang said gently. "The blame for that one is entirely on Adam."

"I know," Blake replied, the sadness to her voice still evident but Yang knew the admittance that any part of it was not her fault meant she was no longer in danger of spiralling. "I just still hate that you got hurt for me."

"Well as I always say, get used to it," Yang sighed as she leant back and put an arm around the girl who was practically her sister. "Because I would do it again in a heartbeat."

"That's what scares me," Blake groaned and relaxed into the hug. "You're too boneheaded to know you should run."

"Nope, I just don't let the people I love get hurt," Yang smiled, happy that Blake was back to her normal self.

"Thanks," Blake replied quietly. "I love you too."

"Aww," Yang grinned and gave her friend's hand a small squeeze. "But you do remember im taken, right?"

The sound of Blake's laughter was the final thing needed for the gloomy atmosphere that had surrounded them to finally dissipate.

"You really excel at ruining moments, dont you?" The girl laughed and reached for a strawberry lace.

"It's a skill," Yang chuckled and turned the television up a little more. "So is trashing dumb ninja shows."

"I take it back," Blake said happily as she shoved the food into her mouth. "I hate you."

"Yeah, yeah," Yang laughed and tore open a chocolate bar. "I bet you love me more than tuna."

"Shut up," Blake grinned and rolled her eyes.

More than happy that Blake didn't deny it, Yang gave the girl a final smile and relaxed back into the bed to watch more awful television with her best friend.

Chapter End Notes

I am sorry to announce that I am giving up writing to play Sekiro forever, it has been
fun but I cannot deny my des... nah just joking. Though the game is absolutely incredible.

Onto the actual notes and I will keep it quick. I was been looking through my chapters last week and decided that I really wanted to finally show a little more of Yang and Blake's relationship so I wrote this. It was actually really fun to write so I hope you enjoyed this little snapshot-style Bee-day chapter. But that is all from me. As you can probably tell, I am still happily enjoying Sekiro so the slowed down upload schedule is still in effect but I am happy I've manage to not take too long with these chapters.

PS. Totally not sorry for the chapter title xD
Need (Part 1)

Chapter Summary

Weiss and Yang are confronted with some challenges that truly make them realise what they need.

Chapter Notes

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Weiss Schnee

_I hate this_, Weiss thought to herself as she reached up with shaking hands to pull the chain, flushing away the vomit she had spent the past fifteen minutes throwing up and stood up to brush her teeth.

It had been over two weeks since her last nightmare, two weeks of not waking up to the smell of blood and dust assaulting her senses. Two weeks of not seeing him stand over her, not hearing the happiness in his voice as he raised the jagged blade that was tinted red with the blood of the man who had tried to protect her.

"I finally found a Schnee."

Those words. The joy in which he had said them had been what haunted her for her entire stay in the hospital. Like she was the villain. Like she was something disgusting that needed to be eradicated. As much as she hated him for what he had done, a part of her was even glad that he had been killed by the police after refusing to lay down his weapon, she couldn't but wonder what had been done to him that made him so gleeful to commit murder. She knew the faunus were treated less favourably than humans by her father; but surely it couldn't have been that alone. Was she missing something? What could her father have possibly done to inspire such passionate hatred? And was she just as bad?

She had never outright hated the faunus, sure she had been wary due to the affect they had had on her life, the fury they brought out in her father; but at the same time, she had never spoken out against his actions. She had never defended the faunus despite know what her father did was wrong. She may have been young, but what if she had? Could she have changed things? Could she have avoided so much bloodshed? Stopped so many families from being turn apart?

She didn't know the answers to those questions, and she doubted she ever would, but she knew she could try and make sure nothing like that ever happened again because of her family's actions. That was what she had decided during her stay in the hospital. During her time there, she had received so many letters that she had forgotten the exact number, but she had read every single one of them. Some were letters from well wishers, some from people thinking she deserved worse, but the vast majority were from faunus saying they were sickened by the actions that the White Fang had
taken. Some were even from family members of those involved in the attack, denouncing their relatives actions and saying that though they certainly had their issue, they couldn't believe that someone they loved would do such deplorable things. Weiss could also never forget the person who had saved her.

She had been sure she was going to die. Her guard was dead, her leg broken from the explosion throwing her across the room, and there was no way she could fight the towering man before her; but as he brought his blade down, a man had come charging out of nowhere and tackled the assailant to the ground. She had learned during her stay at the hospital that he was a faunus by the name of Tuckson, a book-store owner who had been bringing his wife lunch. She had also learned that he hadn't survived. After she had been released, her first stop had been the man's store. She remembered meeting his wife, breaking down and apologising that she had lost a husband while she had gotten away with nothing but a scar, remembered the woman holding her and saying she wasn't to blame and that, though she missed him and wished he was still with her, he had died a hero. A fact that Weiss couldn't deny.

In what Weiss hoped was some small shred of decency from her father, he had offered the woman money as a reward; but she had declined, saying she didn't want to taint her husband's actions by accepting money for it. Weiss understood, the man had acted selflessly and his wife wished only to preserve that selflessness. But even now, Weiss made sure that every book she ordered was from the Tuckson's Book Trade, the store he had left behind that was now run by his wife.

However, that didn't help with the dreams, so still feeling the sting of vomit burn her throat, she slowly turned and walked back into her room. There was only one thing she wanted that could make her feel better.

Taking her Scroll from her bedside table, Weiss quickly brought up Yang's number, only to pause and look at the time. It was almost five in the morning and while it was a school day, Weiss knew her girlfriend wouldn't be awake for another hour. Did she want to wake her? She knew everything Yang had to in the mornings and she knew it was selfish, but she needed it, so cautiously, she pressed her shaky finger on call button. After only a few rings, the call tone ended and her girlfriend's tired mumble came from the other end.

"Herro?"

Guilt set in almost immediately at her selfish action and caused her to not respond. Instead, she sat there listening to her girlfriend's slow breathing.

"Weiss?" Yang asked after a second.

"Sorry," Weiss replied and sat on her bed, her still burning throat making voice raspy. "I didn't want to wake you... I just... I wanted to hear your voice."

"Weiss?" Yang asked again, alarm now tainting her beautiful voice. "What's wrong?"

"I am fine," Weiss choked out, not liking the sound of worry in her girlfriend's voice. "I just... I had the dream again, is all."

Weiss had told Yang about the dream weeks ago. In fact, the dream was the reason she had told her; and it seemed that opening up had helped her somewhat as that had been the last time it had haunted her.

"Oh," Yang hummed gently and Weiss heard a small scuffling. "Same thing?"
"Yeah," Weiss croaking sadly. "I had hoped they were done, but I guess that was stupid of me."

"Not at all," Yang replied, her voice becoming a little steadier. "It's only normal that you would want them gone."

"I guess," Weiss sighed and brought her knees up to her chest. "It is just that I have been so happy lately; with you, and my work at the company. I hate that this makes me feel like I am not doing enough."

"You're doing more than enough, Weiss," Yang replied firmly through the small amount of sleep still in her voice. "You're doing all you can to make things better."

"But that doesn't change how I feel," Weiss said sullenly. "Every time I have that dream I am reminded of how much there is to do and how much it will take to fix everything my father has done, everything he will do by the time I take over. And every time, I remember that despite everything I am trying to do, there is a part of me that is glad they died. How can I change things if deep down I am no better than him?"

"Weiss," Yang replied softly, her voice full of reassurance. "You are so much better than your father. He hates simply because he thinks he's better than them, you don't. What those people did to you was beyond evil, but it is not evil to be glad they can't do it again."

"And you took something what would only normally only reinforce someone's bigotry and somehow found a way to use it to inspire a change. You looked at that what happened to you and asked what caused them to do it. Your father just called them rabid beasts and moved on."

"I know," Weiss admitted and let out a small breath. "But what if I do become like him?"

"I know you won't," Yang said assuredly. "But you do realize I wont let you, right? I let someone else I love go down a dark path once before, that's not something I'm going to..."

"What?" Weiss interrupted as she registered what Yang had just said. And if the sudden spluttering and scuffling on the other end of the call was anything to go by, Yang had realized it too.

"I-mean... I j-just..." Yang mumbled, seemingly trying to cover what she had just said before letting out small sigh. "I just meant, I'm never going to let you go down that path, is all."

Hearing Yang's reaction, Weiss couldn't help but let a small smile take over her face. Whether it was just a wording error, or she had let something slip, the feeling that went through Weiss was one of pure joy.

"I know you wont," Weiss smiled, subconsciously wrapping her arm around her knee in an attempt to keep that warm feeling inside a little longer. "Thank you for listening to me, Yang."

"Whenever and about whatever, beautiful," Yang replied with a yawn.

"Sorry," Weiss said quickly, remembering that she had woken the girl up. "I should let you go bac..."

"Nahh," Yang interrupted nonchalantly. "I will only have to wake up again in half an hour. Besides, since it's early for both of us, I'd rather talk until you have to go. So what're you up to?"

"Laying in my bed," Weiss replied with a smile. "Talking to the most amazing girl I have ever met."
"Awww," Yang cooed and Weiss knew she was probably smiling. "She sounds lucky. But... About that bed you are laying in?"

"What about it?" Weiss chuckled and rolled her eyes.

"Well for a start, is there room for two?" Yang replied teasingly. "Second, how comfy is it? And third... How do I get into it?"

"Well it is super comfy and I am pretty sure I could fit four of me in here, so that is equivalent to one of you," Weiss replied, earning a small laugh from her girlfriend. "As for you getting in, I guess you could sneak in through the window. But there are guards, and repor... vultures that might make that pretty tough."

"Pfft," Yang breathed jokingly. "You think any of them stand a chance against a dragon?"

"Hmm," Weiss hummed thoughtfully. "Then maybe I should keep my balcony door unlocked when I go back to sleep."

"Maybe you sho... Wait, your room has a balcony?"

Weiss was glad that it was very early in the morning and that there were two rooms and a hallway between hers and Whitley's or he definitely would have heard the laugh that escaped from her.

"That is what you choose to focus on there?" she chuckled as she recovered.

"Hey, you only learn your girlfriend has a balcony on her room once," Yang laughed back. "Do you know how many great pieces of art have been done on balconies?"

"Really?" Weiss asked slowly. "Is that what you would be doing if I left my door open for you?"

"I mean," Yang replied seductively. "I would do other things, but I'm pretty sure even saying them might violate a rule."

"I hate my rule," Weiss admitted quietly earning a short chuckle from the other end.

"You know, you never told me why it's so important to you," Yang replied happily. "I mean, I get if you're not ready and I'm not rushing you, just doesn't seem like that's the case, is all?"

"Well," Weiss hummed thoughtfully, a heat making its way up her face since she wanting to be honest. "Honestly, I do want to and I am ready, I just... I want it to be special for both of us. Not something that leaves you feeling like a dirty secret due to me leaving straight after."

"That makes sense, I guess," Yang said gently. "But you know I'm never going to think that, right? Even if you had to leave the second after, I'd know you didn't want to go."

"I know," Weiss nodded, happy that Yang was so understanding. "It is just, not how I want out first time to be?"

"I understand," Yang hummed her tone quickly becoming flirtatious again. "I do like that you think about it though, and a lot apparently. Am I really that tempting?"

"You have your moments," Weiss chuckled and slipped back under her covers.

"Mmm, get you all hot and bothered at night, do I?" Yang laughed teasingly and Weiss felt a blush creep up her face.
"Shut up," Weiss mumbled, though she was smiling to herself.

"Oh my god," Yang continued to laugh. "I totally do."

"Maybe," Weiss mumbled, feeling her natural stubbornness set in. "Like you do not get the same way thinking about me."

"Constantly," Yang replied and Weiss could see the grin that was on the blonde face.

"Typical," Weiss laughed at Yang's openness.

"Not my fault I have such a sexy girlfriend," Yang said, the honesty on her voice making Weiss' blush a little more vibrant.

"Really?" Weiss asked cautiously. "Wh... What part of me is so appealing to you."

"Legs," Yang replied immediately. "Definitely the legs."

"Summer will be hell for your self-control then," Weiss teased happily. "I own a lot of skirts."

"You know, the more you tease, the more tempted I am to take you up on that open door offer tonight?"

"Maybe I want you too," Weiss replied hesitantly.

Even though she knew there was a risk, Weiss really wanted another night with Yang. Especially after a night being taunted by nightmares.

"I bet you do," Yang hummed but her tone quickly became more serious. "If you want me there, all you have to do is ask?"

"We shouldn't," Weiss sighed and laid on her side.

"I know, but do you want me to?"

Despite knowing both the answer she wanted to give and the answer she should give, Weiss took a moment to think. She wanted Yang to come, she wanted the safety that Yang's arms always provided; but it was risky. While no-one ever came into her room without knocking, there was still the chance that one of the guards might catch Yang sneaking in. There were ways she could reduce the risk of the guards catching her, but then there was the reporters who were still camped outside her mansion.

"Weiss?"

Hearing the slight hope in Yang's voice, she knew her answer was already decided. After the night she'd had, Weiss need a night of safety.

"I do," Weiss replied quietly. "But only tonight and you can't be seen, Yang."

"I know, but I will be there," Yang replied eagerly, making a smile pull at Weiss lips despite her nerves. "Any easy way to get in?"

"Well," Weiss hummed cautiously. "There is a gate on the west wall that leads into the garden my balcony overlooks."

"Guarded, I'm guessing?"
"And locked, but I can have Klein leave a key outside of it for you," Weiss replied. Despite the danger, she quite liked the sense of thrill that was blossoming within her. "And call the guard away."

"You trust Klein?"

"With everything," Weiss replied immediately.

"Alright then," Yang said excitedly. "What time? And how will I know what room is yours?"

"I usually retired to my room around ten," Weiss smiled back, the thrill only being intensified by Yang’s eagerness. "There is a tree outside and it will be the only balcony facing the garden that has the light on."

"You cannot be seen though, remember," Weiss said, the worry still present despite the thrill.

"I know, Weiss," Yang replied quickly. "So I will get to the gate a little early and Klein will call the guard away at exactly ten?"

"Yes," Weiss nodded. "I don't know how long he will be gone though so you might not have long."

"That's fine," Yang hummed. "I'm a great climber anyway."

"Good," Weiss smiled and looked at the clock beside her bed to see it was almost six. "But I really should get some rest, I have class in a few hours and quite a bit of work to do."

"Alright, I need to get ready before I wake Ruby up anyway," Yang groaned. "Plus, dad said he wants to talk about something once she leaves."

"Oh," Weiss exclaimed. "But you are definitely coming?"

The question came with a little more insistence than it would have had Yang not just revealed that. Weiss was pretty sure she knew what Tai would want to talk to Yang about in private and if she was right, then she might not be the only one who needed the comfort of someone else that night.

"I promise," Yang replied and Weiss could hear the grin in her voice.

"Good."

"But I should go and let you sleep," Yang concluded. "See you tonight, beautiful."

"I am looking forward to it."

With those final words, she heard the end call tone meet her ears and rested her head against her pillow. While she had originally been eager for Yang to sneak over, there was now the idea that the girl might not be in the best of moods; or depending on how she reacted to the news, might not even show up at all. But nonetheless, she had to make sure she was ready.

Typing out a quick message to Klein to come to her room before she left for a private talk, Weiss hit send and placed her Scroll back onto her bedside table. Though she knew the excitement she was feeling would most likely prevent it, she tried her best to get some rest.

**Yang Xiao Long**

The smell of rain was strong in the air as Yang leant back against hard stone, the cold winter air biting her cheeks as she looked out over the ocean. She still hated the vast expanse of water, but for
reasons she had never figured out, the view from her current resting place had never bothered her like many others did. Sure, she still found it odd that her father has chosen to memorialise her mother overlooking the very thing that had taken her life; but at the same time, Yang knew what the spot meant to them both. It had been where her father had proposed, where her mother had told Tai and herself that she was pregnant, and now it was where her mother's bodiless grave would forever remain.

Fortunately, the cliff itself was magnificent and was a place where time seemed to stand still. Atop it was a field of grass, each blade a pleasant shade of light brown that stretched right to the edge. In the summer when the light hit it just right, the who field would glow a shining gold; but in the winter it would take on a softer, more mellow tone in the faded light. Close to the edge in the the centre of the field was a single headstone, its presence the only definitive evidence that the spot had meant to much to her mother.

It was the back of that headstone that Yang was leant against as she looked out to sea. Usually her father would chastise her for doing such a thing; but as was alone, she had simply enjoyed the silent moment she could spend with her mother.

"Hey mom," Yang finally said in a quiet whisper, her voice masked by the waves that crashed against the rocks below so that their conversation would never be audible to anyone but them. "Sorry I haven't stopped by in a while. Things have just been a little busy."

She had never been the best at talking to her mother's grave, not like Ruby. Yang knew that her sister never failed to visit their mother every Saturday; but for her, the idea of talking to a stone and not hearing her mother's gentle voice in return often left her feeling down.

"I had my fight I told you about last month," Yang continued awkwardly and slipped a finger through the loop of her boot lace. "Lost again. No matter how hard I train, I just cant seem to beat Coco."

"Me and Weiss are doing great," Yang breathed, watching the puff of air turn to mist in front of her. "Her favourite colour is white and she loves school so I think you would have really liked her. Still haven't told her dad but we're working on it."

"Ruby's okay," She added, knowing that Summer would always want an update on that. "Exceeding at school as usual. I still can't believe she's graduating a year early."

Yang heard the pride in her own voice as she told her mother of Ruby's accomplishments. As Summer was a teacher, she knew that she thought of school as incredibly important; so for Yang to keep that alive in the woman's youngest daughter would have made her proud.

"Pretty sure she got those smarts from you since I failed half my classes," She half-heartedly joked and tugged the loose lace free so she could retie it. "Sorry about that... again."

"Dad's... Well, he's still coping," Yang sighed as she retied the lace. "Not that I help much. I don't blame him for everything that happened any more; but there are still those days where I screw up and throw everything back at him again."

"I hate myself for doing it, but I... I dunno, we both know I don't cope with anger very well. I am working on that though."

Taking a deep breath, Yang finished tying her lace and returned to her leaning position again the stone.
"You might have been proud of me today though," she hummed and ripped up a blade of cold grass to twist around her fingers. "Dad told me something... Something that I don't quite know how to deal with."

"When he told me, I wanted so badly to scream at him for waiting so long; but I didn't. I kept my cool and told him I just needed time to think," she sighed and ripped the blade into four pieces before dropping them. "I think he bought it, but I know you wouldn't have."

With a small snuffle, Yang ripped up a few more and repeated the process of ripping and dropping.

"I remember my first day at school," She said with a wet chuckle, feeling the familiar sting of tears behind her eyes. "I was so scared, but all morning I kept smiling and laughing because I knew you and dad were sad we would be separated for the first time. I didn't want either of you to be sad so I kept trying to get you both to laugh with me."

A shuddering breath forced Yang to stop. As usual, baring her soul and not hearing her mother reassuring voice was beginning to get to her; but she didn't want to cry. Not over this. Not because of her.

"But when dad went to the room for more camera film, you knelt down and whispered something to me," Even though she was trying her best, she still felt a tear spill over. The warm liquid turning cold almost instantly as it ran down her cheek. "You told me that I didn't have to be the strong one all the time. That it was okay to show your weakness and let others care for you."

Knowing that there was no way to stop them now, Yang simply allowed the tears to fall unabated; and while she wasn't sobbing, it didn't take long for her to feel the thigh of her pants to grow damp as they dropped into her lap.

"And I can't be strong for this one," Yang cried and fruitlessly swiped away the tears. "I want to be for dad, so that he doesn't think I hate him again; but I just cant. But I don't know who can be strong for me with this."

"It can't be Ruby because I have to be strong for her, it can't be Blake because she has so much on her plate already," Yang wept quietly.

Feeling the tears finally beginning to overwhelm her, Yang pulled her knees up to he chest and covered her face with her hands.

"But Ruby s-says that you t-talk to her when she's here," Yang croaked, her gentle crying now turning into a sob as she prepared to ask for what she knew was impossible. "So p-please mom, just this once. P-please tell me what to d-do again."

Pulling her knees in closer, Yang tried to make herself as small as possible in her attempt to hide from the world while waiting for her answer. But as expected, nothing came. Just the sound of more waves crashing against rocks. As such Yang finally felt herself begin to break; her final hope shattering as she desperately choked out a single, strangled word.

"P-Please."

Yang sat waiting, each passing second torture to her as she tried to push out the thoughts that her mother simply didn't care. She had never believed that Summer actually talked to Ruby, but the girl always seemed certain; so Yang had at least tried to believe there had been something had given the girl that impression. But that attempt at understanding had led her there, questioning why Ruby was allowed such assurance yet she wasn't. Was it because Ruby was actually Summer's
daughter? Not some child she had been stuck with because of a relationship.

Even in her misery, Yang knew that not to be true. Just another of her self-destructive thoughts. But what else would there be? Had Yang not done more than anyone had ever asked of her? Had she not sacrificed so much? Did she not deserve the same assurance her sister was given?

However as Yang sat there, her head in her hands, thinking over the every reason her mother might not want to talk to her, she felt a sudden chill on the back of her hand. Though she ignored it at first, the feel of another chill on her nose pulled her attention, it being quickly joined by another, as if they were trying to make her look up. With tear stained eyes, she looked up for what could possibly be causing such a feeling.

It was snow, only a small amount but it was snow nonetheless. As she watched it gently fall, her eyes locked onto a single flake that landed on her sleeve, the soft leather cold enough that the snowflake was able to hold its form for a small amount of time. As she gazed at it, there was only a single thought that pushed its way to the front of her mind.

Weiss.

The Schnee snowflake. That was it. That was her mother's answer. Yang hadn't wanted to trouble her girlfriend due to her own recent troubles but it couldn't be a coincidence that the snowfall would happen at that exact moment. How could this not be her mother telling her to stop being stupid and turn to the one she loved, the one who was strong for her the last time she had felt such misery.

Though she should have been colder with the newest addition to the winter weather, a wave of heat rushed through her and Yang suddenly felt the light of hope flare up to extinguish the darkness that had been clouding her mind. Her mother had answered in some way and now Yang knew what she needed. She needed the woman she loved.

Chapter End Notes

Well, I really don't want to ask if you enjoyed that one as I fear for the answer xD however it was a little rough to write. Originally the Yang section was going to be a part of next chapter but I decided to have it here instead. I also intended her to have the conversation with Tai, however I wanted a little bit of a different feel so that is where I landed. Anyways, I don't have long to write the A/N but I really do hope you enjoyed and I hope to see you all again for the next chapter.
The sound of bare feet slapping against cold tiles filled the room as Weiss paced back and forth in nothing but her nightgown. It was only a few minutes until Yang was supposed to arrive but she hadn't heard anything from her girlfriend since their call that morning; though she had heard from Blake. Around lunch, the faunus had called to say that Yang hadn't shown up for her class and wasn't answering her Scroll. To make matters worse, Weiss hadn't had any luck getting a hold of her either.

She knew what the likely cause was of course. Tai had said that Yang's mother was a touchy subject with the blonde so for her to go silent after having likely just learned the woman was in town was understandable, but that didn't mean Weiss wasn't worried.

Yang had never avoided her before. During their relationship and even when they were just friends, whenever Weiss had called, Yang had picked up. No matter the time, no matter what she was doing, Yang never failed to make sure she was available; and it was only now that Weiss realised just how much she cherished that reliability. To know that someone was always there for her was like a blanket on a cold day. It made her feel safe and warm; but that blanket had been missing all day and as such, she had felt the cold stronger than she had all winter.

Feeling her Scroll buzz in her hand, Weiss looked down and hit stop on the alarm that she had set to tell her when it was finally time. She knew Klein had placed the key outside the gate and trusted that he would call the guard away, the only thing now was for Yang to show up... though Weiss would understand if she ended the night in bed alone.

Watching as the minutes passed, Weiss let out a small sigh. She had waited all day but now that the moment of truth was so close, Weiss was nervous. If Yang had come then she would surely be in the garden at that very moment and should be on the balcony in only a minute or two more as the gate wasn't too far away. However, what if she was caught? What would happen then? Weiss knew what would happen. She would have to confess everything to stop Yang from facing trespassing charges. Why had she given in to her desire? Why had she acted so rashly when there was so much at stake?

As she thought on everything that could go wrong, Weiss continued to watch the minutes tick by. However, the minutes that passed quickly became more than Yang should have taken and Weiss
felt the panic inside her begin to rise. She was taking too long. If she had indeed come, she mus...

"AHHH!"

The light knock on her balcony door pulled Weiss from her spiralling thoughts with a small yelp as she span around to see Yang's form silhouetted against the darkness. Relief immediately flooded through her as she rushed towards the girl who was gently sliding the door open, cold air pushing its way through the thin material of her nightgown as she threw her arms around her girlfriend.

"Sorry I took so long," Yang shivered slightly and Weiss felt a pair of strong arms wrap around her, the feelings of warmth and safety returning fast enough to push out the encroaching shivers from the cold air. "Had to dive behind a rosebush to not be seen."

"It is fine," Weiss breathed and tightened her grip on the blonde's waist. "I am just relieved you were not caught."

"Please," Yang chuckled lightly as she removed an arm from around Weiss' shoulders and moved it behind her to close the door. "You don't spend years hanging out with a girl obsessed with ninjas without learning some things."

Smiling softly, Weiss reluctantly pulled away from her girlfriend and took a proper look. She was once again wearing the tan jacket she had worn during their date to the museum, its two flaps of fabric hanging down over a plain pair of black pants. A small rucksack was strapped to her back and little specks of white snow rested on the girl's shoulder, likely the cause of her slight shivering, but other than that she looked okay.

"I was still worried," Weiss said quietly as she took her girlfriend's hand, leading her further into the room while holding out her own for Yang's bag.

"I know," Yang smiled and gladly followed, passing it over so that Weiss could place it next to her bed out of sight of her door; just in case someone did stop by. "But I'm here now."

Weiss felt a sudden tug on her arm, the force dragging it around and back into Yang's arms, her face coming up to see Yang's grin. But she knew Yang, knew those eyes and that smile as she had spent more than enough time staring at her boisterous girlfriend to know when the energy was not the same; and at that moment, there was definitely something off.

"You are," Weiss smiled in return, not sure how to broach the subject. Deciding a simple leading question was the best approach, Weiss tentatively pressed forward. "So how was your day?"

"Not..." Yang began but cut herself off with a small sigh, her smile dropping as her eyes locked on to Weiss'. "Blake snitched, didn't she?"

Caught off guard, Weiss looked away slightly.

"Figures," Yang said with a slight shake of her head. "Blake snitched, didn't she?"

"Not..." Yang began but cut herself off with a small sigh, her smile dropping as her eyes locked on to Weiss'. "Blake snitched, didn't she?"

Caught off guard, Weiss looked away slightly.

"Figures," Yang said with a slight shake of her head. The was no frustration but there was definitely some reluctance.

"She was worried," Weiss countered and returned her gaze. "So was I. You were avoiding our calls."

"I know," Yang sighed and let her arm drop, sitting down on a chair near Weiss' desk. "I just needed some time alone so I could think about some things."

Toying with the hem of her nightgown, Weiss sat down on the edge of her bed. Letting her voice
take on a more gentle tone, Weiss carefully pressed a little.

"Do you want to talk about it?"

Looking down at her boots while she thought about it, Yang took a while to reply. Not wanting to rush her, Weiss watched as Yang's shoulders slumped, another small sigh escaping her as she gave a short nod.

"I do," Yang replied and stood up slowly to make her way over to the bed. "Just... Not yet. I wanna relax with you for a little bit before I get into it. Please?"

"Okay," Weiss smiled gently and picked up her Scroll that she had discarded when she had ran at Yang. "So have you eaten? I can have Klein bring you something up."

"I've eaten," Yang smiled in return and sat down on the bed next to her, her hand stroking across the covers. "So, this is the legendary bed? You weren't joking about the size."

"Yes well, the price was no joke either," Weiss grinned, placing the device onto her bedside table.

"Hmm," The blonde hummed and laid back with a pleasured groan. "How much would one of these run me?"

"A little more than you I am guessing you would be willing to spend," she replied and laid back with her girlfriend after hitting send. As she did, she was met with a raised eyebrow. "I believe the price was close to 50,000 Lien."

"A little more!" Yang replied incredulously, clearly not expecting the number to be so high. "I wont have made that much by the time I'm thirty."

Weiss chuckled slightly at her girlfriend's reaction. It was once again proof that Yang didn't care about her status and even regularly forgot about it all together.

"You keep forgetting that my family is one of the richest in the world, Yang," Weiss chuckled and reached out to slip her fingers through her girlfriend's. "I like that."

"Yeah well, there's so many more interesting things about you," Yang smiled in response and turned to her side. "Though 50,000 Lien is so much more comfortable than I thought it would be."

"I prefer yours," Weiss replied honestly and turned her head to look at Yang, the blonde's smiling face filling her vision. Even though she could see the smile was not entirely happy, she was still maintained that it was one of the most beautiful sights she had ever seen. "Except my pillows, they are far superior to yours."

"Well then," Yang replied and moved a little closer, her bright lilac eyes glowing mischievously. "Maybe I should steal one and keep it at mine. You know, for if you sleep over again."

"When," Weiss corrected the girl with a smile and felt her chest hitch a little as she felt Yang's gentle breathing on her cheek. "When I stay again."

A small smile pulled at the boxer's lips and Weiss closed her eyes as she felt Yang press them against hers in a tender kiss that made Weiss' heart skip a beat. It was the type of kiss that had no sexual heat behind it, no hidden desires; only love. Pure, unfettered love. However after a couple of seconds, Weiss felt Yang's breath shudder sadly as she backed off. Opening her eyes, she saw in Yang's something close to what she had only seen in them once before.
"Hey," Weiss breathed softly and ran a thumb over the back of Yang's hand as she tightened her grip on it in an attempt to reassure her. "Talk to me."

Weiss was close enough to hear Yang swallow loudly, her jaw moving back and forth as she contemplated what to say. Tai had clearly not been wrong when he had said that Yang's mother was a tough subject as the silence between them stretched on for at least a minute or two before Yang finally took a deep breath and exhaled.

"On my thirteenth birthday," she said quietly, the pain of the memory she was about to tell evident in her voice. "A woman showed up for my party. I didn't know who she was, or why she was there; but she looked like me. Dad said she was a family member so I just accepted it and went on with my day."

"But half way through I heard shouting from the kitchen... Ruby was upset by it so I went to see what was happening. I remember walking in, seeing my dad and Qrow arguing with the woman, and I was about to tell them to shut up, that they were scaring Ruby, but then the woman shouted that sh... she shouted that she was my mother."

Yang paused and shook her head, her nose turning up into a sneer as her brow furrowed. When she next spoke, her words were shaky.

"I didn't believe it at first," she continued. "But the way dad shouted back, saying that she had forfeited that right when she had left me on his doorstep. After I heard that, I..."

Not wanting to push Yang to continue, Weiss simply continued to stroke the back of Yang's hand.

"... I lost my temper I guess. I remember throwing the plate I was holding, shouting for the woman to leave. That I already had a mom and lost her, that I didn't need another who hadn't cared about me my whole life."

"What did she say?" Weiss asked carefully.

"Nothing," Yang replied with a slight shake of her head. "She just... gave me this look, I still don't know what it was, and then she left. I haven't heard a word from her since."

"Until today?"

"Yeah," Yang mumbled and dug unto her pocket, pulling out a folded piece of paper. "Dad told me today that she moved to Vale a month ago and wants to see me. Even gave me the number she's using, said he didn't like it but the choice was mine, not his."

Looking down, Weiss saw Yang holding the folded paper between her thumb and middle finger, using her index finger to slowly spin it round. Looking back up, Weiss could see the conflict in her girlfriend's eyes, and she was sure she knew where that conflict was coming from.

"I am guessing you want to see her?" She asked gently, receiving an almost imperceptible nod in return.

"I do," Yang whispered quietly. "I know I shouldn't but a part of me has always regretted not hearing her out."

"So what is stopping you now?"

Though the girl wasn't crying, Weiss heard her give a small sniffle.
"Summer," Yang replied slowly. "She raised me, I wasn't even her daughter yet she showed me so much love anyway. But if I give Raven a chance, and if I eventually forgive her, would it just be the same as throwing all of that love back in Summer's face? And what if Ruby sees it as a betrayal of mom's memory?"

"Yang," Weiss shook her head and raised a hand to cup her girlfriend's cheek. "I am pretty sure your sister and your mother would understand. Just because you want to try and get to know your birth-mother, it does not mean you are tarnishing the memories you have of Summer."

"It's not just that," Yang sighed and rolled onto her back, Weiss raising to her side to mimic the position Yang had just moved from. "Summer has always been something that connects me and Ruby more than anything else. Mom died when Ruby was five but she's still in every part of her life. Everything I did to raise her was inspired by what I remember Summer doing for me, when she thinks of mom she can take everything I've done to make that image stronger."

"Even Christmas, we've always had a tradition of watching old tapes of mom. Just me and Ruby in her room. Those tapes she loves so much are what got her so interested in old electronics. When our old tape player broke, she scoured everywhere for another one; and now she makes sure that none of those things that let her see a glimpse of her mom go unlived."

"And you think you will lose that relationship?" Weiss asked despite already knowing the answer, receiving a stronger nod than her last question had earned. She knew just how much Ruby meant to Yang and was therefore able to understand why it was so difficult for her. "So talk to her about it first. She loves you Yang, and I highly doubt you are going to stop any of those traditions just because you give Raven a chance."

"I know," Yang said defeatedly and raised a hand to run it through her hair, letting out a frustrated growl. "I just hate this. Why does everything in my life have to get so... complicated."

At Yang's words, Weiss couldn't help but feel a little guilty herself. Much like Tai had been, Weiss was still hiding something from Yang, something that really needed to be said; but she still had no idea how to tell her.

"I know the feeling," Weiss sighed and rested her head on her girlfriend's chest. "I am sorry for the complications I bring though."

"That's... That's not what I meant," Yang sighed in return and Weiss felt a hand begin to rub lightly along her back. "Our situation is tough, but how I feel about you is one of the least complicated things in my life right now."

"I feel the same," Weiss replied. However, a dirty feeling rise within her as she said it; and knowing what caused it, Weiss knew she had to come clean. "Yang?"

"Yeah?"

"I know this really is not the right time," Weiss breathed and reached up to place her hand on Yang's midsection. "But there is something that I need to tell you too."

"Since you said it like that, I'm guessing its something I'm not going to like?" Yang groaned, the noise making Weiss cringe a little as she gave a slight nod. "Well, may as well get all the bad news done in one day, just means the others had better be really good."

Taking a deep breath, Weiss prepared for the worst as she finally told Yang the truth.

"Do you remember when I told you I might lose the company for a while? But that I would also
"Yes?"

"Well... There is something my father could do," Weiss admitted and felt Yang's hand slow its gentle stroking of her back. "And if I refuse, then it is almost guaranteed that I will never get the company back."

"And what is that?"

"There is a small chance he could order me to go back to Atlas headquarters and continue my work there."

As she felt Yang's hand stop on her back, Weiss also felt her heart-rate pick up as worry quickly began to set in. She already knew Yang wasn't okay with her putting her claim to the company at risk, but to have admitted that she may have to either lose it all together or leave Vale made that sense of security that had slowly begun to return begin to fade again.

"How could you leave that out, Weiss?" The blonde sighed after what felt like an eternity.

"You were going through so much at the time," Weiss breathed, her heart racing as she heard the disappointment in her girlfriend's voice. "And with how you reacted just to the possibility if it, I was worried you would think we were not worth that risk."

"You still should have told me," Yang countered quickly in a steady voice. "We can't be making plans to do something as big as telling your father about us if I don't know everything that will happen."

"I know," Weiss breathed sadly, a pang of pain shooting through her at having added to Yang's terrible day.

Laying there waiting for Yang's response, Weiss shifted her weight around due to the discomfort of the blonde's silence. The last time Yang had shown any disappointment in her had been after her treatment of Mrs Peach during their date, so to hear it again made her dig her head a little deeper into the blonde in hopes that Yang wouldn't push her away.

"Can he even send you away?" Yang replied after a minute, her tone even and unreadable. "You're eighteen."

"As his daughter, no," Weiss admitted and tightened her grip on the stomach of Yang's jacket. "But as the heiress, he could use it as a test to see if I am truly dedicated to the company. If I refuse, he will see it as me choosing you over the company and have reason to take away my position."

Silence followed Weiss' explanation, a silence that felt far too long for her liking; but she waited it out. What she had just revealed was surely something...

"Then you go to Atlas," Yang finally said, her voice sounding firm. "I don't like it but if that's what it'll take to show him you're dedicated then that's what you have to do."

"But what about us?" She asked quietly, though the feel of Yang's hand renewing its stroking was comforting once again. "You said that you do not do well with long distance. That is why you and Arslan br..."

"Arslan was never this," Yang interrupted softly. "She was never someone I could turn to like I turned to you today. But I know you are risking some thing that means so much to you and I don't
want to make that harder, so if I have to deal with long distance for a while, then so be it because you are not giving up your company for someone like me."

"Please do not talk like that, Yang," Weiss replied quickly, unable to keep the slight amount of annoyance from her tone as she looked up at her girlfriend. "Do not ever talk like you are not good enough."

"Sorry," the blonde sighed and looked down to meet her gaze. "It's just... I know what your grandfather's company means to you and I dont want you to even consider giving that up for a registered ex-white fang member who failed half her high school classes."

"Yang," Weiss said and shook her head as her girlfriend's repeated self-deprecating. "That is your past. We have all made mistakes, but if you honestly believe you are not the kind of person I could give up the company for then you clearly are not looking at yourself properly."

"I do not care that you have failed classes and your time in the **White Fang** means nothing to me. What I care about is that you are kind, and caring, and funny, and so much more. You have spent your whole life taking responsibility for things that were way beyond what should have been placed on you; and I can say with absolute certainty that if I were to give up my company for anyone, there is no-one that would be more worthy than you."

"That might be how you feel but I'm still not going to let you give such a massive thing."

"Then I wont," Weiss breathed and and wrapped her arm around Yang's waist. "But please never tell me you are not worth it, because you are."

"Good," Yang replied, an air of defeat in her voice. "I will miss you if you have to go though."

Looking up to meet her girlfriend's eye, Weiss gently pressed her lips against Yang's in a reassuring kiss before pulling back and gazing lovingly into the girl's eyes.

"You know that if he does send me to Atlas, I will be buying you a plane ticket whenever you want one, right?"

"I know," Yang smiled sadly and Weiss felt the hand stroking her back reach up to run the finger through her loose hair. "But I will ask a lot."

"I hope so," Weiss smiled and lowered her head to give her girlfriend a quick peck on the lips.

Weiss smiled down at her girlfriend. Once again, Yang had proved that all of her worries weren't as big as she thought they were and that feeling of warmth that Weiss felt whenever looking into her beautiful lilac orbs began to rush its way through her body, her heart-rate picking up its pace again; but in a good way.

"Yang?"

"Mm?" Yang hummed quietly.

Heat rushed to Weiss' face causing a reddish blush to paint itself over her cheeks. She had known for a while now, but the moment had never felt right. However in the wake of her prior confession, Yang had just proved how strong their relationship was and Weiss could think of no better time.

"I..." Weiss paused to think on how best to say it. "I know it's been just over two months and you don't have to say it back, but I need you to know that I... I love you."
Yang's eyes widened slightly and Weiss immediately felt stupid. *It was definitely too soon,* she thought to herself as she looked away and pulled back slightly, only to be stopped by an arm that quickly wrapped itself around her waist. Nervous as to what she would see, Weiss looked back down at Yang to see that the blonde was happily smiling.

"You don..."

"I love you too."

It was Weiss' turn for her eye to widen slightly at Yang's words as she felt the already strong wave of heat intensify. She had been sure that despite her own acceptance, it had been too soon; but Weiss knew Yang wouldn't say it in return simply to make her feel better. Unable to fully articulate just how happy she was, Weiss once again pressed her lips against Yang's.

A surge of happiness rushed through her as she immediately felt Yang return the gentle affection; and in that moment, the mere fact that Yang had been able to say those words in return meant more to her than anything she had experience in her eighteen years. Her own words having failed her, Weiss pressed in a little to show exactly how much it meant and felt Yang's arm tighten around her waist, the comfort of the situation growing by the second.

Crawling up a little higher so that she was no longer stretching her neck, Weiss continued to deepen the kiss she was sharing with her girlfriend. As she did, she reached her hand up to grip the zip that rested around her midsection and pulled it down, the tan jacket quickly falling open. However, as she rested a hand on Yang's still clothed stomach, a small knock sounded from her door.

Weiss jumped at the sound and pulled away as leapt up from her bed, pointing silently for Yang to hide down the other side out of sight of the doorway. As she strode over to the door, she focused on correcting her breathing, not wanting whoever it was to have any reason to suspect something. With a final deep breath, she pulled it open only to be met with the kind and smiling face of one of her favourite people in the world.

"Good evening, Klein," Weiss breathed out with no small amount of relief upon seeing the portly butler.

"Good evening, Miss Schnee," the man smiled happily and held up a tray with a teapot and cup resting on top of it. "I bought you your evening tea."

"Oh, yes," Weiss nodded and moved aside to let the small man into the room. "Just on the desk please, Klein."

"Of course," he said with a nod and entered the room, carefully placing the tray where Weiss had told him and turning around to rock back and forth on his heels as he reached into his blazer pocket and pulled out another small cup. "Will you be needing this spare cup?"

With a small smile, Weiss gave the man a nod and pushed the door behind her closed.

"Yang," Weiss called quietly as the door clicked shut, instantly seeing her girlfriend's head poke up from the side of the bed. "I would like you to meet the man who has served my family since before I was born."

Standing up from her crouched position, her jacket now missing, Yang gave the man a smile and held out her hand.

"Klein Sieben," he said in a jolly voice as he gently took Yang's offered hand and shook it.

"The please is all mine, Miss Xiao Long," Klein replied as he dropped the girl's hand and swooped into a deep bow. "It is so nice to meet the woman who has been making our little snowflake so happy as of late."

"Oh," Yang chuckled and ran a hand through her hair. "Not had someone bow to me before, but you're welcome. She makes me happy too."

Weiss felt her heart beat a little faster and her face glowed a bright red as Yang flashed her a loving smile.

"It looks very much like you make each other happy," the portly man chuckled in response and placed the cup onto the tray. "However, I highly doubt you want this old man ruining your precious time, so I will take my leave. Please enjoy your stay, Miss Xiao Long."

"I already am," Yang replied while the man walked towards the door and pulled it open. As Klein shut the door behind him, Weiss watched Yang turn to look at her, the blonde's eyebrows raised in amusement as a smirk spread across her face. "I think he likes me."

"That is because he is a good judge of character," Weiss smiled and locked the door before she sat back on the side of her bed.

"Aww," Yang replied and swooped down to place as small kiss on her as she picked up her bag. "But I need to get changed."

"The bathroom is right there," Weiss blushed at the smile Yang was giving her as she pointed to the door near her desk.

"Your room has a bathroom?"

"Rich family, Remember?" Weiss laughed and kissed her girlfriend again before the girl could stand back up properly. "We have a butler just for cakes so yes, my bedroom has a bathroom."

"Now you're just showing off," Yang grinned as she made her way towards the aforementioned door, pushing it open and peeking inside. "Be back in a minute."

Smiling to herself, Weiss quickly set her alarm for early the next morning and pulled back the covers of her giant bed and slipped beneath them. Fortunately, since her bed really was so large that they could both lay in there through the night and barely touch, she knew that Yang would be more than willing to cuddle.

Shifting nervously while she waited for Yang to finish getting ready, Weiss remembered what had happened last time they had shared a bed. If she was honest with herself, when they had first arranged the stay over she had expected things to happen, for moves to be made and steps to be taken; but with everything that Yang was facing, she now doubted that anything of the sort would progress that way.

"Did ya miss me?" she heard Yang say and saw the blonde's smiling face pop around the doorway.

"I would have but I was comfortable in bed," Weiss replied smugly and pulled one side of the covers open. "Though if you were to join me, it would mean I could enjoy both of you."

"Hmm," Yang hummed cheerfully and jumped up onto the bed, now wearing the same yellow t-shirt and shorts she had been when Weiss had spent the night at her house. "I like the idea of you
enjoying me."

"I bet you do," Weiss replied and rolled her eyes as her girlfriend slipped beneath the open cover and shuffled closer, throwing the sheet back over them both so that she could feel the heat emanating from Yang immediately began to warm the trapped air. "But I just enjoy being near you."

"Oh really?" the blonde chuckled and Weiss felt an arm wrap around her waist to pull her closer to her girlfriend's warm body. "Is this close enough for you?"

"Even this..." Weiss replied and moved a little closer to actually press against Yang, the warmth of the girl's body immediately passing through the thin fabric of her night gown. "... Is not close enough."

"You know there are ways we could be closer?" Yang said jokingly and bit her lip seductively, a hand raising to press gently against her cheek.

Weiss gazed into the lilac eyes of the girl she loved and pressed her lips softly against Yang's, a feeling of love rushing through her immediately as the girl's returned it lightly. Maybe she was wrong, maybe Yang was still interested. Pulling back, Weiss gave the blonde a caring smile.

"Is that what you want?" She breathed, her hand finding its own way to Yang's hip. "Because I am not going anywhere tonight."

Apparently taking a second to think, Weiss saw temptation flicker through Yang's eyes; however after a few moment had passed, Yang shook her head and pressed her forehead carefully against Weiss' own.

"Not tonight. I did this morning," Yang admitted quietly. "I kinda thought you might have asked me over for th..."

"I did," Weiss admitted slowly. "At least, I did while we were making the plans."

"Oh!" Yang sighed and Weiss felt the girl's arm around her waist tighten a little. "Guess that's another thing that got screwed up today then."

"Not at all," she quickly whispered in return and placed another gentle, fleeting kiss on her girlfriend's lips. "I know you are going through stuff right now; but you have waited months for me to be ready, I can easily wait an extra week or two until you are."

"Thanks," Yang smiled as her eyes fluttered a little. "For being there for me. I was feeling so lost today and I had no idea what I was going to do; but as I tried to work through things, someo... I was guided back to you."

"By what?" Weiss asked cautiously, her voice gentle in an attempt to not pressure her.

"My mom," Yang answered nervously with an uncertain smile. "I know... it sounds stupid; but I went to her grave and talked to her. Ruby says it always helps so I thought it was worth a shot; and when I asked her what to do..." Yang paused, the uncertainty fading from her smile. "... It started to snow and I knew it was her way of reminding me that I should be taking to you."

"That does not sound stupid at all, Yang," Weiss smiled sweetly after taking a second to process what she had just been told. "But I am glad your mother seems to like me."

"She would have loved you," Yang nodded and leant in for a kiss that was breathtaking in its
gentleness before pulling back all too soon. "I know I do."

"You know I am never going to tire of hearing you tell me that," Weiss smiled and felt a wave of happiness surge through her as Yang's thumb stroked her cheek.

"I hope not because I intend to make sure you know it for the rest of your life," Yang breathed slowly, returning the smile without any hint of sadness.

"I can live with that," she chuckled happily at the amazing future she knew was ahead of her. "And I know I said it earlier but... I love you too."

Seeing the grin that spread itself across her girlfriend's face, Weiss was convinced that even if her father were to burst through the door unannounced, she would still have pressed her lips against the blonde's, happiness rushing through her as she simply laid there and revelled in what couldn't have ended as a more perfect night for her.

Chapter End Notes

This chapter gave me sooooooo much trouble. There are sections that went through 3 drafts as my intentions went back and forth; and honestly, the main reason for that had been whether to go in 'that' direction or not. As I have stated before, M-rated long stories are harder to get noticed and while I don't really care about they views, I do appreciate feedback. However I finally made the decision that since enough people are interested in it (you perver... nahl I love you guys) it will eventually go that way, and this chapter was originally supposed to be that moment; but as I wrote what was supposed to be here, it just didn't feel right for what was happening (I nearly had an anxiety attack while trying to sleep as i ran through in my head for hours about how wrong the moment felt) though rest assured, it will eventually... come. (hehe)

I have also been feeling that my descriptive writing has been taking a little more of a dip in favour of conversation as of late so I have been working on that too, I hope it shows here a little more. But that is all for the notes, I hope you enjoyed the chapter. The next one is a nice one I have had planned for a while however I do need to finish up the finale of another series so it may take a little while for that to arrive.
Yang Xiao Long

Taking a deep breath as she stirred, Yang inhaled the beautiful flowery scent of the girl in her arms. She had been enjoying a pleasant dream about her and Weiss sitting in the green fields of Beacon, at least what her brain remembered Beacon to look like from her tour two years ago. While they had sat there, her arms wrapped around a studying Weiss who had been sat between her legs, people had passed by giving them jealous looks; each one making her feel happier than the last as it was her who got to openly show her love for the white-haired beauty. However, as she had been about to nuzzle her chin softly into the girls slender neck, a slight shifting in the real world had woke her.

Though what she had awoken to was just as great. Shifting ever so gently in Yang's arms was the beautiful girl from her dream doing her best to not wake her as she clearly tried to escape. Grinning slightly as she felt a small hand close tenderly on hers and attempt to removed it from its place on Weiss' stomach, Yang kept her arm from budging a single millimetre. Apparently thinking it was just Yang's natural strength, the beauty carefully applied more pressure but Yang simply wrapped her arm around tighter around her and pulled the girl back in to close the tiny space that had been created.

"No," She breathed softly, a childish smile etching itself onto her face as she heard Weiss give a happy sigh.

"I heard my Scroll vibrate," Weiss replied quietly and made another half-hearted attempt to move away, only to be stopped once again.

"But you're warm."

"No," The girl chuckled lightly and made to shift again, though not away from her, but to turn around. "You are warm."

"Exactly," Yang smiled as a beautiful pair of pale blue eyes came into view. "I'm keeping you warm. With the size of this bed, you'll freeze to death before you get back to me."

"You are such a dolt," Weiss laughed softly and Yang felt an arm slide around her own waist. "It
will take five seconds at most."

"People can die from cold shock in seconds," she countered and moved her hand up to gently stroke through the girls silky hair.

With a shake of her head, Weiss leant in and buried her face just below Yang's chin and a wave of happiness surged through her. The day before had been so miserable, with having learned her mother was in town and being worried about her relationship with Ruby, but to wake up with the girl she loved wrapped comfortably in her arms made her happier than ever.

"You do know I have to get my Scroll, right?" Weiss sighed jokingly and pulled back slightly to look her in the eye again.

"Fiiiine," she groaned, feinting annoyance with a roll of her eyes. "But there's a leaving fee."

Loosening her grip slightly, she teasingly pushed out her lips and closed her eyes, earning a small chuckle from her girlfriend; however before even a second had passed, Yang felt Weiss' lips press gently against her own. As she happily received payment for letting Weiss go, the girl slowly untangled herself from their cuddle and moved away, finally breaking the kiss and leaving Yang alone in the massive bed.

No longer having anything to hold onto, Yang let out a yawn as she stretched her tired limbs. Weiss' bed was exceptionally soft and sleeping on it had been like sleeping on a cloud; but even still, with Weiss no longer by her side it felt significantly less comfortable. However, true to her word, Weiss returned seconds later and Yang slipped her arm under the girl as she nestled her back against Yang's chest.

"So?" Yang yawned again and pulled her closer, resting her chin on Weiss' shoulder. "Was it at least worth leaving me alone?"

"Idiot," Weiss giggled and tapped the screen, the sudden bright blue light making them both flinch. "Nothing will ever be worth that."

"Mmm," Yang hummed happily and pressed her lips against her girlfriend's neck earning a pleasant groan in return. "So who is it?"

"Uhh," Weiss said hesitantly, causing Yang to look up from her tender affections. "It is a message from Winter."

"Oh!" Yang exclaimed, feeling herself seize up slightly. "Umm... Good news?"

"Very," Weiss nodded and held the Scroll up so that Yang could see the message that was displayed on screen.

Weiss,

As promised, I have spoken to General Ironwood and he has granted me my leave. I shall be arriving next Monday and staying over the holidays.

However, I do wish to remind you once more that there is a lot you do not know and a lot that you will not like; so, again, ask that you think on whether this relationship is something you truly are serious about.

Winter
Reading the message over twice, Yang couldn't help but feel a small amount of nerves run through her. From the second half of the message it seemed like Winter was already against their relationship. She could only imagine what would happen when Weiss' told the woman about her past.

"Seems like she already doesn't like me," Yang groaned and rested her chin back on Weiss' warm shoulder.

"She is always like that," Weiss replied quietly as she closed the device; but there was something not quite right about her tone, like she was confused about something.

"So why do you sound worried?"

"It is not..." The ivory-haired girl replied and once again turned around to face Yang. "I just thought I knew everything about Winter, but apparently I was wrong because I have no idea what she is talking about here."

With everything going on, Yang could certainly understand how Weiss had felt. The day she had found out that she had a mother she'd never known had certainly been troubling for her, though it had mainly stemmed from the fact that everything she'd known had been turned upside down.

"I'm sure its just something she's never had a reason to talk about," Yang said quietly in an attempt to make sure Weiss didn't worry.

"I know," Weiss sighed and shuffled a little closer, one of the girl's legs slipping between Yang's own. "I have a strong feeling that it is about my father though."

"Well," Yang smiled and wrapped an arm over her girlfriend. "If it is, then we'll deal with it together."

Yang watched a slight grin overtake Weiss' face caused her eyes to glint as she leant in and gently pressed their lips together the action sending yet another wave of happiness through her. Using her arm that was trapped under the girl, Yang pulled her into a tighter hug to further enjoy the feel of having the ability to hold such a person so close.

"Mmm," She hummed contently as their lips parted. "What was that one for?"

"For being you," Weiss grinned and rested a hand on Yang's hip. "For always reminding me that not everything is as bad as it seems."

"Well, that's what I do best," Yang chuckled and teasingly ran a finger down Weiss' back. "For anyone but myself, that is."

"Well that is what you have me for now," Weiss smiled and pecked her on the lips again. "However, I do need to shower since breakfast will be starting soon."

"You know, I could join you?" she asked and let a mischievous smile pull at her face.

"For the shower or for breakfast?" Weiss chuckled lightly and Yang felt a hand close on her waist.

"Pretty sure I'd be willing to join you for both."

"Hmm," She hummed in return and reopened her scroll. "Well it is Saturday so Father and Whitely should have left for the office already."
"What about your mother?"

"One moment," Weiss replied and began to type on her Scroll before pressing it against her ear. "Good morning Klein, have Father and Whitely left yet?"

The faint voice of the tiny man she had met the night before sounded from the other side of the device and a slight amount of relief passed across her girlfriend's eyes.

"And what about Mother?"

Once again, the muffled voice sounded and a smile etched itself onto Weiss' face.

"Thank you, Klein," Weiss smiled and gave Yang a small nod. "In an hour, can you please call a staff meeting in the west wing? Father mentioned that it was looking a little dusty."

"I doubt he used those words," Yang interrupted with a smile and received a gently push on her hip.

"Yes, thank you Klein," Weiss said as she closed the Scroll and snaked her hand around Yang's waist. "Well, Father and Whitley have left and Klein said he believes Mother has a meeting in town; so if you want to join me for breakfast and have a tour of the house, you can?"

"That..." Yang grinned and rolled onto her back, her arms tightening around Weiss and bringing the laughing girl to a rest on top of her. "... Seems like something I want quite a lot."

"Good," Weiss laughed and leant down to press their lips together lightly for a few seconds.

"Great," Yang smiled and ran her fingers through the white hair that was falling around them. "So, with that sorted... Where did we land on the shower?"

A cheeky smile wrote itself across the beautiful face above her as she sat up on her knees and looked down on her, the covers falling back and exposing them to the cold air. With the pale girl sat on top of her framed by the pale light shining through the window, Yang was once again convinced that the person she was gazing upon was in fact an angel.

"Well..." she smiled as her hand fiddled with the hem of Yang's shirt. "... I am going into the shower alone; but as I made clear last night, the choice is yours as to whether I stay alone."

"Hmm," Yang hummed thoughtfully. The temptation was there to join the girl but she knew it would likely lead to more and Yang didn't want their first time together to be like that. "I think you should shower alone today."

"Okay," Weiss replied with a gentle smile and slowly climbed off of the bed. "I wont take long."

"I'll miss you anyway."

"You can shower after if you want then," she replied with a quick rolled of her eyes and placed a small kiss on her as she turned to leave for the bathroom, leaving Yang alone.

"Ugh," Yang groaned as she laid back on the bed once Weiss had closed the door.

*Stupid,* Yang sighed inwardly. Normally she would never refuse to shower with anyone she was dating if given the chance, so to refuse and remain in the bed while her girlfriend was showering only meters away with free reign for Yang to join her was frustrating to say the least. She had been so ready yesterday when she had assumed that Weiss was calling her over for that, but with everything happening, with all the worry about Raven, and Summer, and Ruby. Yang had found
herself caught in a similar situation as Weiss had been.

Weiss had been clear that she had been holding off due to not wanting Yang to feel unappreciated, but now Yang was holding off because she didn't want Weiss to think she was just trying to take her mind off of something because as little as sex normally meant to her, she wanted the first time with Weiss to be special. She wanted them to both be ready and prepared, to not have any doubt about the others intentions and while shower sex was exciting, it wasn't how she imagined it being. She wanted it to be perfect.

Giving a large sigh as she though on how she would accomplish that, Yang ran her hand through her hair and sat up to get her clothes ready so she could shower after Weiss.

*  

Weiss house was huge. Hell, huge was an understatement. Yang had only seen half of it as they made their way to what the ivory-haired girl had called the music wing but she was already sure that her house could fit inside Weiss' mansion ten times over with room to spare. So far she had seen most of the upstairs, which had turned out to be mainly bedrooms, but as they had made their way downstairs the rooms had become far more varied; from bars to an indoor pool, even a movie theatre that they had only poked their head into since Klein had chosen that room to hold to staff meeting.

However, Yang had noted that Weiss had seemed genuinely impassive towards all of them. She had been shocked at first, because who on Remnant couldn't love the fact that they had a movie theatre in their house, but as they explored more and more room, it started to become clearer as to why.

With each new room she saw, she had begun to notice just how empty they seemed despite their rich design, they all seemed cold and unused, like they were simply there for show. None of the rooms were there because the family needed them or because they enjoyed what that room had to offer, but because it showed they were rich. It only took until the fourth bar for Yang to realised exactly why Weiss didn't care about them.

The cold, pristine nature of each room was representative of how she was raised. As if image was everything, that the only thing that mattered was how people perceived you. They spoke of absence of family and loneliness. As such, the rooms had quickly begun to lose their charms. Even the entryway, that Yang hadn't seen the prior night due to sneaking in through Weiss' balcony, was a spectacle. It looked more like something one would see in the entrance to a museum and while Yang could admire the artwork and the statues, there was no feel of family there; nothing that made you feel like you were walking into a family home.

"So what's this room?" Yang asked as she rested a hand on the handle of a door that Weiss had walked passed, trying her best to sound excited.

"Oh," Weiss said in surprise as she turned around and gave Yang a smile. "That's the wind room."

"You have a room full of wind?" Yang grinned in jest, hoping that her stupid joke would at least make the smile on her girlfriend's face more genuine. "Rich people really are weird."

"You know you are an idiot, right?" Weiss replied as she gently shook her, though the smile on her
face did indeed become a genuine one. "I meant that the room is for wind instruments."

"Ooooh," Yang hummed facetiously and gave a quick nod. "Yeah, that makes more sense."

"You want to see inside?"

"Nah," Yang smiled and pushed herself off of the door to continue their walk down the hallway. "Seems like you wanna show me something."

It was true. As soon as they had entered the music hall, Yang had noticed that Weiss had slightly increased her speed and was particularly favouring the left side of the hall.

"Maybe," She nodded and turned to walk beside her.

Giving her girlfriend a small shoulder bump as they walked, Yang felt an arm hook itself through hers and taking a quick look behind them to see that no-one was around them, she shifted her arm upwards and let her fingers entwine with Weiss'.

"I like this," Yang admitted, feeling herself breath a little sigh of relief.

"My house?"

"No," Yang laughed and held out their hands slightly as she gripped it a little tighter. "I mean this. Holding your hand as we walk through your house."

"Oh," Weiss exclaimed and tightened her own grip with a smile. "I do too."

"I would hope so," Yang replied with a sidelong grin at the girl. "So what are you so eager to show me?"

"My favourite room, beside my bedroom of course," Weiss answered and slowed her pace. "We are here anyway."

Coming to a stop in front of a plain white door, Yang watched as Weiss placed a hand on the handle and gave her a small look before pushing it open. For reasons unknown to her, the room seemed far brighter than the hallway where they were stood and in the middle stood a large, white grand piano made of what looked to be marble. It could have been because Weiss actually seemed to like the room, or just because there was something more loved about it, but the room seemed much warmer than any she had seen in the house.

Feeling a slight tug on her hand, Yang allowed her girlfriend to pull her into the room, shutting the door before letting her guide her towards the huge contraption. As they arrived, Weiss pulled out a small bench from underneath and sat down while tapping the seat next to her.

"Come sit down."

"Mmm," Yang hummed with a smile as she took a seat next to the snowy-haired girl. "I know you studied music but you never told me you could play the piano?"

"I studied a little while I was growing up," Weiss shrugged and reached out to gently glide her fingers across keys, the resulting sound rather pleasant to Yang's ears. "But I started again recently."

"How much is a little?" Yang asked, knowing that what Weiss called a little was often a lot.

As if in response, Weiss raised her other hand and effortlessly played a melody that immediately
made the room shine a little brighter. Yang wasn't the most musically inclined but even she could tell that what was being played was far more complex than someone who had only studied a little; and if the smile on Weiss' face was any indication, the tune she was playing was a happy one.

"Wow," Yang breathed as Weiss let her fingers stop their movements and turned to smile at her. "You call that a little?"

"Okay," Weiss chuckled and turned back as she pressed down lightly again, her fingers tinkling out a quiet melody. "There may have been days where I refused to leave the room."

"Well you are really good," Yang grinned and gave the girl a small bump. "How come you never told me?"

"I just..." Weiss said and paused, her smile falling slightly. "I stop playing for a while."

"How come?"

Once again, Weiss took a short pause, but after a couple of moments of beautiful music, she took a deep breath.

"Have you ever had something you love more than anything just make you sadder than you could ever imagine?" Weiss asked and Yang gave a slight nod. "I used to love playing but eventually I just stopped hearing what I wanted."

As Weiss talked, even Yang in her limited knowledge of music could tell that the girl's playing had taken on a more sombre tone.

"Every time I played I just felt myself start to crumble. Like every bad thing in my life would be reverberating around me, every thing I hated would ring in my ears. It eventually just got to the point where I could not bare to hear it any more."

Yang could understand. While she loved Ruby more than anything in the world, there had been a short amount of time after finding out about Raven where she had completely neglected her as every time she saw the girl who looked like the woman she had called mom, she was reminded of just how much of a lie her life had been. Her father had originally never even wanted her, her birthmother had left her on a doorstep, and the only woman who had provided her strength was gone. It had taken Blake's constant pestering and Ruby freaking out about getting diagnosed with autism for Yang to realise just how much she still loved the girl, but eventually she had sorted herself out and stopped avoiding her.

"So what made you start again?"

"You," The word was little more than a gentle whisper but immediately the sombreness that had begun to darken the music quickly became lighter. "Last week I found myself drawn to this room, and as sat down and started to play again, you were the only thing I could think of and for the first time in years, I could play what I wanted again."

Feeling a heat rise in her chest, Yang gave a small smile to the girl and let a hand wrap lightly around her waist. To hear Weiss saying that she had returned something she loved back to her life made her feel better than she could have ever thought possible.

"Well I am glad I got you to play again," Yang grinned an placed a quick kiss on his girlfriend's cheek. "Because you are really good."

"I know," Weiss smiled coyly and picked up the pace of her playing a little. "I never realised how
just much I did miss it."

"Aww," Yang cooed and hugged her a little tighter. "So what does this one do?"

Reaching out a finger, Yang rested it against on the the black keys and gently pressed down, the sharp sound cutting through Weiss' beautiful music and making her flinch. Seeing Weiss smile and gently shake her head, Yang pressed down on a few more and earned a laugh from her girlfriend.

"You are such a child," she laughed and once again slowed her pace. "Here."
Continuing a more gentle melody, Weiss slipped a hand under Yang's, her finger lining up directly underneath her own, and slowly replaced it back where her own had been. "Relax your hand and fingers."

Eyeing the girl suspiciously, Yang removed as much control from her hand as possible and slowly felt her fingers begin to rise and fall in a steady rhythm. It was nowhere near as graceful as her girlfriend had been playing before but feeling Weiss' finger work under her own was enough to pull an awed smile from her.

"You're incredible," Yang breathed and shifted her hand to the side, the music interrupting harshly as Weiss' finger slipped between her own.

"I was taught by the best," Weiss smiled and let her other hand continue the melody. "For a while at least."

Holding her girlfriend's hand gently, Yang sat there for a couple of moments just listening to the girl play. Even one handed, the melody was beautifully light and uplifting, like she was channelling her happiness into the notes themselves.

"So?" Weiss asked, her voice gentle and cautious as it not trying to upset her. "Have you decided what you are going to do? About Ruby and Raven."

"Yeah," Yang answered slowly with a nod. While she had held Weiss' sleeping form the night before, she had thought for a while on the subject. For some reason, her mind had been clearer while holding the girl and there had only been one thing that made sense to her. "I'm gunna talk to Ruby soon. I want to see Raven but my sister comes first; so if Ruby isn't cool with it, then that's that."

"Do you really think she will say no?"

"I dont think so," Yang smiled and stroked her thumb along the back of the hand she was holding. "But Ruby is the most important thing to me, if there's even the slightest chance that she isn't going to be okay with it then I have to make sure."

"I understand that," Weiss nodded and tightened her fingers around Yang's.

"So what about you and your sister?" Yang asked with a smile. "You two are pretty close, you gotta be excited about her coming, right?"

"I am, sort of," Weiss hummed happily as she played. "Nervous excitement would be a more apt description."

"Really?" Yang asked in surprise. Every time Weiss had mentioned Winter, she had always mention just how much she adored the woman. "How come?"

"Well, Winter and Father don't really get along," Weiss' explained slowly and let her fingers fall away from the piano keys. "I love having her around but Father is always far more... irritable
during her visits."
"Sounds like a rough deal," Yang hummed, receiving a nod in return.

"It's worth it to see Winter again," Weiss smiled and leant gently against Yang's shoulder. "And to finally get some help with our situation."

"I guess," She replied hesitantly, unable to stop the small amount of worry that arose within her. "Weiss?"

"Mmm?"

"I read the story about Winter and the White Fang in Atlas after the attack," Yang admitted nervously and felt Weiss breath out heavily. "I know its hypocritical since I just said I have to tell Ruby my thing, but is there any chance we can just... not tell your sister about my past?"

"You are still worried she will hate you?"

"Pretty much come to terms with the fact your family will hate me," she sighed and shook her head. "More worried your sister will shoot me than anything."

A small shaking against her shoulder was her reply as Weiss quietly giggled to herself, though they quickly ended and Weiss' voice came back full of reassurance.

"She won't shoot you, Yang," Weiss said, a small amount of humour tinting the reassuring tone. "And no, we do not have to tell her but once she knows your name, she will look you up."

"And discover I was arrested for White Fang activity multiple times and am still registered."

"Mhm," Weiss hummed in confirmation. "But she's not unreasonable, Yang. She knows people change, just like I do."

"I hope so," she sighed and gripped a little tighter on her girlfriend's hip. "Sorry, I kinda killed the mood a little there, huh?"

"It is fine," Weiss smiled and leant up to give her a quick peck on the lips. "However, breakfast will be ready by now, so we should get going."

"Food sounds perfect right about now," Yang smiled in return and stood up, helping Weiss to her feet as she went only to pull her close. "Just like you."

"Save the buttering up for your toast," Weiss grinned and allowed herself to be pulled into Yang's arms. "And just so you know. Even if Winter does not like you, it is not going to stop me from loving you, okay?"

"I know," Yang smiled and leant down to place a kiss on her girlfriend as her heart gave a small flutter. "I love you too."

"Good," Weiss smiled genuinely and pulled back as the two of them walked towards the door. "Now let us go get something to eat."

*That's weird,* Yang thought to herself as she watched her girlfriend pull the slightly ajar door open. *I could have sworn I shut it.*
Well, that's their second morning together, less exciting that their first but I wanted it to be a little more cute. Mainly because I have noticed I've made their relationship a little angsty. Don't get me wrong, I like me some angst but I don't want that to be all they are, I understand a lot of this is because I'm choosing to explore a lot of Yang's issues that I wished the show took some time to explore properly but I do want to show the fun side of them that originally made me want to write the story too.

But that is mainly it for me today. There was supposed to be another scene (no, not that scene) here but I decided to scrap it because it just didn't feel right. Anyway, I hope you enjoyed, I tried to focus a little more on detail as well as dialogue so if it felt better or worse than please let me know as it really does help me grow as a writer.
Chapter Notes

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See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 23 – A Worthwhile Trade

Weiss Schnee

Placing her pen on the desk, Weiss stretched her arms above her head to purge herself of the stiffness that often came with being hunched over paperwork all day. She had spent the entire day in her room milling over her coursework in an attempt to get it all done before the upcoming winter holidays and had finally managed to whittle it down to only one piece remaining. Unfortunately it had already grown late and that piece was by far the largest as it was yet another failed business study, but Weiss was confident she would be able to finish it before she went on break for as grueling as it could sometimes be, she really did enjoy her coursework. However compared to her morning, her entire day had been rather dull.

Even as she thought on it, Weiss was barely able to think of the words to describe how good her morning had been. Thanks to Klein, she had been able to spend some extra time around the house with Yang on top of having had her stay the night. Growing up in the mansion, it had always felt cold, like their family had somehow managed to capture the weather of Atlas on bring it with them; but as she walked its halls with Yang, everything had felt that little bit warmer. She still hated it of course as Yang's presence hadn't changed that the rooms were all still lifeless husks, serving simply as trophies and displays of wealth, but the blonde had given her a new memory for one of her favourite rooms that she could cherish.

Even breakfast had been one of the most enjoyable that she could remember as they had mainly just hung out in the dining room and eaten as much of the usual massive breakfast that the kitchen staff served. She remembered laughing as Yang's eyes widened at the sheer amount of various foods and how her mouth had practically been watering as she pulled an eggs benedict towards herself. She remembered the fun, light-hearted conversation they had enjoyed as they ate, such a thing rare around that table. But, of course, Weiss also remembered the sadness that had welled within her as she had watched her girlfriend leave the house through the same back gate she had entered.

How Weiss would have loved Yang to have stayed, for her to still be wrapped in the girl's arms as she worked; or for her to even have been able to leave out the front so that they could show the world that something had finally happened that made her beyond happy; but all of that would come in time. In time she would be able to enjoy all of those things without having to hide; but for now all she had remaining was the tan jacket she had found laying on her floor shortly after Yang had left that she had been wearing all day, with the exception of dinner.

The smell of lavender had been surrounding her the entire time she had been working and while it had been difficult to concentrate with such a relaxing scent, eventually it was the thought of being able to spend more time around the the source of such a scent that had spurred Weiss to buckle
down on her work. If she were to prove that she keep up on everything, then she was sure that it would at least help to make the coming out go smoother in some way. With that thought fresh in mind again, she lent back over her work and began to make sure everything was correct.

A short while later, Weiss looked up from her work satisfied that she had done more than enough to receive the highest grade possible, and checked the clock on her desk to see that over an hour. Sighing to herself as she knew she really should get some rest, Weiss slowly packed away her books and placed them in the drawer labelled finance. However, just as she raised from her seat to head to her bed, Weiss heard the gentle buzz of her Scroll vibrating against her white desk and quickly picked it up, her face breaking into a smile as she saw a message from her girlfriend.

'hey beautiful missing me yet?'

Smiling to herself despite Yang's apparent disdain for punctuation, she quickly began to type out a response only to delete it and hit the call button instead. Raising it to her ear, the first ring had barely even finished before the blonde picked up.

"I take that as a yes," she said immediately and Weiss could hear the smile in the girl's voice.

"Maybe," Weiss replied with non-committally and sat back down on her desk chair. "Though I chose to call because it is far easier to understand you on the phone than to try and understand your messages."

"Wow," Yang laughed, the sound making Weiss smile uncontrollably. "Maybe I just shouldn't message you again then?"

"I mean it is bad," Weiss grinned happily knowing that the only thing that could stop Yang from messaging her was if the blonde knew she was in a meeting. "But I suppose I can deal with it."

"Mhm," Yang hummed amusedly, the sound of loud voices in the background coming from the other end of the call for a brief moment. "So what you up to?"

"I just finished the rest of my finance coursework and about to get ready for bed" Weiss answered and leant back, stretching her legs out. "How about you?"

"Nothing really," Yang replied and with a yawn. "Just hanging with Blake, Pyrrha, and Nora. They decided they're spending the night."

"Then why are you on the phone with me?"

"Because I wanna be hanging out with you too."

"Sap."

"Shut it, whiskers," Yang replied to the new voice, causing Weiss to giggle a little.

"Hello Blake," Weiss smiled, talking to the girl directly as she knew the faunus was likely listening anyway.

"Hey," she responded, her voice a little louder than before. "Thanks for looking after bonehead here last night."

"Hey!"

"It was my pleasure," Weiss laughed at her girlfriend's attempt at sounding insulted.
"I'm sure it was," the faunus replied, the inflection of her voice causing heat to rush to Weiss' face. "Can it, kitten," Yang interrupted in a falsely threatening tone. "And please go back in there before Nora eats all my chocolate strawberries again."

"Yeah, yeah," she heard Blake groan in response. "Later, Weiss."

"Bye," Weiss smiled and once again heard the brief loud noise that she now knew was likely Nora. "Please tell me you apologised for making her worry yesterday?"

"We're cool," Yang hummed and Weiss heard the running on a tap in the background. "She can't stay mad at me. She loves me too much."

"I guess," Weiss smiled at the blonde's assurance.

"Oh!" Yang exclaimed quickly as if she had suddenly been caught off guard. "Speaking of loving things, I think I may have left my favourite jacket down the side of your bed. Would you mind looking for me?"

"Sure, one moment," Weiss grinned as an idea popped into her head, causing her to move the Scroll away from her ear and opened up the camera only to freeze. She had only ever taken a handful of selfies before and wasn't too sure of how she should pose. Did she stick her tongue out or purse her lips like she saw so often online? Or did she do what she normally did and just smile? No, that wouldn't work, Yang would know a put on smile on sight.

"Weiss?" She heard faintly from her Scroll that still had the camera pointed directly at her. "Dammit," Weiss thought to herself and decided on something different all together. Grabbing the collar of the tan jacket, she pulled it over her nose to hide most of her lower face, only letting a small part of her mouth show that she was smiling. Squaring herself in frame properly, she snapped the picture and sent it to her girlfriend before putting the device back to her ear.

"What did you..." Yang replied, her voice slightly fainter as Weiss knew she was looking at the picture. "...Okay, now that is hot."

Unable to control herself, Weiss let out a loud laugh at the girl's clearly approving remark and felt a small heat rise up her cheeks.

"I hope you know that I am probably keeping this jacket?"

"As much as I like this picture and the idea of you wearing her when I ain't around, I'm afraid I can't let you keep her," Yang chuckled happily from the other end.

"Wow," she replied, mimicking Yang's earlier false upset. "You would choose a jacket over me?"

"There are very few things I would choose over you," Yang said cheerfully. "However, I suppose I can let you keep it until you are able to return it to me. You know... maybe the next night we spend together."

"Hmm," Weiss hummed as she pretended to think on the compromise. "But what would I have of yours to keep my warm after that?"

"Tell ya what," Yang replied after a moment where she seemed to actually be in thought. "When you return it, I will give you my second favourite jacket that actually looks like something you"
would wear. That way you can go out in it too."

"Have I seen it before?"

"Yup," Yang replied fondly. "The one I wore when we went for the walk on our first date."

"Hmm," Weiss hummed again, this time in genuine thought. She remembered the cream-coloured jacket that Yang was referring to and remembered thinking it was quite nice; and while it was a little different to what she would normally wear, she could certainly make it work with some of her outfits. "You love it as much as this one?"

"Almost."

"So I would be trading this amazing jacket that has been keeping me warm all day for one that is loved a little less and a night with you?"

"Pretty good trade, huh?"

"I suppose I would be partial to that trade," Weiss grinned happily as she was getting two amazing things for the price of one.

"Great," Yang replied and hummed gently. "So... Maybe we can do the trade this Friday?"

"Friday?" Weiss asked slowly, quite sure of what her girlfriend was getting at.

"Yeah," The boxer replied just as slowly. "I mean... If you want, that is? I can cook again."

Weiss took a moment to think on the offer. They had been acting rather brazenly as of late and Weiss knew that luck only lasted so long; but at the same time, she wanted it. She wanted to stay with Yang and be together and she was tired of having to suppress that desire.

"I want to," Weiss confirmed nervously and fiddled with the sleeve of Yang's jacket. "But are you sure? You still have everything with your mother and sister."

"I'm sure," Yang said gently, the assurance in her voice making Weiss smile. "Raven is next year's problem and I can figure that all out over the week, but Friday will just be for us."

Taking a pause, Weiss pulled her calendar towards her to check what she had that day and was happy to find that there were no meetings scheduled, which meant she would likely just be doing paperwork and planning. She could easily get ahead on that too and so long as she did, that would leave her able to take the day off.

"I can make Friday work," she said in a slight whisper as she closed her calendar.

"Great," the blonde answered and Weiss could hear the relief in her girlfriend's voice. "That's great. It's a date then."

"I am looking forward to it," Weiss smiled at the normally confident boxer's sudden bashfulness, even though she had begun to feel a little shy herself.

"Great," Yang repeated only to stop and take what sounded like a deep breath. "I mean, I am too. But I should go because Nora really will eat all my strawberries and then I will have to kill her."

"I understand," Weiss chuckled at the image of the two well-build woman fighting over chocolate-covered fruit. "I should get some sleep too. Goodnight, Yang."
"Night beautiful. Sweet dreams."

Reluctantly hanging up the phone, Weiss placed her head on the desk and let out a happy sigh. Not only had she just spent the night with Yang, and spent all day wearing the girl's favourite jacket and surrounded by her relaxing scent, they had now made plans to spend another night together. A night that Weiss was sure was going to end in something she had been wanting for weeks. Sure she was already feeling a little nervous about the day as she knew Yang had more experience, but there was also a certain level of anticipation that sparked at her nerves and caused a small amount of excitement within her.

So letting out yet another sigh, Weiss stood up to move over to her bed and climb under the covers, only taking off her girlfriend's jacket so that she could fold it slightly and bring it up to her chest. Due to her sheets having been changed already, the fabric was the only thing she had left in her house that smelled of Yang and she knew she would rather leave for her girlfriend's house right there and then than spend the night without it.

Chapter End Notes

So only a short one this time but I hope it was good enough to be considered short and sweet.

I did originally have different plans for this chapters and even wrote 7000 words of it; however as I was looking through it, I couldn't help but feel it was rushing certain things and just the pacing of it was really bad so I decided to scrap it and go with something a little more lighthearted as I am pretty sure we all know that there are going to be more angsty moment coming soon. I still have the chapter saved and you will likely see some of the things from it eventually but I feel, for now, they are better off left for later.

Also, I do feel obligated to tell you that chapters may once again be a little slower. I try to upload at least within 10 days where I can but have been struggling with some stress-related health issue lately and have decided to just take thing a little easier. The story is not stopping but there may be an extra couple days between uploads so yeah, please bare with me there.

Anyways, that's all from me, I hope you all enjoyed.
Family Talks

Chapter Summary

Yang seeks assurance and breaks a silence that has continued for too long

Chapter Notes

Important notes regarding the next chapter as the end of this one

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See the end of the chapter for more notes

Yang Xiao Long

"Hey nerd," Yang said with a smile as she stuck her head around Ruby's bedroom door.

The moment her head had entered the room, her nose was assaulted by the strong scent of grease that made her nose wrinkle slightly. As usual, the room looked like a bomb had exploded in the very centre of an electronics stores as half destroyed radios and cameras, among other things she couldn't make out, were left abandoned on the floor near one of the piles that line the room's walls. In the corner of the room was a stack of at least thirty old DVD players and tape recorders, each one missing buttons or their little screens.

In the other corner of the room stood a large, thick, wooden workbench that was equipped with all sorts of things such as a backboard that held the girl's most frequently used tools, numerous drawers, a clamp fitted to the side, Yang even knew that it was fully adjustable so that Ruby could always choose between either standing or sitting on the stool that stood in front of it, a stool in which Ruby was sat on. By the side of the table itself was an industrial vacuum cleaner that their father had bought for the girl after finally getting tired of having to replace their normal ones due to their tendency to break from sucking up screws.

On the other side of the room was what Yang called the living quarters of the room. Up against the far corner stood the horrendous monstrosity that was Zwei's bed. The huge metal arch had been welded together outside, under supervision of course, and covered in red and black paint. Along the side was some lights that spelled out the little corgi's name, that their dad had told Ruby to never light again after running up the electric bill by a significant margin, and Yang knew for a fact that Ruby had made the door remote controlled so that she could open and close it at will. In fact, quite a few things in the room such as the windows and the door bolt were controlled by two small devices that were screwed to the side of the workbench and to a post of the girl's bed. The bed itself was by far the most nondescript thing in the room and was simply there so the girl could have something to sleep on.

"Morning," the small redhead replied from her bench where she was disassembling something under a clear plastic case. "And nerds are awesome, most of your friends are nerds."
"That's because I'm too smart to hang out with dumb jocks," Yang grinned back happily. "Mind if I join you for a bit?"

"Sure," Ruby replied and shuffled over a little, using her free hand to pull out a spare bench from underneath the table.

"Great."

Shutting the door behind her, Yang made her way over to her sister, taking a second to look into the dog den to check on Zwei only to see a small amount of white fur as the corgi slept quietly in the darkness. Setting herself down next to her sister, she reached over to the small control panel and pressed the button labelled *Door*, the loud thunk from said door's direction telling Yang that the wide bolt attached at its side had slid into place and locked it. Yang also knew that the small light outside room would now be red to show that they shouldn't be disturbed as opposed to the green it had been when Yang had entered.

"So what you doing to that thing?" She asked her sister who was gently unscrewing what looked to be a hard drive.

"I need the read write head for that one," she replied and jutted her head towards another hard drive at her side. "Took a while to find this hard drive and its ruined but luckily the head is fine."

"Head?" Yang asked in confusion. While she had made an attempt to understand Ruby's interest a while ago, very little of it had managed to sink it.

"These," Ruby said and pointed to to a very thin triangle of metal that ended in three points hovering above a disk sized circle. "It converts..." Ruby began but took a quick glance at Yang's raised eyebrow and smiled. "It reads and writes the information on a disk. Its also very fragile."

"Ahh, gotcha," Yang hummed and watched carefully as her sister delicately pushed aside the rectangle she had been unscrewing, careful not to pull the wire that was attached. However shortly after, the girl began looking around her as if she was searching for something. "You lost something, rubes?"

"My head combs... oh," the tinkerer replied and pointed to Yang's side of the bench. Looking to her side, Yang saw she was pointing to a small wooden box that held a bunch of weird looking tools in different sizes, each one placed snugly in foam. "Can you pass me the uhhh... 3.5 inch? Yeah, the 3.5 inch and its pin."

"Sure," Yang replied, taking the numbered tool from the box along with the pin that rested beside and and held it out to her sister.

As Ruby took only the tool from her, Yang watched with held breath as the girl slowly pushed it onto the thin metal and positioned it gently over all three points. Afterwards, she reached out and took the pin and slipped it into a hole that was in the top of the tool.

"Thanks," Ruby said gratefully and pulled some tweezers from her t-shirts breast pocket. "You wanna help a little?"

"Absolutely," Yang replied eagerly. While she had never understood what the girl was doing, she had always enjoyed helping her where she could.

"Okay, you've washed your hands already, right?" The girl asked and Yang gave her a quick nod. "Good, now I dont have a holed desk so I need to gently turn this over. You see this orange bit here?" Ruby pointed to an orange oval at the opposite end of the metal triangle to the head and
Yang gave another brief nod. "Good, I need to pull the head back so you need to put your finger on that and hold it down. Not too hard, just enough the it doesn't shift after I move it."

"And if it does move?" Yang asked as she positioning her index finger where Ruby had indicated, a little concerned about what would happen if she screwed up. A concern that became a little more real as Ruby used her tweezers to remove a pin that had been near Yang's finger.

"The head might break and I will have to find another one of these since this type of drive wont accept heads from other makes," The girl replied as she carefully pulled back the metal, Yang pushing down a little harder as the girl let go. "Great, now I need the screw underneath to remove it and you might feel it slack a little but dont let it move, okay?"

Hearing the seriousness In her sisters voice, she gave a confident nod and Ruby began to gently turn the device, Yang making sure to keep her finger steady. Once it was on its side, the girl made quick work of the screw underneath and as her sister had said, Yang felt it slip a little but held it firm. Fortunately, there was only one screw and once it was undone, Ruby returned the drive to its correct position and place it on the board.

"Alright, just gotta get it out now," the girl whispered to herself and positioned her tweezers over the metal itself. Feeling her sister trying to raise the metal, Yang let her pressure ease up a little until the whole thing was finally clear of the Drive, the small rectangle and wire she had been working on earlier dangling from its side. With a smile, she held out the tweezers towards Yang while keeping it inside the plastic box. "Perfect, now just hold this carefully while I sort out the other Drive. Don't take it out of this shield, or breath on it, and do not touch the ends."

"I wont," Yang replied with a smile of her own as the took the offered tweezers and leaned in to inspect the extremely fragile looking tips in awe that something so small and delicate could do so much. "So, this is what reads the disk, huh?"

"Yup," The girl replied, clearly a little less tense since the piece was finally out. "And I will get ready for my appointment once this is done."

"Not what I came in here for but good to know," Yang grinned and watched as the girl took apart the other drive with a little less care than she had earlier. "Aren't you worried about breaking that."

"Nah, the heads the most delicate part and this ones already worn out. But I do need to be quick because even a small amount of dust can screw up the drive," She replied and quickly stripped away a rectangle that was similar to the one dangling from Yang's piece. "So what did you come in here for?"

"I can't have just wanted to spent the morning with my sister?" Yang chuckled but earned a jovial shake of the girl's head in return.

"You hate my room," she smiled back and pulled back the arm herself without the tool she had used earlier, though this time she simply turned the device over in her hands to get to the screw underneath.

"True. Its an assault on the senses," Yang laughed and earned a very sharp look from her sister towards to tweezers. "Sorry. You're right though, there is something I wanted to talk to you about."

"Alright," The girl replied and flipped the drive back over and removed the head. "Mind if I finish this first?"

"Well I ain't gunna stop your nerdery now, am I?" Yang teased as Ruby set the second Drive back
on the board and took the tweezers back, gently slipping the piece of metal back into position and signalling for Yang to put her finger back where it was. "You could have easily done this by yourself though, right?"

"Yup" Ruby answered and turned the hard-drive back over to do the screw underneath, all of her delicate care returning as she did. "But like I said, read write heads are super fragile and I really don't want to spend weeks looking for another one of these. Again."

"I guess," Yang replied and let her finger be replaced by Ruby's once the drive was placed back on the board.

Watching as Ruby delicately repeated each of her previous steps in reversed, Yang took a moment to watch how focused she was. While she always joked about hating the girl's room, Yang actually loved it in a way as it was one of the very few places where Ruby actually felt confident. Usually the girl was a little on edge in almost every other place she went, even if it was just downstairs, and while she was able to function normally, Yang knew that it stressed her sister out a little; but in her room surrounded by things she could easily work out, that she found predictable, the girl was actually very relaxed.

"There we go, just gotta test it," Ruby said happily and screw the lid back on before leaning down to pull open a drawer under her desk that had a selection of old laptops set up like files in a cabinet. Running her thumb over them, she picked out a very beat up looking one and brought it up to the desk. "So what did you wanna talk about?"

"Oh yeah," Yang said, having been too focused on the fact that Ruby owned around seven laptop from what she had counted, though she knew they probably all only half worked and had a single purpose for the girl. Sure enough, Yang watched as the girl removed the battery and slid off the already unscrewed back of her selected laptop to see that there was a space exactly where Yang assumed a hard drive would normally be. "You know I have always tried my best to be open with you, right?"

"Yup," Ruby replied and while she seemed entirely focused on what she was doing, Yang knew she was paying attention.

"Good," Yang smiled at having at least succeeded in that regard. "And I don't wanna stop that now, so there is something big you need to know."

"Is it about that falling out you had with dad a couple of days ago?" Ruby asked carefully. The girl thought highly of their father and hated it when Yang and Tai fought so while it was only a minor falling out, the discomfort in her sisters voice wasn't a surprised to Yang at all.

"Yeah," Yang confirmed and placed a hand on her sister's shoulder to get her attention. "Rubes, do you remember that woman who stopped by on my thirteenth and argued with dad and Qrow?"

"You mean Raven? Uncle Qrow's sister?"

"Yeah," Yang nodded, unsurprised that Ruby would know her name since she was so close with their uncle. "You know that she's also my birth mom too, right?"

"Yup," Ruby nodded gently.

"Good," Yang nodded slowly. She was fairly certain Ruby had already known that but she was glad that she wouldn't have to explain that fully nonetheless. "Well, it turns out that she's been in Vale for a month and has been wanting to see me."
"Oh," Ruby breathed and paused her reattachment of the battery.

"Look, rubes," Yang said, letting her hand drift down to the girl's arm and applying a small amount of pressure to get her full attention. "I'm not gunna lie to you, I want to see her; but not if it's gunna cause problems between us. You are the most important person in my life and if are not okay with it then I will throw away her number without regret and never look back, okay?"

As she looked into silver eyes, she could see the thoughts passing by her sister's mind and waited patiently for the girl's reply. She knew that Ruby had a very real fear of losing people she loved due to her struggle of getting close to them in the first place, so to have her own sister ask if she was okay with her getting to know a mother that had abandoned her and potentially lose a special connection had to worry the girl in some way.

"I love mom," Ruby replied after a couple of moments, the randomness of the statement taking Yang off guard for a second. "And if I ever got the chance to spend just one more day with her, there's nothing that would stop me."

Yang listened intently as the girl talked and slowly worked her way around to her point.

"I can never have that, but I know how much I want it. So it wouldn't be right for me to not let you get to know Raven. If you want to see her then I am okay with it."

Nodding slowly at the girl, Yang gently pulled her into a small hug that was only left unreturned due to the fact Ruby was still holding a partially dismantled laptop.

"Are you sure?" She whispered as she wrapped her arm around the girl's shoulder. "Because you know I would do it for you."

"I'm sure," Ruby replied softly as she let herself lean into the hug as much as she could.

"Thank you," Yang smiled in relief and finally let the girl go free. "And just so you know, nothing will change okay. Summer will still always be my mom, you will always be the first thing in my life, and everything we do like watching the tapes on Christmas and visiting mom's grave on her birthday, none of that's going to stop."

"I know," Ruby smiled and finished attaching her battery. "I didn't think it would."

"Good," Yang grinned and bumped her sister's shoulder slightly with her fist. "Now why don't you hurry up and show your dumb big sister if all your genius paid off because I still need to have a word with dad before your assessment."

With a grin of her own, Ruby gave a small nod and pressed the power button on her laptop. As they waited for it to load up, Yang put her arm back around Ruby's shoulder and thought on just how lucky she was to have her as a sister.

* *

Stepping down from the final step of the stairs, Yang peaked around the banister to check if her father was awake and thankfully found the door to his bedroom open, meaning he was likely already in the kitchen getting breakfast. While they had been talking a little, a majority of it had been passing small talk and though she had been meaning to talk to him properly ever since she'd returned from Weiss', there had been something stopping her. Maybe it was the fact she was still a little annoyed he had hid the truth from her for so long, or that she wanted to discuss things with Ruby first, but she knew she couldn't allow the silence to go on any longer; so taking a deep breath, Yang made her way towards the kitchen.
As she entered the cold tiled room, she immediately saw her father sat at the table eating a bowl of cereal and noted that he had looked better. Dark rings circled his vacant eyes and thin stubble lined his jaw, a clear sign that he hadn't been sleeping and that he was once again forgetting to maintain his appearance. Fortunately, he had taken the day off work to take Ruby for her assessment and would hopefully be able to get some rest when they got back from it; but even still, Yang couldn't help but feel a little bad.

While Raven was a difficult area for her she also understood that there was a lot she didn't know that had happened between her father and the woman, things that made a shadow of shame pass across the man's eyes at the mention of her name. It certainly didn't help the man's mood that Yang had been avoiding him since he had told her as Yang was well aware that the feeling of creating distance between him and her was something that always got him down when it happened.

"Morning, dad," Yang said softly as she walked slowly up to the counter and pulled out a bowl and a box of cereal.

"Morning, fireball," he replied hoarsely, his voice rough from the lack of use. "Is Ruby getting ready?"

"Yeah," she answered as she pulled the milk from the fridge and pour it onto her cereal. "She was just finishing up something with a hard drive."

"Ahh, that again," He hummed quietly and put a spoon of food into his mouth. "She get it working this time?"

"I think so, she seemed happy with it at least," Yang smiled and picked up her bowl, making her way over to the table to sit opposite her father.

As she sat down, the man's eyes locked onto her for a second and his back straightened slightly. The whole week she had chosen to eat her breakfast in whatever room her father wasn't in, so for her to sit at the table with him was a clear indication to the man that she was finally willing to talk.

"That's good," He whispered and Yang didn't know if he was talking about her choice in seating or Ruby's apparent triumph.

"Yeah," Yang replied noncommittally and swirled her cereal around to get it totally covered. "You look tired?"

"Nah," He scoffed, a clear attempt to make it seem like she was misreading it. "I'm fine."

Shaking her head slightly at her father, Yang placed a small amount of cereal into her mouth and let the awkward silence stretch on for a little longer. However after three more mouthfuls, Yang let out a small sigh and finally addressed the issue.

"I'm sorry," She said, looking at her bowl as she swirled its contents once again. "For being so distant lately."

"It's fine," the man sighed after he swallowed his own food. "It's not like I didn't expect you to be angry at me."

"I wasn't angry," she sighed back and gently rested her spoon against the ceramic. "I was... am tired of not being treated like an adult. Not when I've already done more than enough to earn at least that."

"It was never about how adult I thought you were, Yang," the man groaned and copied her,
pushing the bowl away slightly. "I just know how Raven is better than most and I didn't want to tell you in case she decided to just skip town anyway."

"I understand that but I still deserved to know," Yang replied calmly and looked up at her father's eyes. "I don't know what I would have done if she had just randomly walked into the store or something else without time for me to prepare. I might have ruined my chance to talk to her, because you hadn't told me there was one. Then I would have been angry."

"I know," he said with a nod of his head. "I guess I'm just not too keen on having Raven involved with us again; but you're right, I shouldn't have risked you losing your chance to meet her."

"She doesn't have to be involved with you, you know?" Yang said softly and picked up her spoon again. "I can just stick to meeting her away from the house."

"No," he said adamantly, shaking his head slightly. "I don't want you to feel like you need to hide a part of your life from me."

"If you're sure," Yang replied and received a small nod as his response.

As she spooned a small amount of food into her mouth, Yang contemplated asking the question that was on her mind; a question she had been wondering for as long as she had noticed how the mention of Raven's name affected her father. After a couple of seconds she finally decided that she needed to ask it, even if the reply she got was only vague at best.

"Can I ask?" She said carefully and received a raised eyebrow from the man. "Do you know why she left? I mean... it seems like something bad happened between you."

Just as she always did, Yang saw the flicker of shame in her father's eye for a brief moment before he looked down at his own bowl. Understanding his silence as she had never really expected an answer, Yang gave a short nod of her own but stopped abruptly when his rough voice reached her ears.

"Raven and Qrow had a very... difficult childhood," he said quietly and reached out to run his finger across the rim of his bowl. "Their father was... well let's just say abusive and leave it at that... but everything they went through left them both with a lot of trust issue. Raven worse than Qrow. Even though we became friends in freshman year, it took until our junior year for her to open up to us about anything, but eventually she did. She came to trust us, and w... I betrayed her."

"How?" Yang asked, her curiosity getting the better of her but this time receiving a strong shake of the man's head in return. "Sorry."

"How doesn't matter," He said and picked up his bowl as he stood and took it to the sink. "All that matters is I did; and because of that, you never got to know her."

"No," Yang said firmly and stood up herself. There had been a great many things she had blamed her father for over the years, but aside from the most recent events, she had never once blamed him for Raven leaving. "You may have done something that made her leave, but she is to blame for me not knowing her. She could have stopped by, or made an effort, or she even could have raised me instead of leaving me on the doorstep and walking away. Those things are on her, not you."

"Maybe," He sighed and started to wash up his plate. "But there were things I could have done differently after she left you with me."

"You're not the only one who's made mistakes, dad," She said as she walked over and leant against the counter next to him. "We just need to begin moving past them now and start being more open
with each other, okay?"

"I promise to start treating you with the respect you've earned," He said with a reassuring smile, a
smile that Yang returned and shook her head as his voice once again became a little more serious.
"So I take it you're definitely going to contact her then?"

"I have too," Yang said with a nod, grabbing a nearby towel and holding her hand out for the bowl
her father had just finished washing. "Even if it's just to find out why she never made the effort."

"And I'm guessing you already talked to your sister?"

"Just now," Yang confirmed as she took the dish from him and began to dry it. "But I wont be
doing it until the new year."

"Well then, I should probably warn you," He sighed and dried his hands on the bottom of Yang's
towel. "Raven is complicated, you may go in wanting a relationship with her and you may even get
it, but that relationship will be difficult to maintain. Take it from someone who knows first hand."

Taking a second to look into her father's eyes, Yang saw that the man was dead serious and gave
him an understanding nod. "I will keep that in mind."

"Good," he hummed quietly. "Now, shouldn't you go and get ready for college?"

"I should," Yang sighed and threw the towel aside, reaching up to put the bowl away. "But there is
something else I wanted to talk to you about. A favour actually."

"I'm probably going to regret asking, but what is it?"

"Well," Yang said hesitantly. "I was kinda hoping I could ask if you and Ruby could stay at
Qrow's on Friday?"

Raising his eyebrow at her, Tai gave her a very suspicious look and made his way over to his
abandoned seat at that table.

"Can I ask why?" He said curiously as he turned to face her. "And please do no say a party,
because I remember the state you left the house in last time I went away for the weekend."

"I cleaned it up," Yang replied and made her way back over to the table where her cereal was still
waiting for her; albeit a little mushy. "But no, nothing like that."

"Then?"

Taking a second to think how to say it, Yang put a spoon of the now horrible mush into her mouth
only to grimace and pushed the rest of the bowl away. While she was fairly certain her father knew
she was sexually active, they had never really had the conversation about it and everyone she had
been with had been either out of the house or against her fathers rules. However, that wasn't what
she wanted for Friday, for it to be a hushed thing in a full house; so in the new promise of
openness, she let out a sigh and steeled herself.

"Well," She breathed and lightly scratched the table at the awkward conversation that she knew
was about to occur. "Me and Weiss have been together for a while now, and things are pretty
serious. But we haven't really..."

"Oh," He whispered, his eyes widening as the realisation of what Yang was talking about hit him.
“Yeah,” Yang nodded, the only reason she was at all embarrassed being that it was her father she was talking to. "But she's coming over on Friday and I would just... really like to have the house to ourselves."

"R-Right," her father stuttered and entwine his fingers together. "I'm not going to pretend I don't know you've been... Well, that... But are you sure you and Weiss are ready for that step? Not to speak out of turn but from what I understand, there's a lot of complicated things about your relationship."

"There is," Yang admitted and played with the spoon of her discarded food in an attempt to distract herself. "But not this. I know you have your rule and stuff but there is nowhere else we could feel comfortable and I just want this to be right, dad."

Looking up from the spinning metal, Yang met her father's eyes. Despite their tiredness, it was clear he was trying to see how serious she was and after what had to have been almost a minute, he finally gave a small nod.

"Okay," He breathed in defeat and let his hands unravel from themselves. "If you and Weiss really are ready for that step, then I can stay at Qrow's with Ruby."

"Really?” Yang asked happily, feeling a sense of relief rush through her. "Thank you."

"Yes well, like you made clear," He groaned and leant back in his chair. "You're an adult now, and so is Weiss. You are both capable of making your own decisions but please at least assure me you will both be safe. However uhh... however that works for two women."

"I will," Yang chuckled at her father's discomfort.

She didn't blame him for not being aware as dams were rarely used anyway and, though she did own some, they likely wouldn't be used Friday as she knew she was clean and that Weiss almost certainly was; however she would definitely still bring it up to the girl.

"Good," Tai nodded and stood up to stretch his back. "But we should both get ready to go. Your class is soon and Ruby will likely want something to eat on the way to her assessment."

"Text me when she's done?" She said and raised out of her chair, passing her bowl to her father who had pointed towards it.

"Don't I always."

"And remember, cookies are not breakfast," She said firmly as she made her way towards the kitchen door, hearing a mumbled 'Okay' in return.

With a final smile to her dad, Yang left the room and typed a quick message to Weiss telling her that they were all set for Friday. Hitting send, she slipped the device back into her pocket and went to get dressed, her thoughts once again turning back to what she could cook for them.

Chapter End Notes

So really not much to say here. This chapter was mainly to set up some things and was actually finished nearly a week ago as quite a lot of it was already planned out, however I held off because I didn't want to just put it up and make you wait like 3-4
weeks for the next chapter. And that is the chapter I really want to talk about here.

So first things first, it is that chapter; However the very important thing is that I have absolutely no idea when it will be up. It could be in 3 days, it could be in 3 weeks... I honestly don't know as I am paying very close attention to it and trying to make sure it is as good as I can possibly make it. As of writing this, I do have the rough draft finished and it currently stands at 13k words but its still got to go through edits, I need to flush out the text some more and there are a few scenes I'm contemplating adding, so the only thing I can tell you is that it will be a long one and will absolutely put this story to an E rating. The scene that boosts it can be skipped without missing anything; but yeah, I suppose you could count this as your warning of that.

But that's it for me. As usual, I hope you enjoyed and please let me know what you think.
Their First Time

Chapter Summary

Weiss and Yang finally attempt to take that next step

Chapter Notes

Huge shout-out to ToxicExotic for all the editing help. He is the reason you are getting this so soon so please give him some love.

Warning: Explicit sexual content ahead

Disclaimer: All characters belong to Rooster Teeth Productions

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Weiss Schnee

"Where are you?’’ Weiss mumbled to herself as she slid her clothes along the rack in search of a certain pair of jeans she knew she owned.

Her annoyance grew as she slid each pair of jeans in her black section aside. She contemplated whether or not they had been thrown away but quickly tossed that idea out. The staff would never throw away a piece of her clothing unless it was ripped or she ordered it herself; and even though she very rarely wore black, she was absolutely certain she had never given such an order. However just as she was thinking of giving up and settling for another pair, her eyes caught sight of the twisted hook of a hanger she had missed and quickly pulled it free.

"Finally,'’ she sighed happily as she looked upon the faded black jeans.

Normally she would have chosen one of her skirts as they were what she always felt more comfortable in, but due to the winter chill having finally descended upon them, she was having to settle for her jeans as of late. Although the idea of wearing the pair she was holding didn't bother her at all as it was mainly to go along with Yang's jacket that she would be wearing tomorrow, so with a small smile on her face she ran her hand over the black fabric and inspected the white snowflakes that wrapped around the waist and fell gently down the right leg. They were the biggest commonality among her all of her clothes as they typically adorned each of her garments and after another second of consideration, she felt confident that she had chosen the right pair and smiled to herself as she exited her closet to pack them away.

Lost in thought and smiling to herself, Weiss didn't notice the white-haired woman that was sitting on her bed gently running her hand over the pale blue t-shirt that she was going to be changing into soon. Seeing the woman, she stopped in her tracks and noticed the sad smile on her mother's lips as her fingers traced each snowflake.

"I remember when you purchased this top,” she said quietly, the mournful tone and the very same
memory making Weiss cast her gaze to the floor. "You pulled me into a store to avoid the rain and we spent an hour searching the shelves until the rain stopped. Of all the clothes we saw, this was the one I liked the most."

"I know. That is why I bought it," Weiss admitted quietly as she looked back up to see her mother staring at her with curious eyes.

It wasn't hard to recall how she knew her mother had loved it since that day had been one of the very few times in the past few years the woman had been completely sober. It had been during the summer when her mother had had a meeting in town with an old associate, Weiss had known then that those chances rarely came around and had happily accepted her mother's offer to join her. However the person they were meeting had cancelled last minute and as they had been walking down the street to find somewhere to eat, a sudden rain shower had taken them by surprise and they had both ran into a nearby store to escape it. Weiss loved that memory as it was one of the very few recent ones that had been made.

"You said it reminded you of a top grandfather bought you as a girl."

"It does," She said with a small smile and slowly stood up, the act not adding much to the woman's height and once again reminded her that she had been the only one in the family to inherit her mothers short stature. "Are you going somewhere?"

"Oh," Weiss replied as the question pulled her from her thoughts of just how alike her and her mother looked and noticed her mother pointing towards the partially-packed bag that was on her bed. "Yes, I have some coursework I wish to finish before we break for Christmas and Headmistress Goodwitch has given me permission to access the library for the night so I will be staying in one of Beacon's spare dorm rooms tonight."

While Weiss had no problem with lying to her father, it always hurt to lie to her mother so the feeling of guilt that rose within her was nothing new. For all the problems they had, she still loved her mother and the idea that she was contributing to the distance between them rather than attempting to close it hurt her heart more than any harsh vitriol that her father could throw at her.

"I do not recall Miss Goodwitch ever being so lenient," her mother said absent-mindedly as she took a peek inside the bag, though Weiss could have swore there was an undertone to the statement that she just couldn't place. Fortunately Yang's jacket was still in her drawer so there was no risk of her mother seeing something she shouldn't.

"She understands that I have been rather busy with the company," Weiss lied again and walked forward to place the folded jeans she was still holding inside.

"Hmm," her mother hummed and raised her head, her pale blue eyes catching Weiss' and sending a shiver through her at just how focused they were for a moment.

She knew the look, it was the steady piercing gaze that had caught her out on so many lies as a child and though she was caught off guard by it, Weiss quickly tried her best to keep her own gaze steady and impassive to mask her lie. Unfortunately, though the moment passed and the woman looked away with a small nod as she made her way towards the door, a large feeling of guilt still arose within Weiss for keeping the distance intact once again.

"Very well," she said as she placed her hand on the ajar door and pulled it open. "I shall inform your father, should he ask."

"Thank you," Weiss smiled back despite the guilt, thankful that she would not have to be the one to
talk to her father.

"And please do not work yourself too hard," She added as she made to leave, her head turning and giving her a final surveying glance. "Your music has sounded tired as of late."

*Her music*? Weiss scowled to herself as the woman turned and left; but once she had, the weight of those words hit her. While she certainly knew her playing would have been audible for anyone in the west wing, to anyone further away it would have likely been nothing more than muffled noise. Had her mother been listening to her play? She must have been to be able to discern that she had indeed been tired from all the extra hours she had been pulling. But her mother had not ventured into that side of the house in years and even if she had, the copious amount of alcohol she consumed usually rendered her unable to even comprehend most questions let alone the intricate complexities of music. As she thought on it, the remark her brother had made over a week ago came to her mind.

*Has Mother really been drinking less?* She thought to herself as she walked to the door and locked it. In truth, she did not know. Her mother's drinking habit had become such a certainty in her life that she had stopped watching, finding it easy to look away than watch the once brilliant woman continue to destroy herself; but maybe she shouldn't have, maybe she should have been paying attention as the recent conversation certainly hinted that there may have been things she had missed.

*Could I even help?* Weiss questioned as she walked over to her drawers and pulled out her towel. She wasn't an idiot and knew the source of her mother's problem, it was the same as hers and Winter's, the same source of the company's problems. But what could she do? She could be there for the woman like Winter had been for her? But would that even help? It wasn't like she could do anything to stop her father. Things could be changed in the company, shareholders caring about public perception gave her the room fix everything he had screwed up; but at home, in his house. She was powerless, and she hated it.

*But Winter wasn't,* she sighed and removed her clothes and entered her bathroom to get ready for her date with Yang. Winter had escaped and even flourished without their fathers aid. Maybe she could provide some help, advise her with something she could do to help their mother. Knowing it couldn't hurt to ask, Weiss stepped under the water and decided to use her time before the date to think on how best she could ask Winter for the help she needed.

*

She stood in front of the door to Yang's house, hesitant to knock, before gathering the courage to do so. Weiss closed her eyes and took in a deep breath as she reached out to knock on the door, the sound of her knuckles striking the wood almost as loud as the blood the she could hear pumping in her ears. However even through her nerves, a smile was brought to her face as she heard stumbling on the other side of the door followed by what she assumed was a Mistralian obscenity. Opening her eyes as the door opened, Weiss found herself gazing on the breathless, shining beauty that was Yang Xiao Long.

Dressed in a lovely yellow shirt and pair of simple blue jeans, Weiss stood there and just admired her girlfriend as she stood framed by the light of the house. Unfortunately Weiss had been unable to visit the coffee shop for over a week, so to see Yang with her hair up again was a welcome sight.

"Hi," the girl breathed with a smile and put a hand on her side where her shirt was slightly wrinkled.

"Are you okay?" Weiss chuckled softly at the girl's eagerness.
"Yeah, just caught myself on something is all," she smiled happily and waved the hand that had been going to her side. "Though I swear I have no idea how that desk got there."

"If you say so," Weiss laughed and took a step forward to press her hand lightly against Yang's side. "But are you sure you did not hurt yourself?"

"Yup," the girl grinned and and stepped back to allow Weiss to enter the house. "Anyway, come on in, it's snowing out there."

"Keep up the puns and I may just Yang out here instead," Weiss smiled playfully and stepped over the threshold so that Yang could shut the door. Once it was shut, the blonde turned around and smiled down at her. "You look lovely."

"I hope so," Yang chuckled and smoothed out her clothes. "This is my best shirt. You look amazing too... but you always do so..."

Looking up into her girlfriend's eyes, Weiss saw that it wasn't eagerness that was causing Yang to stumble around, but nerves. Discovering that, Weiss suddenly found her own nervousness calm slightly at the knowledge that Yang was just as anxious.

"Thank you," Weiss smiled shyly, taking off her coat to reveal a thin white top with small blue snowflakes on it which had Yang fumbling as Weiss handed the thick blue material and her bag to the blonde. Missing the jacket on her first attempt and flustering a little, Yang looked up from Weiss' thin top and tried for the jacket again, that time succeeding and quickly placing them in a nearby cupboard.

"Oh!" Yang replied and turned back around. "Just a warning before we go in there, dad and Ruby have been out all day so Zwei is downstairs. You're okay with dogs, right?"

"I am fine with dogs that do not bite," Weiss said cautiously, her eyes glancing at the closed door that led to the front room. "You said he is a corgi, correct?"

"Yeah but he may as well be toothless," Yang grinned and walked over to place her hand to the doorknob. "But he does get very lick-happy with new people so just shove him away with your foot or something if he bugs you."

"Noted," Weiss chuckled and gave the blonde a nod to say she was ready.

With a small smile Yang pushed the door open and before Weiss could even make out the living room, a small blur of black and white shot out of the crack and launched itself at Weiss' legs. After watching him run around her legs for a few moments, Weiss dropped to her knees and found herself eye-to-eye with the small hound whose black and white fur mixed together into a grey in some places to make him look older than he likely was. Gently reaching out, she smiled to herself as he sniffed her fingers and immediately stuck out his tongue to lick them. Chuckling slightly, she moved her hand and ruffled the soft black fur on his back.

"Aww," Weiss cooed inadvertently and gave the little corgi a scratch behind the ear, his eyes closing and his head leaning further into the fussing.

While Weiss had never owned a dog, she has always loved them. The idea of a companion who would always be by your side was something she had dreamed of as a girl but unfortunately her father's attitude toward animals was the same as everyone else. If they did nothing for him, then they were not worth his time.

"I think he likes you."
"He is rather cute himself," Weiss admitted as she stood back up, the corgi returning to sniffing around her legs. "I can see why Ruby kept him."

"To be fair, he could've bit her and she still would've kept him," Yang laughed and walked through the door into the front room. "Anyway, I should continue with dinner, You can... Uhh, watch TV or something if you want?"

"Or I could help you?" Weiss replied as she arched an eyebrow and followed her with a smile, carefully stepping over Zwei as he made to follow them both.

"H-Help?" Yang asked, the surprise in her voice wiping out the nerves momentarily as one of her eyebrows shot up. "Have you ever... You know, cooked before?"

"Hmm," Weiss hummed thoughtfully, trying her best to maintain her confidence so that they didn't fall back into their earlier awkwardness. "No, but I suppose if a dolt like you can do it then it cannot be that hard."

"Oh really?" Yang laughed as they walked through Yang's living room to the kitchen. The plain decoration caught her slightly off guard as it was so close Christmas that she had assumed Yang would have started decorating already. "Well then princess, I remember you said you do fencing so let's see how you handle a knife."

"You know fencing does not involve knives, right?" Weiss chuckled, pulling her attention back to the blonde as they entered the kitchen. "Nor are the foils sharp."

"So what's the point of them?" Yang grinned as she replied and pulled a yellow apron off the table before reaching into the cupboard and pulling out a bright red one that she passed to Weiss, who was still shaking her head at the terrible pun. "Anyways, put this on and wash your hands."

Taking the red apron that she assumed was Ruby's, she quickly threw it over her head and tied it around her before thoroughly washing her hands. Once she was done, she turned around to see Yang pulling ingredients from the fridge and cupboard and setting them on the side.

"So what are we cooking?"

"Nothing that complicated," Yang replied as she counted what looked to be small leeks and gave a short nod to herself. "It's just some ginger scallion noodles."

"Well," Weiss smiled and leant against the counter as she waited for Yang to finished setting everything up. "You have never failed to make something delicious so it sounds good."

As the blonde pulled a cutting board out from a drawer under the sink, Yang flashed her a single smile and Weiss instantly felt her face heat up a little. While she had always loved Yang's smiles in general, the little smiles were without a doubt her favourite as they were always so genuine; each one carrying the full force of the blonde happiness at that moment.

"Well I'm glad a dolt like me can impress," the girl grinned and pulled a sharp knife from the knife rack, holding it by the blade as she held it out. "Now, let see if you can impress me by cutting the scallions properly."

"Okay..." Weiss replied and stepped forward, her confidence suddenly leaving her the moment the knife touched her hand and she remembered she had no idea what she was doing. "Umm... How do you want me to I cut them?"

"Julienne will be fine," The girl replied smugly and leant back against the fridge, her eyes shifting
expectantly to the green onions on the board.

"Right," Weiss replied and hovered the knife over one of the green onions and prepared to cut it.

*Matchsticks*, she thought to herself and repositioned the vegetable to that she could study it better and the only thing she was certain of was that she needed to cut off the little bulb at the bottom; so hovering her knife over the white knot, she pressed down lightly. She had no idea why she was surprised but the knife slid through it like butter and Weiss quickly scraped it aside. However, all of her confident failed her as she had no idea what she had to do next so the only thing she could do was take a stab in the dark. Lining her blade up with the length of the onion, she gently pressed down again and cut through it. Almost instantly, she knew she had screwed up and looking to her side, she saw that Yang yang a huge smile on her face as she tried not to laugh.

"Okay," Weiss sighed in defeat as she laid the knife down on the cutting board to avoid any more embarrassment. "I have no idea what I am doing."

"Oh I know," Yang chuckled while still trying her best not to laugh. "But your first cut was right at least."

Apparently unable to contain it any longer, she picked up the long green string and let and a short humorous laugh that, despite her embarrassment, had Weiss smiling as she shook her head. Putting her hand on her hip, Weiss waited for Yang to finish and once she finally did, she gave a quick roll of her eyes at her.

"Here, let me show you," Yang chuckled and picked up the knife and repositioned the onion Weiss hand been working on. "You cut the bulb off fine but afterwards you cut it into three two-inch pieces and then do what you just did."

As Yang spoke, she cut the leak into the three easy to handle rectangles and stacked them on top of each other before effortless sliding the blade through the pieces lengthwise. At first her movements were slow so that Weiss could see but they quickly picked up pace and soon became faster than Weiss would ever be capable of. Once she was finished, all that remained was a pile of thin strings of onion.

"Best for you to do one piece at a time so you don't cut your fingers off," She smiled and place the knife back down. "And keep your fingertips that are holding the onion curled under so you don't cut yourself, okay?"

With a quick nod to the blonde, Weiss picked back up the knife and pulled another scallion towards herself and tried her best to mimic what Yang had done. Fortunately, while her first attempt produced more wooden beams than matchsticks, her second attempt fared far better.

"There ya go," Yang smiled and leaned in give her a quick kiss on the cheek. "You're gonna be a pro in no time, now I'm gonna go sort the chicken out while you take care of that and when you're done I'll show you what to do with the chillies."

"Alright," Weiss replied and continued her work as Yang pulled another knife from the rack and placed some wrapped chicken on the side and began to work on it.

After a nearly ten minutes, Weiss had finally finished cutting both the scallions and the chillies while Yang had already begun to cook the thin slices of chicken she had prepared. In seconds the room had begun to be filled with the wonderful smell of cooking meat and fresh vegetables and with nothing else to do, Weiss leant back against the fridge door and watched her girlfriend tend to the chicken inside the large metal wok.
Once again, it struck her just how much she loved the simplicity of hanging out in the kitchen and watching Yang cook. Her whole life, the act of cooking had gone on in another room while she had simply waited for the food to be bought to her; but as she watched Yang, even as she helped a little, she couldn't help but notice the smile that had repeatedly painted itself on her face. Weiss didn't know whether it was simply because it was Yang or whether it was because it was such a simple task that made her feel normal, though she guessed it was a little of both.

"Enjoying the view?" Yang chuckled as she wiped her forehead on the towel over her shoulder.

"Maybe," Weiss smiled at the blonde, keeping her tone a little dismissive as she made a show of reluctantly pulling her eyes away from the blonde's backside that was framed nicely by her jeans.

"Hmm," She replied teasingly and pointed to a bowl near Weiss. "Like seeing me all hot and bothered, huh?"

Yes, Weiss thought to herself as she picked up the bowl and walked over to give it too her. However before she handed it over, Weiss raised herself onto her toes and pressed her lips against Yang's for a second. Feeling Yang hum happily, Weiss grinned to herself and pulled away, passing Yang the bowl as she did.

"I'll take that as a yes," the blonde smirked and begun to scoop the chicken out of the wok and into the bowl. "But if that's what I get every time I cook for you then you should come over more."

"Don't tempt me," she smiled and shook her head as she watched Yang turn on the hot water tap and wait for it to heat up before placing the wok underneath for a few seconds. "You know I actually do prefer being here, right?"

"Really?" Yang replied as she gently wiped down the large steel pan dish and gave her a concerned look. "Something happening at home?"

"Other than my father being on a warpath ever since I told him Winter was coming to Vale?" Weiss sighed as she remembered the way her mother had winced when her father had slammed his fist against the table upon hearing the news. "My mother has been acting rather strange lately."

"In what way?" Yang asked and put a couple spoons of oil into the wok along with what looked to Weiss like yellow sweets.

"I am not sure," Weiss said honestly and moved her chopped vegetables closer to stove as Yang pointed to them. "She just seems a little... sharper than usual. It kind of reminds me of how I remember her being when I was a kid."

"Is that a bad thing?" Yang question and stirred the two things together.

"No," Weiss replied cautiously after a couple of seconds. "Whitley did say he thinks Mother has been drinking less lately but..." Weiss paused, sure that what she wanted to say would make her sound a little paranoid.

"But?"

"I just cannot shake the feeling that she has been watching me," Weiss admitted with a slight shrug as Yang picked up the board and tipped its entire contents into the pan.

"How come?" she asked and begun to stir the new ingredients. "You think she suspects something?"
"I doubt it," Weiss shook her head, though the thought had definitely occurred to her too. "But I remember my mother being an especially sharp woman, at times she was even more perceptive than Father, so if Whitley is right about Mother not drinking as much then I may have to be a little more cautious."

"Would it be a bad thing?" Yang asked, the hope in her voice clear and she pulled the lid of a pan of noodles she had drained while Weiss was chopping the food and began to spoon them into the wok. "I mean, I know your dad's gonna freak but you still haven't told me about how your mom and brother will take us being together?"

"Well," Weiss hummed knowing full well how her brother would take it. "My brother will take it much like my father will, though he will mainly just be an annoyance to me; as for my mother, I really do not know. She was never one to judge others but that was a long time ago."

"I see," The girl said with a nod, adding what Weiss recognised as soy sauce and pouring the chicken back into it while she continued to stir. "So there is a good chance she will be okay with it?"

"Probably," Weiss nodded though she was still genuinely unsure. While the woman she knew as a child might not have cared, that woman hadn't been present for a long time and their relationship had become so estranged that she had no idea what to expect anymore.

"Well, I guess only time will tell then," Yang shrugged and pointed to a cupboard that Weiss remembered held the plates and bowls. "You wanna grab the dishes?"

Pulling open the cupboard and grabbing two bowls, Weiss thought and how Yang had taken the news. While Weiss had never been especially concerned about how her mother would react, there had always been the slight hesitancy nonetheless; so to see Yang look at the situation and take it in a more positive direction gave Weiss a little hope that maybe Yang was right.

"True," she smiled and placed a quick kiss on girl's cheek before putting the bowls next her. "But tonight is just about us."

"I can get behind that," the blonde grinned happily and began to transfer large portions of delicious smelling food into each bowl.

"Good," Weiss smiled approvingly, picking up the drinks that Yang had poured for them while they were cooking and turning to leave the kitchen.

* * *

There were plenty of things Weiss loved about Yang's house like the warmth it seemed to possess, like every room had a blazing fire in its centre, or the homey feel that seeped for every corner of the rooms; but the thing she loved the most was that unlike her own house, she was actually able to relax there. There was no Whitley to knock at her door and bother her with his incessant need to talk down to someone, her father wasn't able to come into her room and belittle her with orders and everything she had been doing wrong. With all the worry of those annoyances gone, Weiss found that sitting on the couch, eating wonderful food and watching a terrible movie with her girlfriend to be the easiest thing in the world.

Digging into the bowl to scoop the last of her cheesecake onto her spoon, Weiss took the final bite of her dessert and placed the empty dish next to Yang's on the table in front of her and returned back to her position leant against Yang's side, careful not to disrupt Zwei who had been sleeping between them ever since they had sat down. At first Weiss had been sceptical of Yang's claim that
the corgi would just sleep but she was pleasantly surprised that he hadn't begged for food once.

"That was amazing," she sighed happily and leant her head on the blonde's shoulder, her attention turning back to movie they were watching as she ran her hand lightly through Zwei's soft fur. "This film however..."

"What?" Yang replied in false offence as they watched a grown man playing hockey shoulder barge some kids out of the way. "You think the equivalent of take-out is amazing but not this film? *Just Friends* is a classic."

"A classic it may be but come on," Weiss laughed as the lead actor's character smacked the puck and it ricocheted back into the his own mouth. "You expect me to believe a girl like that will eventually fall for someone like him? He is a complete ass."

"Agreed, but he has a pretty nice one too," Yang replied, her chuckles turning into a laugh as Weiss gave her a raised eyebrow in response. "Oh come on, even you have to admit that Cyan Reynolds is hot?"

Even though she rolled her eyes at Yang's comment, Weiss had to admit that the man certainly was handsome, however the personality of the character he was playing was incredibly narcissistic.

"Though I guess you are more into Amythyst, huh?"

"Her character is at least somewhat likeable," Weiss shrugged with a smirk, not commenting at all on the actress who was indeed incredibly beautiful.

"Barely," Yang grinned placed her foot on the table in front of her. "She's just trying to get those extra good girl points for Christmas."

"I would believe that if she were five," she laughed in return and alter her position so that her knees were underneath her. Normally at home she would never sit in such a way but as there was no-one around to scold her, she was more than glad to be able to get as comfortable as she could. "And still believed in Santa Claus."

"Hey," the blonde grinned and gave a small shrug. "Ruby believed in Santa until she was twelve."

"Please tell me you are not serious?" Weiss asked, genuinely confused as she heard no hint of sarcasm or jest in her girlfriend's voice.

"Oh I'm serious," Yang smiled and paused the film to reach down the side of the chair. After a minute she came back up with what appeared to be a photo album and pulled it open, flicking through the pages in search of the one she needed. "Here ya go."

Looking at the picture Yang was pointing at, Weiss felt a smile stretch across her face as she gazed upon a young Ruby sat on a mall Santa's lap. From the look on her face, there was no mistaking that the girl believed entirely that the man truly was the real deal.

"Oh my gods," Weiss blinked in disbelief as she double-checked to make sure the picture was actually showing what she was seeing. "She actually did."

"Told ya," Yang chuckled and tried to pull the album back only for Weiss to keep a firm grip as she had just spotted a young Yang in the photo beside it. "If I remember properly, she asked for a TV with an in-built VCR."

"That does sounds like what I would expect from everything you have told me," Weiss said with a
small smile and turned the page. The moment she turned it, her eyes flew open and she placed a finger on a picture of Yang with very short hair that barely reached her neck. "What is that?"

Seeing what Weiss was pointing at, the blonde immediately tried a little harder to pull the book away but Weiss simply held on tighter as she started to laugh happily. It was hard to imagine the girl in the picture as Yang without the wild windblown hair but the lilac eyes that were so alight with happiness were so unmistakable that Weiss had recognised her immediately.

"That was just after my tomboy year," Yang sighed and stopped trying to pull it away, clearly understanding that the damage was already done.

"I thought you were still in your tomboy years?"

"Ha ha," Yang replied in an amused sarcastic tone and leaned in a little closer. "You joke but my damn hair took forever to grow back out."

Taking a second to burn the image into her memory, Weiss turned the page and was greeted by more Christmas pictures that once again made her look around the room. Unlike the pictures she had just turned to that showed the room covered in red and green tinsel with its inhabitants smiling happily, the room she was sat in felt rather odd. While it was still warm and comforting in every way that she loved, she couldn't help but notice there wasn't a single Christmas decoration that showed how close the holiday actually was.

"Your family seems to love Christmas," Weiss smiled and ran a finger over one of the pictures that had Yang laughing with a young Blake scowling at her.

"It was Mom's favourite holiday," Yang replied with a nod and turned the page, more pictures of Yang and Ruby opening presents greeting her. "Dad sorta took up the mantle of taking every picture he could."

"But you do not decorate any more?" Weiss asked curiously, keeping her voice cautious in-case there was something she was missing.

"Decorations go up in a couple of days," Yang shrugged and dug her fingers into the very front pages of the book and flipping them over. "Kinda hard to have everything looking so festive during the week she passed."

"Oh," Weiss replied and looked back down to the album to see a picture of Summer laughing as she pulled flour out of a child Yang's hair. "Sorry."

"It's fine," Yang shook her head with a smile of her own and reached out to gently stroke the picture of her mother. "She would call us stupid anyway. Besides, it's just the decorations. The presents and everything else are already done," as she said it, her finger stopped and Weiss turned to look at her. "Speaking of, I need your Scroll."

"Why?" Weiss replied with a scowl, her hand reaching into her pocket and slowly pulling out the small device. Holding out the device, Yang took it and pulled out her own before stopping and holding Weiss' back out to her.

"I don't know your password."

"5-6-9-3-0-1-6-2."

"What th..." Yang replied as she typed it in and gave her a quick look. "Why is it so long?"
"I have private work documents on there," Weiss said and tried to look at what the blonde was doing only for the screen to be turned away from her. "Hence why I would like to know what you are doing with it."

"You will see," Yang grinned as she typed something onto her own scroll before handing Weiss' back to her. "All done."

"At least tell me what you accessed," Weiss asked again. It wasn't that she didn't trust Yang, because she did, but her Scroll had access to very private server info and to access it, even accidentally, outside of a Schnee company location would have set off alerts.

"Just your contacts," Yang replied, her voice a little more serious as she apparently understood that Weiss needed to know. "I promise."

"Good," She breathed and let her body relax again, her hand resuming its stroking the corgi that was still asleep between them. "So, are we going to continue watching this terrible movie or not?"

"I guess," Yang chuckled, clearly happy that the moment of tension had passed, as she took the photo album back and returned it to where she had pulled it from. "We can watch something else if you want."

"No," Weiss replied quickly and took her girlfriend's hand to stop her reaching for the remote. "I mean, no point swapping now."

Despite Weiss' words, she actually had been enjoying the movie. While the premise certainly wasn't anything new and the humour was a little juvenile, it usually managed to at least deliver a few chuckles and the awkwardness of the characters actually made her feel a little better about her own from earlier.

"Ahh," Yang hummed victoriously as she pressed play and slipped her fingers between Weiss' own, her shoulder slumping slightly as she repositioned herself so Weiss could return to her position of resting her head on it. "So you were enjoying it?"

"It has some charm," Weiss replied and nestled her head further into the crook of Yang's neck, chuckling as Cyan Reynolds' character struggled on his gurney only to slide down the ice hill. "Just like the dolt who put it on."

"Wow," Yang laughed and went to pull her hand away only for Weiss to keep hold of it. "I will have you know that this film helped me with relationships."

"That explains a lot," Weiss teased quietly, though keeping her voice loud enough for Yang to hear.

"Hey!" Yang grinned poked Weiss gently in the stomach. "I wooed you, didn't I?"

"Not with any of that," Weiss smiled and attempted to gently slap the offending hand away. "You were actually charming."

"Oh I was, was I?" Yang said happily and quickly moved her hand out of the way, disturbing Zwei who let out a short grumble. "You took the time to talk to me like a normal person and then made me feel included with your friends."
"Me? Bumbling?," Yang grinned and moved her hand to stroke Zwei a few times to settle him. "Nah, you must have me mixed up with someone else."

"You almost fell over a chair," she smirked with a raised eyebrow and earned a slight groan from the blonde.

"Damn," Yang sighed and gave the corgi a quick scratch behind his ear. "I was really hoping you had forgotten that."

"How could I?" Weiss laughed and let her hand drift up to give Zwei's ear a scratch too, her fingers linking with Yang's again once she was done. "But like I said, I thought it was cute. It is actually part of the reason I came back."

"Huh, I guess I will save that chair next time Kali does a refurnishing then," Yang smiled as she tightened her grip on Weiss hand. "I'm really glad you decided to come back though."

"Yes, well I really did think the chair was cute," Weiss teased and ran her thumb over the back of Yang's hand as the brawler gave her a shocked look that made Weiss smile. "You also made an impression, and you seemed interested so there was no choice in it."

"I was that obvious, huh?" Yang groaned again and rested her head against the back of the chair and turned to face her, her lilac eyes shining with happiness.

"You were," Weiss giggled gently and raised her head slightly from it's position on Yang's shoulder to look up into her girlfriend's eyes properly. "And for the record, I am really glad I went back as well. If I had not met you then I would likely still be sat behind a desk instead of sitting with someone who makes me happier than I ever thought I could be."

Weiss watched as a smile stretched itself across Yang's beautiful face and her eyes gleamed with joy. The slight feel of loss hit her as she felt the girl's warm hand leave her own, but that loss was soon replaced with elation upon feeling said hand place itself gently on her cheek.

"I love you too," she said quietly with a smile as her thumb gently stroked her cheekbone causing Weiss' stomach to flutter.

Closing her eyes as she saw Yang lean in, Weiss felt the blondes lips press gently against her own and happily returned their slight pressure, the feeling of love behind the kiss drawing Weiss deeper into Yang's embrace. Letting out a soft hum as her bottom lip slipped between Yang's, Weiss shifted herself a little closer to the warm blonde and moved her now free arm to place it around Yang's shoulder.

After a couple a seconds however, Weiss felt the tenderness of the kiss slowly fade as the blonde began to greedily apply a little more force; feeling the rise and fall of Yang's chest deepen, she took a deeper breath and responded in kind, pressing back and opening her lips a little wanting to taste more as her heart began to race. Whilst enjoying the feel of Yang's affection, she moved her other hand to Yang's thigh to pull herself a little closer and completely forgot about the corgi that was between them and immediately felt guilty as he let out a loud grumble at being disturbed. Worried that she may have hurt him, Weiss pulled back from the kiss and looked down at the poor dog. "Did I..."

"Zwei," Yang interrupted with a slightly raised voice and red cheeks, the little dog looking up at the sound of him name. "Bedtime."

At the blonde's word, Zwei let out a small bark and slowly slipped himself off of the couch and
trotted his way to the door of the room and Weiss assumed he was heading up to Ruby's room.

"Wow, she said in slight awe at how well trained he was. "He is rea..."

"Mhm," Yang hummed, cupping her chin and cutting her off again as her lips pressed back against Weiss', the desperation in the renewed kiss taking her breath away for a second.

Feeling a smile pull at her lips as she quickly regain her breath and responded in kind, Weiss closed the small amount of space Zwei had been taken up and moved the hand that had been on Yang's leg to her waist. Apparently Yang believed that the hand on Weiss' cheek no longer suited the more passionate kissing and instead moved it to the back of her neck, the girl's finger sliding through her hair as it went and sending a shiver through her. However, after a few second of feeling the blonde's lips clash pleasantly with hers, Weiss had to admit to herself too that the position didn't work for her either; so using the hand on Yang's waist as a hold, she pulled herself onto her girlfriend.

Now straddling her girlfriend much like she had been the morning after she had first stayed, Weiss felt Yang's hand position itself on her hips; the girl's fingers digging in slightly and pulling her closer. Still smiling to herself both at the happiness swelling inside her chest as well as the sudden height advantage over her girlfriend. Weiss moved her arm that hand been slung around the blonde's shoulders so that her hand cupped Yang's jawline and lent further into the kiss.

Enjoying the new position much more as the smell of meat that clung to Yang's clothes from cooking surrounded her, Weiss let out a soft hum as she felt Yang's lips part and the girl's tongue brushed tenderly along her own. As it did, a wave of heat rushed through her and Weiss happily let it part her own, the slippery muscle instantly finding her own and the delicious flavour of the food they had just eaten coating her taste-buds again as her own tongue rose to meet it. As the heat began to build and course through her body; the pleasure quickly begin to fog her mind, faintly she felt Yang's hand slowly beginning to work its way up her back, wondering what the blonde was going for, until she felt the snowflake tiara that kept her ponytail in place jostle before being pulled free and letting her hair cascade down her back.

Of course, she smiled to herself, knowing full well that Yang loved when she had her hair down so the the blonde could run her hands through it. Sure enough, Weiss felt fingers brush through her silky strands as the hand that had removed the tiara made its way back down to the base of her back, the fingers only leaving so that the hand could plant itself at the base of Weiss' spine sending a small surge of electricity through her.

Grinning to herself as she felt Yang's stomach give a small lurch, Weiss stroked her thumb across her girlfriend's cheek once before she finally let the hand begin to fall and heard a happy groan come from the blonde as she purposely letting her nails scratch delicately along the girl's neck. Despite the pleasant fog that had already partially clouded Weiss' mind, she knew what she wanted and traced her fingers along the Yang's collarbone until she felt it hit the top button of the shirt.

Top or bottom? She asked herself, thinking about it for only a second before choosing the one she could use to tease the girl below her for a little longer. With an inward smirk at having the chance to get a little revenge for all the times Yang had teased her, Weiss slowly let her finger run over the button to travel deeper down the girl's generous chest, purposely letting her nail catch on each one so that it tugged the material slightly and made the blonde sigh.

However Weiss had already grown tired of the teasing as her finger reach the bottom button just above the girl's waist. She had already waited months and after spending so long imagining and wandering and fantasising, the knowledge that she was holding off again only succeeded in infuriated her more. At that realisation, Weiss removed her other hand from Yang's waist and
brought it around to join her other at the button as she prepared to remove the shirt.

Letting the smile spread across her face this time, Weiss popped the button through the hole, her fingers slipping a little at first but quickly recovering and worked her way up the yellow fabric. With each button, she pressed her lips into Yang's a little deeper for a second until she finally felt her hand reach the topmost one. Deciding she wanted to see what she was doing Weiss opened her eyes, briefly taking in the sight of her girlfriend lost in passion before pulling back from the kiss and leaning back slightly so that she could gaze properly on the blonde.

Watching as Yang's desire-filled eyes slowly opened, Weiss bit her bottom lip and finally popped the last button free. With every button now out of the way, she felt her breath deepen as she move her hands up to the collar of the shirt and slowly pulled it over the girl's shoulder to reveal the straps of a yellow bra. As Yang leant forward to allow her easier access, Weiss felt herself grow hotter with every inch she lowered the shirt until finally the now loosened front fell apart a gave Weiss a view of the thin lace bra that Yang was wearing.

Recognising it immediately as the one she had been wearing the morning after her stay, Weiss smiled at the knowing look Yang gave her and returned her gaze to Yang's body. Unsurprisingly the girl skin was pale as the limited sun offered very little time to sunbathe, something Yang had said she loved about summer, making the black White Fang tattoo just below her ribs stand out all the more. However, Weiss found she didn't care about it as her gaze was instead drawn upwards to the lace bra. Standing out vibrantly against the skin, the yellow material was thin and quite revealing. While it certainly covered enough that Weiss still had to imagine what laid underneath, the top half was almost see-through, except for the pattern of dragons that was sewn into the lace, allowing her to see the supple breasts that laid beneath.

"See," Yang breathed and Weiss looked up to see her grinning mischievously. "Now I know you're enjoying the view."

"Shut up," she replied with a roll of her eyes leaning forward again to reclaim the girl's lips as Yang threw her shirt aside to join Weiss' tiara.

With the heat coursing through her body, Weiss' renewed affection were a little more heated than before and she found herself unable to stop herself from running her hands up Yang's arms until they reached Yang's shoulders. As her hands moved over the curve she allowed her left to return to Yang's jawline while her right roamed in the opposite direction. Letting her nails drag slowly down the girl chest, Weiss felt nerves run through her slightly at the prospect of finally getting to do what she had wanted; however as her hand drew closer to Yang's breast, her fingers caught what seemed to be a very distinctive bump on the girl's skin that she hadn't noticed before. Taking a note to inspect it later, as she knew scar tissue when she felt it, Weiss continued to let her hand wonder downwards until she felt the soft exposed flesh at the top of Yang's breast under her fingertips.

Running her index finger along the top of the bra, she felt Yang take a shorter breath and grinned at the freedom she finally had and gently captured Yang's bottom lips with her teeth. Pulling bad slightly, Yang happily followed to continue the kiss and Weiss finally pushed her index finger under the fabric as Yang achieved her goal. The instant her finger passed over the girl's nipple Yang let out a small gasp into Weiss' mouth causing Weiss to grin even more as her own feeling of exhilaration continued to grow.

Passing her finger over it again, Weiss made her way to the thing she had seen earlier, the thing she had never imagine but somehow seemed to be the most Yang thing ever. Slipping her fingers around the curve of Yang's breast, she immediately found the small piece of plastic in the centre and hooked a finger underneath. Felling Yang's heartbeat speed up slightly on her finger, Weiss
gave the clasp a single twist and felt it come undone beneath and taking a deep breath, she let it go.

The moment she felt the fabric slip away, Weiss let her hand glide back over the curve of Yang's breast eliciting a soft moan from the girl as her thumb flicked across her nipple yet again before gently cupping the soft, warm mound. While digging her fingers in gently to feel what she had dreamed of frequently, Weiss rolled the small bud carefully with the palm of her hand eliciting more gently hums of pleasure from the blonde. However, after a few seconds she felt warm fingers grazed against the skin of her lower back as Yang's hand gripped the hem off her t-shirt began to raise it further up Weiss body, clearly wanting it gone. More than happy to oblige, Weiss raised her arms as the white fabric was pulled over her head and tossed aside with the rest of the clothing.

Sat there in front of Yang in just her pale blue bra to cover her top half, Weiss couldn't help but feel a little self-conscious as she looked down into the lilac eyes that were taking their own chance to explore Weiss' body. She was nowhere near as developed in that area as Yang and looking down on the blonde's bare chest, the difference was clear as day. Bulging out proudly from Yang's chest with only the slightest amount of drooping was a pair of magnificent breasts, their areolas a light brown against the white skin; whereas her own where little less than a handful, even with her bra pushing them up slightly. However if the lust that lit up the blonde's eyes was any indication, Yang didn't seem to care that Weiss barely managed a B-cup and what few self-conscious thoughts she were having quickly faded away into the darkness from whence they came.

While Yang probably didn't know what made Weiss next kiss a more loving one, she did her best to convey her gratitude for a few seconds before placing her hand back on Yang's chest pushing her back against the couch and deepening the kiss once more. Feeling Yang slowly began to move her kisses away from Weiss' lips, she let out a small sigh of pleasure as the girl's lips pressed against her neck. With pleasure pulsing through her as she felt Yang's teeth sink gently into her flesh, Weiss let her head fall to the side so that she had easier access. So caught up in the pleasure that was coursing through her body Weiss only just registered the unclasping of her own bra in the back of her mind and absent-mindedly let Yang pull it over her shoulders to reveal her small breasts.

"Mmm!" Weiss moaned audibly, unable to keep the sound from leaving her throat as Yang's lips closed around her nipple and caused her back to arch slightly from the pleasure that tore through her.

Even through the fresh, lustful haze that quickly began to envelope her mind, Weiss felt Yang's lips stretch into a smile as her girl's tongue darted out to flick tormentingly across the small bud. Once again, the soft moan that was pulled from her throat was entirely involuntary, but the hand slipping around to the back of the blonde's neck in an attempt to encourage her further was entirely her own doing. Unfortunately, instead of Yang's continuing her delightful actions, the blonde slowly began to work her way back up to Weiss neck until she finally breathed three words into Weiss' ear that made her glad she had been denied what she had sought.

"Ready for bed?"

Before Weiss could even finish nodding, she felt the hand on her back slip to her waist as Yang pushed herself effortlessly off of the couch. Smiling as she felt the thrill run through her, Weiss wrapped her legs around her girlfriend and placed a tender kiss on her lips as she was carried to
what she could only assume would be heaven.

*  

Weiss couldn't help but smile at the loud bang of the door that echoed around the room, the force in which Yang had thrown it shut a clear indicator that she wanting absolutely nothing but to give her entire attention to Weiss and anything that attempted to divert it would feel her full wrath. It was a smile that only grew as she was lowered onto the bed, her legs releasing the blonde's waist so that Weiss could gently run her feet down Yang's until she felt her heels dip into the space behind the girl's knees. Applying just enough force to get what she wanted, Weiss dug her heels in so that Yang's knees buckled and they both fell heavily onto the mattress, Yang's hand shooting out to catch herself from crushing Weiss and causing their lips to part for a moment.

"Nice trick," Yang breathed with a slight chuckle and immediately closed the distance that had been created between them, the girl's lips immediately back on hers and sending sparks through her body.

Letting out a small hum at the feeling of one of her nipples brushing over Yang's, Weiss moved the hand that was holding the back of Yang neck into the wild mangle of blonde hair to pull her deeper into the kiss. Never before had a lover made her so excited with simple foreplay so the fact that she was feeling herself slowly lose control of her action was a little scary; though scary in every good way that scary could be. With every press of their lips Weiss felt herself give herself over to her lust more and more, one of her hands gliding down Yang's neck until it reclaimed its prior position on Yang's voluptuous breast while the other snaked its way down the woman's toned stomach. The scary aspect of it came from just how much she wanted it, just how much she enjoyed tracing her fingers over the thin line that separated the two sides of Yang's well-defined abdominal muscles, and mostly from how she didn't hesitate for a second to pull open the metal panel that locked her belt into position.

Taking a deep, shuddering breath Weiss easily pulled the belt open and worked on the buttons underneath, each one popping open with only the tiniest pressure until there were none remaining. As she finished opening the button, Weiss dug her thumb into Yang's breast and dragged it down slightly until her nail scrapped across the small bud that she already knew Yang loved being played with by the sharp intake of breath the girl took every time Weiss did it. Smiling to herself at her girlfriend's reaction, Weiss ran her hand that had been working at Yang's jeans up the side of her leg until she came to the edge of the material.

Grinning to herself, she slipped her hand into the back of the jeans and dug her fingers lightly into the girl's cheeks earning a slight groan in return. However even as much as she enjoyed the feeling of having two large parts of Yang in her hands, the trail of fire that was travelling down her waist quickly caught her attention and before she could even look past the pleasure to realise it was Yang's own hand, every button of her own pale blue jeans was popped open in one well practised movement. Clearly Yang had her own tricks too.

Letting out a small gasp as she felt Yang's tongue slipped between her lips once against and started to dance with hers, Weiss pressed her fingers into Yang's cheek and rolled her wrists, the waistband of the jeans slipping low enough that Weiss felt air brush over her knuckles. Clearly understand what Weiss wanted as she hooked her thumb over the fabric, Yang raised her hips and Weiss wasted no time in pushing them. Once they had been slipped down to the top of Yang's thighs, she felt a pressure on her back as Yang used the hand that was still placed on her back to pull Weiss into a sitting position as she slowly stood up. No longer having the resistance that had stopped her before, Weiss pushed the jeans further down Yang's legs until they fell on their own and she stepped out of them.
As soon as they were gone, Weiss felt the hand on her back fall away and without being supported, a feeling of loss rushed through her as Weiss fell away from the blonde; though upon opening her eyes she felt a wave desire flood through her at the sight that stood before her. Weiss had caught herself imagining this very sight before her numerous times, she had even dreamed of it, however the breathtaking sight of Yang standing there in nothing but a pair of yellow lace underwear that matched the long lost bra, her chest rising and falling heavily as she took deep breaths, was beyond every image her brain had managed to come up with. Every inch of the woman was clearly muscle yet her entire form screamed of femininity and Weiss found that there was only one word she could use to describe her.

Stunning.

While Weiss knew she could only have been staring at the beauty before her for half a second at most, it had felt like an hour but she was suddenly returned to reality as she felt a tug on her jeans. Looking up at her girlfriend's eyes that were wild with love and desire, Weiss raised her hips and Yang immediately pulled them off, taking almost no care as she tossed them aside and returned her lustful gaze to Weiss' body. Feeling herself heat up, Weiss raised herself back up placed a hand Yang's stomach as she looked up into the beautiful lilac orbs that so clearly wanted to give in and ravish her. Wanting it herself, Weiss hooked her index finger under the band of the blonde's underwear and pulled her closer, Yang dropping down to her knee and pressing her lips back into Weiss'. With another shuddering breath, Weiss threw an arm around Yang's neck and her legs locked around her thighs as she felt a hand snake to her back and lift her off the bed slightly. Feeling a slight tug beneath her when Yang threw the quilt aside, Weiss smiled and slipped her legs from behind her girlfriend's and into the now open bed. Within a second, Yang had crawled on top of her and thrown the covers back over them, the cold she had never noticed quickly being replaced by the warmth that Yang's body produced.

Not liking that there kiss had been interrupted during the repositioning, Weiss pressed forward and took Yang's lip with her own, only for the girl to pull back after a second and stare intently into her eyes. Trying again to get what she wanted only to be refused with a smile, Weiss raised her hand to the back of Yang's neck and desperately tried to coax her into the embrace that Weiss desired. At first she thought it had worked as she saw Yang grin and begin to lower her head but the kiss Weiss wanted was placed on her cheek instead; and then her jaw, in fact the kisses slowly trailed their way up to Weiss' ear and after a quick nibble on the earlobe that sent sparks through her, she heard Yang's whisper something gently to her.

"I told you last time..." the girl breathed sexily into Weiss' ear and Weiss felt a shifting below her.

"Yan... Mmm!" Whatever Weiss had tried to say was quickly replaced by a hard moan as she felt Yang's leg press against her, causing her hips to buck down instantly.

"... That you would enjoy it so much more when I'm not holding back," Yang finished, her voice barely a whisper any more yet still full of lust as the hand not holding her up trailed slowly down the centre of Weiss' chest; only diverting for a couple of seconds to play with one of her already erect nipples.

Another of her own soft moans filled Weiss ears as Yang's fingers continued their path down and Weiss pressed her lips into the crook of her girlfriend's neck, her hips pressing down in search of the jolts of electricity that each thrust send through her. The memory of the effect the same thing had on her last time made the moment all the more intense but as she let out yet another moan, that was only partially muffled by her lips locking onto Yang's necks, she felt the leg pull away and Yang's hand took hold of the top of her underwear.
Take them off, Weiss pleading in her own head, the desire for them to be gone and for Yang to continue what she had been doing taking hold and making her hips raise off the bed. Thankfully Yang seemed to have heard her and was more than happy to obliged, her hand easily slipping the thin blue fabric over her Weiss' hips and as far down her legs as she could. Very much not wanting them to remain there, she raised her legs so that Yang's could remove them fully and within seconds they were thrown out of the bed.

Where to? Weiss didn't care. The only thing she cared about was the fingers that were now grazing against her inner thigh, the trail of fire they left behind spread and burning hotter as they climbed higher and higher until she could almost feel the heat that issued from them on her lower lips. However Yang fingers stayed where they were, the tips gently stroking the very top of her thigh as Weiss felt the girl pull away from her ear and opening her eyes that had been shut from the divine pleasure she had been experiencing, Weiss immediately found herself gazing into the beautiful eyes of her girlfriend; eye that seemed to grow bigger in her vision until she finally felt both the thing she had longed for minutes ago and the thing she desired then happen at once.

The moment Yang's lips pressed against her own, the woman's finger finished their climb upwards and Weiss was completely unable to stop the whimper that left her as she felt the tips trace her lips and an intense surge of energy shot through her. Still quivering at the initial touch, Weiss felt Yang's index finger circle around the inside of her lips, briefly flicking over the sensitive bundle of nerves at the very top before tracing its way down the opposite side. As it reached the bottom, Weiss felt another digit join it thought not on her lips, but directly on her opening.

"Ahh..." She whimpered again into her girlfriend's mouth as his hips buckled down onto the new addition and pushed the tip between her lips sending another jolt tearing through her and wiping her mind blank of anything else. "Ple... Ahh."

Apparently insistent on not letting her finish a single word, the finger pushing its way up her slit, the care taken to not push it any deeper obvious as it slowly massaged top to bottom and it wasn't long until Weiss felt her arousal remove any friction that had once been present. Thankfully however, Weiss felt the girl's lip pull into a smile as the finger reached the bottom of her slit for what was apparently the final time and was quickly joined by the other that hadn't moved since the second had joined. The base of Yang's palm came down to rest against the top of her folds as Yang pulled her lips away and Weiss let out a loud moan that filled the room as she felt both fingers push their way into her; each knuckle that slid inside making her moan crack into a whimper as a whole new kind of energy ripped through her body.

Clearly having enjoyed the reaction she received, Yang reclaimed Weiss lips with her own and pulled her fingers back out, the feeling of emptiness taking hold instantly and making Weiss press down in a fruitless attempt to return them to their proper place. Thankfully however, Yang wanted them back just as badly and Weiss felt them thrust into her with a little more force; their tips curling slightly as stroking along her walls which immediately began to pulse.

"Mm... Mm," Weiss panting into Yang's mouth as the fingers picked up their pace and the familiar fire began to grow fiercely within her.

Yang was right. She had thought their last act in Yang's bed had felt amazing but it paled in comparison to how good it felt to have a part of the girl inside her, like they were simply supposed to be there, the pleasure they offered a thing she had never known she was missing until then. Yang's hand had already shifted it position, her thumb now drawing gentle circle around her clit and her fingers spreading the inside of Weiss' hole a little wider and making her walls contract more around them as they tried to fight it. Barely able to contain her moans any more, Weiss let them out; the sound of her pleasure surrounding the both of them and making Yang pick up her
pace and her fingers plunge deeper inside her.

"Don... Mmm," Weiss moaned in the few breaths between kisses as her hands/that had been absent-mindedly exploring Yang's back, came up to tangle themselves in the blonde woman's hair. "Do... Ahh...Don't s-stop."

"Mhm," Yang hummed as she pressed down harder on Weiss' clit and stroked her fingers along her walls again.

Practically panting from the fire heating her body, Weiss felt the pleasure begin to spill over and pulled Yang deeper into their kiss, her hip jutting downwards to stroke Yang's curled finger across her walls. She could only last so long however and within seconds the tidal wave of pleasure that had been building up finally crashed down upon her and completely wiped all though from her mind.

The feeling was incomparable. Never before had her body felt so alive, like every nerve and muscle was alight with an unquenchable flame that spread across her body and made her feel faint. Never before had she moaned so loudly, so gutturally, that she felt the strain on her throat as it tried its best to withstand her orgasm. Through all of it, she could feel her walls convulsing around Yang's fingers, the constant tightening imprinting the feel onto her forever and Weiss knew that the liquid dribbling down her cheeks was certainly making a mess of the blonde's bed. Not that Yang seemed to care as with each convulsion of her walls, Yang would gently run her fingers along them to tease out Weiss orgasm just that little more until finally she felt her senses begin to return.

With her muscles finally relaxing, Weiss let her body sink into the bed and took a shaky breath as she turned to face the smiling woman who had fallen to her side her lilac eyes glinting with victory and a slight hint of mischief. *What is she pla...*

"Mmm," Weiss whimpered as a new, smaller wave a pleasure ran through her. As he body had been relaxed, she had forgotten that there were still a pair of fingers inside her but was suddenly reminded as Yang slowly teased them out of her sensitive hole with a smile.

"So?" The blonde grinned and bit one side of her lips. As Weiss leant forward to claim them, she was stopped by yet another wave of pleasure as she felt Yang pull her fingers out a little more and let out another small moan as a fresh bead on liquid dripped between her thighs. "Was that worth the wait?"

"You have no ahh... I-Idea," Weiss replied, her words faltering a little as she felt the fingers finally exit her still incredibly wet hole and leaving her with a slight feeling of emptiness.

"Oh, I think I do," she smirked and finally placed a short lived kiss on Weiss' lips and raised her hand out of the bed causing Weiss to blush slightly at how wet the woman's finger were. "I think you made a mess of my bed."

"That is your fault," Weiss breathed and kissed the woman again as her hand rested on Yang's side to pulling their bodies closer.

Feeling Yang return the kiss, Weiss hummed happily into her girlfriend's mouth and grazed her nails along the woman's ribs absent-mindedly until she felt Yang slowly pull away with a content smile.

"So... You definitely enjoyed it?" She asked, the sincerity in her voice far greater than when she had asked it seconds earlier. "No regrets?"
"None whatsoever," Weiss whispered confidently without even having to think, raising a hand to stroke the strand of golden hair that fallen over Yang's beautiful eyes behind her ear. "It was perfect."

"Good," she sighed happily and went to place her hand on Weiss' cheek, only for Weiss pull her head back and raise her eyebrow slightly. "Oh, right. Should probably clean that up."

As she said it, Weiss watched as Yang raised an eyebrow tauntingly and moved her fingers towards her lips. Taking it as a challenge, Weiss squinted at the girl as if to dare her to do it and to her surprise, she did. Clearly making a show of it, she popped one of her fingers into her mouth and gently sucked the residual moisture from it with a small hum and even though a small rush of excitement ran through her at the woman's brazenness, Weiss couldn't help but roll her eyes. Letting out a small chuckle as she reached down the side of her bed, her hand returned seconds later with a pack of wet-wipes that she used to clean her hand.

Shaking her head slightly, Weiss leant forward and pressed her lips against Yang's, not caring about being able to taste herself on the woman's lips. When she had first started to become sexually active the idea of doing such a thing had made her extremely uncomfortable; but as she had grown and become more experienced, she had learned that the exchanging of fluids was simply something that happened.

Grinning to herself as she grazed her fingers down Yang's cheek to her chin, Weiss pushed her face up slightly and captured the woman's bottom lip with her teeth, Yang letting out a hum as she gently bit down and ran her tongue along it. Letting out a deep breath through her nose, Weiss let her fingers slowly trace down her girlfriend's throat until they came to divot between her collarbones. Taking a second to circle her index finger on the smooth skin, she released Yang's lip and crashed hers back against them, her small excited gasp that she received making her smile as she slipped her hand lower.

Apparently enjoying Weiss' slow teasing, Yang ran her now clean fingers into her hair and pulled her deeper into the kiss as Weiss let own slip into Yang's generous cleavage and trace the outline of her breast until it began to curve around. If what had happened last time as well as what had happened downstairs was anything to go by, she knew Yang liked her breasts played with so raising her hand slightly to cup the beautiful mound she purposely flicked her thumb across Yang's hard nipple.

The lustful moan that vibrated through her lips made Weiss' confidence grow and wanting to feel it again, she brought her index finger up to join her thumb and rolled the small nub between them as her others gently kneaded the flesh.

"Mmm," Yang groaned softly into her lips and Weiss gave the sensitive bud a small pinch to show that she liked the reaction.

While she continuing her teasing of Yang's breast, Weiss let her kisses drift to the woman's cheek and slowly pecked her way along her jawline and down her neck. With each kiss she placed on the smooth skin, she felt Yang shift her neck slowly in an attempt to feel more but Weiss purposely kept herself from giving Yang what she wanted, much like the blonde had done to her earlier that night. After a couple of seconds however, Weiss' lips found Yang's collarbone and she happily kissed her way down to the divot her fingers had found earlier, a small smiled spreading across her lips and she carefully placed fleeting kisses along the same path her fingers had travelled earlier.

Shifting her body down as her head dipped beneath the covers, Weiss let her lips leave the trail her fingers had made and carefully pressed her lips against the top of Yang's other breast, the malleable flesh bowing slightly with each kiss until she felt a hard lump brush against her bottom lip and
heard Yang let out another gasp above her. Emboldened by the sounds, Weiss took the small bud between her lips and gently sucked on the hard flesh, the slight taste of strawberry present from what she assumed was whatever lotion Yang had applied that day. The flavour however didn't matter as the loud moan that Yang released sent a shiver through Weiss body and only spurred her on further.

Pressing the tip of her tongue against the nub and earning another smaller moan in return, Weiss let her fingers perform one last circle of the blonde's nipple before dropping her fingers explore further down. While Weiss loved everything about Yang's stomach and would happily spends hours exploring every inch, she had another goal and soon felt fabric beneath her fingers. Letting her hand drift over the fabrics, Weiss felt a large amount of heat against her hand as it dipped between Yang's legs and eagerly pushed a finger into the already wet crotch of the woman's underwear.

As she stroked her finger back and forth along the fabric a few times, Weiss gently bit down on the nub in her mouth and then let go with a smile. Unfortunately, the feel of fabric covering the spot she desired so badly was already beginning to wane on her and she let her fingers drift back to the waistband and quickly pulled them down, Yang's hips raising so that she could pull them down to the woman's knees with ease. Letting them go so that Yang could kick them the rest of the way off, Weiss released the nub from her mouth and let her kisses begin to trail down her girlfriend's stomach. Taking care to kiss each well defined ab as she went, she felt Yang shuffled above her but ignored it and brought her hand up to lay on the blonde's waist and give a slight nudge. Apparently getting the message, Yang moved so that she was laying on her back and Weiss moved to lay between her legs as she slowly continued her descent.

However just Weiss' lips left Yang's stomach and pressed against her groin, the intoxicating smell of Yang's arousal invading her nose, she felt a hand slip into the one that she still had placed on the woman's waist and she immediately felt something in it. Curious as to what Yang could want to pass her at such a moment, Weiss took the offered item and ran her thumb over it, instantly recognising the foil wrapper for what it was. She had used them before on times where she had been uncertain but there was no uncertainty about Yang, no doubt whatsoever so she extended her arm to drop the offered item off the side of the bed before entwining her fingers back through Yang's.

Continuing her travels towards the alluring scent that filled her nose, Weiss felt Yang's fingers tighten on her as her lips pressed into a small patch of soft hair that covered the woman's pelvic. As her lips brushed against the soft strands, she felt a tiny amount of moisture coat her lips and ran her tongue along them only to get nothing but a hint so taking in a deep breath of Yang's scent, she gently kissed a little lower where knew knew the delicate bundle of nerves would be.

"Shit," She heard Yang breathe the moment her lips made contact and felt the blonde's fingers tense around her own.

Weiss smiled and kissed a little lower so that her lips brushed against the woman's lips and were coated plenty more of the liquid that had speckled them earlier and knowing she could finally get a proper taste, she ran her tongue back over them, the tip purposely brushing of Yang's hole as it gathered the woman's nectar.

The taste was strong, the slight tanginess that was usually present almost completely overwhelmed by just how sweet it tasted but overall the taste was nice. Wanting to confirm her opinion, Weiss ran her tongue tenderly through Yang's lips earning a loud moan from her and as a thin layer of the fluid covered her tongue, Weiss discovered that the taste was just as intoxicating as the scent. More than satisfied with the flavour, she lashed her tongue back against it.
"Holy fu..." Yang moaned, her words cut off as Weiss pressed her tongue a little deeper into the woman's slit and traced her way up the girl lips, her mouth closing of the clit again and swirling her tongue around it.

Enjoying the gentle rocking that Yang seemed to be doing absent-mindedly Weiss slid her free hand up the woman's leg, her nails digging in slightly as it climbed, until she felt her fingertips brush against the wet hole. Clearly the touch had also alerted Yang and the second they made contact she bucked a little harder, the tips of Weiss fingers sinking slightly between the folds and earning lust-filled groan to sound from above her. Wanting desperately to return the pleasure that Yang had given her she worked a single finger into the woman's soaking hole and slowly crooked her finger as if to motion the woman towards her, her finger stroking the walls that slowly pulsed at her touch.

Opening her eyes for a brief moment as she felt shift, Weiss removed her mouth from Yang's clitoris to look at and saw from the small beams of light that Yang's own free hand had already taken the place on her breast that Weiss' had once held, her fingers pulling at her nipples desperately. Knowing that Yang was very much enjoying herself, Weiss slowly pulled her finger out and raised another to join it and using both of them to spread her girlfriend's lips open she eagerly stroked her tongue along the delicate pink flesh inside. However, as she was still looking up she saw Yang's chest rise as she took in a deep breath and decided that there was no better time to close her fingers and push them both inside the woman.

"Argh," Yang moaned loudly in a strangled breath at the sudden intrusion and Weiss felt the blonde's walls quiver around her fingers as the muscles tightened around them.

Smiling as she pushed her tongue back against Yang's clitoris, Weiss curled her fingers and pressed into the woman's walls in search of a certain spot and within seconds she had found it and a loud moan issued from the blonde, the sound music to Weiss' ears as she continued to stroke the spot that had caused such a noise.

While she didn't want to rush Yang to her climax, Weiss found that she was getting increasingly excited for it herself to the point where she felt that her own crotch was once again exceedingly wet. Knowing that it would probably drive Yang wild once she realised why, she let go of her partners hand and reached down between her own legs to brush her finger against her own clit.

"Mmm," She hummed at her own touch, the sound muffled as the new pleasure pushed her face forwards causing her tongue to slip into the hole her fingers were still holding open.

"You ahh..." Yang words were cut off but her moan but her now free hand came to a rest on the back of Weiss' head, her fingers brushing through the silky strand as the palm pushed her in deeper.

More than happy to oblique as Yang seemed to be close, Weiss pressed the tip of her tongue past the woman's entrance and flicked it over the wet wall. As she did, she teased her fingers further out only to push them back in and wanting Yang to know just how much she was enjoying herself, she did the same to herself too; her moans coaxing the blonde to the climax Weiss knew would be arriving soon. And it was a good thing too as in her desire to please Yang, she had been completely unaware that the same fire as earlier had already begun to grow within her again, its flames licking at her body and begging for release.

Fortunately after a couple more thrusts of her fingers, Weiss felt Yang's wall begin to twitch and knew that the woman was on the very edge, an edge that Weiss was very keen to push her over so withdrawing her tongue she closed her lips back over her clitoris and flicked her touch against the bundle of nerves as she pushed the fingers of both hands deep inside each hole.
While the small orgasm that pulse through her body was nowhere near as strong as the one one Yang had given her, it was clear that the blonde was in ecstasy. What sounded like a loud growl filled her ears and the hand on her head tightened into a fist gripping her hair for dear life as Weiss felt Yang's walls tighten around her fingers. Looking up again as the long growl stopped, she saw the blondes chest rising and falling rapidly and quickly kissed her way back up it, her lips closing around the nipple that Yang was still holding and making the woman's hole clamp down harder. Finally, after what felt like minutes, she felt Yang's breathing slow down and smiling to herself Weiss pulled her fingers free and let go of the bud before she kissed up her girlfriend's chest, the heavy smell of sex soon replaced with fresh air as her head exited the covers.

Before she could say a word Yang's lips crashed into hers without a care in the world for where they had just been and a tongue pushed its way into her mouth, the woman's heavy breaths washing over them as she rode out the last dregs of her climax. Finally however, the kisses became less heated and Weiss gently pulled back to let Yang recover in piece.

"So?" She grinned, feigning innocence as she repeating what Yang had asked after Weiss had come down from her own orgasm. "Was that worth the wait?"

"I could have waited years... for that," she sighed contently as pressed their lips gently together for a moment, the taste of where Weiss mouth had just been still strong between them. "And it would still have been worth it."

"I doubt I could have waited years," she replied happily and sat up on her knees, the cover falling back as she reached for the wipes and cleaned her hands while Yang's face broke into a wide grin.

"You know?" Yang grinned as she placed a hand in her back and used it to pull herself into a sitting position. "I don't think I told you just how sexy you are."

"Hm," Weiss hummed and pressed her lips against her girlfriend's for a fleeting moment of happiness before pulling away. "You didn't... But you can tell me now?"

As the blonde's face cracked into a huge smile, Weiss felt a hand cup her cheek and lilac eyes locked pointedly onto hers causing her heart to flutter at the sincerity they held.

"You... have to be..." Yang breathed, her words punctuated by the occasional gentle kisses that succeeded in taking Weiss' breath away. "... The sexiest woman... That I... Have ever met."

"Hm," Weiss hummed again and leaned in to steal another quick kiss. "Even though I do not have your... Assets?"

"Hey, not everyone can be gifted with a rack like mine," Yang grinned and Weiss threw the used wet-wipe at the blonde's face with a smile of her own. "But yours are perfect."

"Yours are pretty great too," Weiss rolled her eyes and bit her lips and leant in to press her lips gently against Yang's, letting out a single contented breath as the woman stroked her cheekbone.

"You really are perfect," Yang replied gently the moment their lips parted, not a single hint of a lie in her voice as her thumb passed pointedly over the scar on Weiss' eye. "And I love every part of you."

Feeling her heart swell, Weiss captured Yang's lips with her own and placed her hands on her girlfriend's waist to push them both back onto the bed, the feeling of love washing over her and making her head spin more than either of her orgasms that night until she finally broke away, her eyes opening and gazing into her girlfriend's with a smile.
"I love every part of you too."

Seeing the love and happiness in the boxer's eyes, Weiss placed another short but loving kiss on her before letting the fatigue her body had build up through the night finally take hold causing her for falling down lightly on the woman, her arms wrapping around Yang's waist as the blonde turned them on their sides and pulled her into an embrace.

The night had been perfect. The food, the movie, the sex; but most of all, Yang. Never before had she felt so comfortable with someone, so in the moment and carefree, that she threw caution to the wind and let go of all restraints on their first time. With Yang however, she had felt no need to hold back, no need to not indulge herself; and for the first time in her life she didn't need to rush away after.

So letting out a sigh at the fact she couldn't remember ever being so happy, Weiss closed her eyes and shuffled as close as she could to the woman she loved, the warmth and gentle breathing comforting as the feeling of tiredness finally overwhelmed her and she gently drifted to sleep.

Chapter End Notes

So first thing first. This chapter would have taken so much longer to get up if I hadn't had help from the wonderful ToxicExotic. He was so much help in making everything so much smoother and speeding things up and was super patience with seeing all the mistakes I make. So please, go and give them some love.

Now onto the chapter notes. It has been a long time in the making and I am sure a lot of you have been looking forward to this moment so I really hope it was worth it. I tried to convey the nervousness of their first real exploration while downstairs and the confidence of prior experience upstairs so I hope that came across. I also didn't want it to be all about sex so I hope the fluff and other stuff was good and enjoyable too.

But that's it for me. This was a long chapter so I don't want to keep you reading for too much longer. Thank you for reading and I really, really do hope you enjoyed the chapter.
The Morning After

Chapter Summary

After a night they will both remember, Weiss and Yang wake up the next morning still feeling the high.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: All characters belong to Rooster Teeth Productions
Once again, huge thanks to ToxicExotic for looking over this chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Yang Xiao Long

Yang woke up hot, hotter than she had been in some time. As she took that first deep breath of returning from her pleasant dreams, she felt thin layers of sweat that covered hers and Weiss' bodies. She didn't mind of course, the sweat induced by the combined body heat of them both was an indicator that something amazing had happened. However, it was a little uncomfortable so, careful not to disturb Weiss, Yang gently pulled her stomach away from the woman's back and let out a relieved sigh as cooler air breezed against her. With the stifling heat sorted, she opened her eyes and looked down at the sleeping, ivory-haired beauty in her arms.

Though she could only see one side of Weiss' face, it was still more than enough to make her heart flutter. The relaxed look on her face lacked the usual scowl that was on the woman's brow even when she was happy, the way the delicate strand of white hair in front of her face shifted back and forth ever so slightly as short, soft breaths escaped her. Had she known she could escape without waking the the woman, Yang would have loved to have sat there and drank in the beautiful sight before her. However, with one arm trapped under Weiss' neck and one of her ankles captured by the woman's legs, Yang knew there was no way to escape and not wake her. With that understanding, Yang happily settled for watching her girlfriend sleep for a little longer.

Letting her eyes follow the strands of hair down Weiss' neck, she quickly came to the woman's shoulders and was reminded again that they were both completely naked. Smiling to herself at the memory of everything that had happened the night before, Yang moved her hand that had been gently resting on the woman's stomach. While her hand now met some resistance due to the thin film of sweat, she remembered how it had been last night; how every inch of the woman's body had been smooth as porcelain, how much her mind had raced as she had let her hands explore it. With the desire to feel it again, she softly curled her fingers on Weiss' stomach and was happy when she felt the woman let out a deep breath onto the arm she was resting against.

Enjoying the feeling, Yang repeated it for a couple of minutes, keeping her touch light and smiling with each breath Weiss let out. So caught up in watching the woman sleep, Yang almost missed the light that had begun to spill through her curtains and picked up her head to check the time. While it wasn't too late, Yang knew Weiss worked on Saturdays so she happily set about waking the
sleeping woman up, pressing her lips softly against Weiss' neck and earned an audible breath in
return.

"Weiss," She whispered gently and pressed her lips back against her neck, receiving an almost
conscious hum in response. "Hey, beautiful. Time to wake up."

"Mmm," Weiss moaned pleasantly after a couple more kisses, her body shifting as she mumble her
reply. "What time is it?"

"Almost 7:30," she answered softly, placing another kiss into the crook of the woman's neck and
felt Weiss' hand lay itself over her own. "What time do you have work?"

"E-Eleven," Weiss yawned and slipped her fingers between Yang's as she pushed her neck further
into the light kiss. Placing another kiss just behind the woman's ear, Yang heard Weiss let out a
little squeak as she stretched in her arms and slowly begun to turn around.

"Morning, beautiful," Yang beamed happily as Weiss came to a rest on her back and opened her
eyes. "How'd you sleep?"

"Amazingly, as I always do here," Weiss smiled back, her pale blue eye gazing up at her happily
causing Yang to be unable to stop herself from pressing a brief kiss against the woman's lips and
eliciting a soft hum from her girlfriend before she pulled away. "What about you?"

"Pretty good," Yang hummed and ran her thumb along the woman's stomach. While there wasn't
much muscle there, she had certainly kept it toned enough that the flat surface still felt firm under
her fingers. "Though you did tired me out pretty well last night."

"You sound surprised?" Weiss chuckled as she pulled the sheet down a little, presumably to get rid
of the heat that was trapped under the quilt, and exposed her breasts.

"Not surprised," she grinned, making a show of letting her eye drift down and biting her bottom lip.
She remembered Weiss' question last night about whether they had been enough and Yang had
been completely honest in her reassurance. They really were perfect for the woman's frame. Just
like everything else about Weiss, her breast were on the small side; each one only just a handful of
creamy white flesh topped by a small nipple that were such a pale brown that they almost appeared
pink. When she had first seen them she had been taken aback by just how perfect they were and in
seeing them again, it was clear that feeling had definitely not faded.

"I always knew you would be great, and you were, I just thought you might not have been so...
forward."

"I am not a virgin, Yang," Weiss laughed and rolled her eyes as she raised her free arm to put it
around the back of her neck. "But... If it were anyone else, I probably wouldn't have."

"Well then," Yang grinned widely as Weiss' fingers pushed into her hair, something only those she
trusted completely were allowed to touch. "I gotta say I'm glad you didn't."

Seeing Weiss smile back at her, Yang leant down to place another kiss onto the her lips and let out
a soft hum of her own as the woman's lips parted and allowed her deeper access. More than happy
to accept, Yang let her tongue seek entry only to meet Weiss' halfway and begin a gentle dance that
slowly became more and more heated. Feeling that warmth flood her body, Yang pulled back and
gave Weiss a mischievous smile.

"Soo..." She grinned and let her hand slowly drift up Weiss' stomach towards the woman's perfect
exposed breast. "You said you start at eleven, right?"

"Mhm," Weiss hummed, her lips pressing back against hers as Yang’s hand cupped the small mound of snow white skin.

"Good," Yang breathed lustfully as she shifted her position and climbed on top of the woman, pulling back from the kiss and giving Weiss a wide grin. "Weiss cream for breakfast it is."

Hearing Weiss let out a loud laugh, Yang kissed her way down the snowy-haired woman's neck and gave the cupped breast a gentle squeeze as she made her way further down with the sole intent of returning everything Weiss had done the night before.

*

**Weiss Schnee**

Stopping as she arrived at the kitchen doorway, Weiss hid behind the door frame and poked her head out breathing in the delicious smell of bacon that was filling the house. It had been the most exciting morning she'd had in some time and even after cooling herself off in the shower, she still felt herself blush as she remember the events that had transpired after waking up. However even though she had certainly enjoyed herself, Weiss shook the memory from her head as she knew if she allowed them to pervade her thoughts again, she likely wouldn't be able to keep her hands off the blonde.

Instead she simply watched the woman make her way around the kitchen, the usual smile stretching across her face, and waited for Yang to turn around. After finishing her shower, Weiss had dressed herself and immediately upon reaching the bottom of the stairs had reached into the coat cupboard to look for the jacket that had been promised her. Fortunately she had found it there and had quickly put it on and was eager to see the blonde's reaction.

"The food smells good," Weiss smiled as she leant slightly to her side so that only her head was in view.

"Bet the view is good too," Yang chuckled happily and threw what looked to be small cubes of bacon into one of the frying pans.

"It was better earlier," Weiss smirk and stepped out from the door.

"I bet it was," Yang laughed, Weiss biting her lip as the woman begun to turn around. "So what took you so lo..."

Placing her hands behind her back and biting her lip, Weiss gave the blonde a devilish smile as Yang stood there clearly unable to speak for a few seconds, her eye scrolling up and down Weiss' form. She watched as Yang’s eyes drifted over her hair that she had taken the time to place into a crown braid for the day, with a majority of her hair hanging down over it free from the usual ponytail. It was rare she did anything but her usual side ponytail ,as having such long hair became a nuisance after a while when kept loose, but she felt it would be okay for one day. Once Yang had gotten her fill of that, she quickly took in the cream jacket and the perfectly matching black jeans; and after a quick glance at her heeled boots that faded gently from black to white, her eye flicked back up to meet hers own.

"So how do I look?" Weiss asked with a grin, knowing she looked pretty good.
"You look amazing," Yang smiled as Weiss walked towards her and wrapped her arms around the woman's waist. "We should see what else of mine you look great in."

"You know I would have to get undressed for that, right?"

"I know," Yang replied, her smile turning into a wide grin as she crossed her arms around the back of Weiss' neck. "I could help."

"Hmm," Weiss hummed in false contemplation as she pressed her lips against her girlfriend, enjoying the content feeling that washed over her for a brief second before pulling away with a wide smile. "As much as I would love that, Hazel will be here in roughly twenty minutes."

"Shame," Yang sighed in false disappointment and placed another quick kiss on her before turning around to tend to the bacon and the scrambled eggs that were cooking in another pan. "So what are you doing at work today?"

"Well, I have an interview with an applicant who may have been denied a position unfairly at twelve; but apart from that, I think it will mainly be paperwork and overseeing some things on the floor," Weiss replied and sat down at the table to await the delicious food Yang was making. "How about you?"

"Me and dad are gonna work on my bike again when they get back," Yang answered happily as she placed two slices of bread into the toaster.

"How is that deathtrap going?" she asking jokingly, earning a small chuckle from the blonde. "I bet Ruby has enjoyed getting her hands on it."

"It's going good," Yang replied as she setup up the plates and scooped the cubes of bacon up to throw them into the scrambled eggs. "And she has, though she ain't helping today. Her and Blake are going to an unused lot nearby so Ruby can practice driving."

"Is that safe?" Weiss asked despite knowing Yang would never allow Ruby to do anything that wasn't. "Or legal?"

"Safe, sure. Legal..." Yang paused trying to find her words as she pulled the toast from the toaster and buttered it. "Well... Depends on your definition of illegal."

"Something that is against the law is the most common definition," Weiss replied with a roll of her eyes and Yang let out a small laugh.

"Well since Ruby only has her learners permit and Blake isn't technically family and has only been driving for two years instead of three, it's illegal," Yang grinned and scooped the food on top of the eggs and picked up the plate to place it in front of Weiss. "But it's what the lot has been used for for decades, I bet most of the cops at out local precinct learned there too."

"So you are not at all worried she will be arrested?" Weiss asked, immediately cutting into the amazing smelling bacon and scrambled eggs Yang had served her and took a bite, the taste as great as everything else Yang had ever cooked her.

"Nah," Yang shrugged, pulling a small muffin out of the cupboard and sitting down opposite her. "Me and Blake never had an issue."

"Well, if you are sure," she hummed after swallowing her mouthful. "So where did they spend the night anyway? Your uncle's?"
"Mhm," Yang replied and took a bite of her muffin. "Rubes was pretty happy about the arrangement."

"I bet," Weiss nodded as she remembered the young redhead's reaction to her uncle arriving at the party last month. "She seem to really love him."

"Dude spoils her rotten," Yang chuckled with another shrug. "Plus, he's got some pretty great stories of when mom was in school that rubes loves to hear."

"What about you?" She asked, looking down and cutting into her food in an attempt to keep just how curious she was hidden as she also remembered that Yang had not seemed so happy to see the man. "You never really mention him too much."

"Nah, I love him," Yang shook her head dismissively. "But he's just not very reliable. I made the mistake of relying on him once and Ruby got hurt."

"How?" Weiss asked softly and put some more food into her mouth.

"It was a couple years after mom had passed," Yang responded with a shrug and placed her muffin on the table. There was no anger or annoyance in her voice, instead it held a form of acceptance; like the story she was about to tell had already been processed and understood. "Dad was away sorting himself out so we were staying at Qrow's for a few months."

"The first few weeks were fine but his work makes him travel a lot so he wasn't used to staying in town for so long. His apartment was a mess and it was usually me that cleaned it, which was fine I was used to it by then. But one day I was sweeping the hallway and heard Ruby let out this awful scream. When I got in the kitchen she was on the floor with this bright red burn on her leg."

"What happened?"

"He was cooking food and went to check his laptop. Ruby being Ruby, knocked the pan off the stove while playing around and spilt hot oil on her leg. It wasn't too much, but he knew how hyperactive she was then, he should have been keeping an eye on her. I let my guard down and relied on him but he let me down."

"What did you do?" Weiss asked, unable to keep the worry out of her voice as she knew how protective Yang was of her little sister. "When you saw her."

"I reacted as any mother would when they hear their child scream," Yang nodded and pulled off a small piece of her muffin and put it in her mouth. "When I saw him standing over her with his hand out, I just lost it. Slammed the brush handle into his hand, picked up Ruby and carried her to the neighbours house and had them drive us to the hospital."

"Wow," Weiss exclaimed and looked down at her half eaten food. For some reason the image of Yang attacking her uncle and carrying Ruby was one she could picture with absolute clarity.

"Yeah," Yang sighed with a shrug and placed the last of the muffin in her mouth. "They were both fine, Ruby didn't get any lasting scars and Qrow only had two of his finger broken, so... bright side I guess."

The chuckle that the blonde let out made a shiver run through Weiss and further reinforced the idea that she should never hurt the woman's sister, whether intentionally or unintentionally.

"But like I said," Yang smiled and leant back on her chair. "He's a good guy, just not the most
reliable."

"I can understand that," Weiss replied with a nod as thoughts of her mother sprung to mind.

"Yeah," Yang smiled and stuck her tongue out as she reached out to pull a small piece of toast off of Weiss' plate and took a bite. "Anyway, enough of my uncle, what's this about someone being unfairly denied a position?"

"I honestly don't know," Weiss shrugged and took another bit of her quickly depleting eggs and swallowing. "Her application was perfect and Ciel says she was very respectful; yet when I asked Arthur about it her I was met with another one of his sarcastic comments."

"Can't you like... Pull rank on him or something to stop that?"

"I can," she sighed and speared a piece of bacon on her fork and held it out to the blonde. "But he still reports to Father and I would like to keep from annoying him too much, just in case."

"That sucks," Yang grinned and leaned forward to take the offered food into her mouth.

"It does," Weiss replied, rolling her eyes at the woman's grin and scooping up some more eggs. "But I have a meeting with the woman today to discuss it so I will find out what happened anyway."

"Hmm," Yang hummed and leant on her arms to give Weiss a mischievous smile. "I love it when you're feisty."

Shaking her head as a wide smile stretched across her face, Weiss swallowed the last of the eggs just as her Scroll pinged. Picking it up, she saw a message from Hazel saying he was waiting outside.

"You love everything I do," Weiss chuckled, letting her girlfriend take the empty plate from the table as she stood up and zipped her new jacket.

"Except when you leave," the blonde frowned in jest and placed the plate into the sink.

"You know I want to stay longer," Weiss replied softly as she slipped her hands around the woman's neck and looked up into her girlfriend's beautiful eyes. "But I..."

"I know, I know. You have to go be a badass at your company," Yang interrupted and placed her hands on Weiss hips. "But at least you look the part now."

"Mhm," Weiss grinned and pushed herself up onto her toes to place a loving kiss on the boxers lips. "Your other jacket is upstairs by the way."

"Good to know," Yang replied with a nod and pressed her lips back against hers for a moment before pulling away and giving giving her a grin. "You dropping by the store later?"

"Maybe," she answered and let her fingers play with a strand of bright blonde hair. "Depends how the meeting goes."

"Gotcha," the brawler nodded and placed another quick kiss on her as she let her hands drop a little lower. "Then you should get going."

"I should..."

However instead of pulling herself away as she should have, Weiss pulled her girlfriend down once
again so that she could press her lips against Yang's in a deep kiss. Letting herself melt into the blonde for a few moments to enjoy it, Weiss let out a small lustful groan as she felt Yang's hands slip down to her butt and give it a gentle squeeze. Unfortunately though, Weiss knew she had to pull away or risk being worked up for the day; so with a slight groan she pulled away and gazed back into the lilac eye of the woman who made her lose control more than anyone else ever had.

"I really do have to go," Weiss sighed sadly and received a small nod in return as both of their hands fell away from each other. "I love you."

"Love you too," Yang grinned happily and placed one final peck on Weiss' lips. "Now go kick ass at work."

Rolling her eyes at the blonde, Weiss finally turned and walked out of the kitchen with a last wave. While the meeting had been something she had been looking forwards to for a while, she couldn't help but find herself a little infuriated at its arrival as had it been a day later she could have stays at Yang's a little longer. However she knew her work was important too and she had special plans for if the meeting went well, so casting aside her own disgruntlement, Weiss pulled open the front door and made her way towards her car.

Chapter End Notes

So just a small follow up chapter as I always like to do the next morning, but I also wanted to set a precedent here regarding the future. I may have upped the rating of the story, but I won't be detailing every time they have sex as I don't want this to be that kind of story. There may be the occasional time where I do if I feel it fits or if I think it makes sense to do one, but for the most part you may only just get an acknowledgement; if even that.

But yeah not much to say today as it was more of a bridge chapter with some background but I hoped you enjoyed regardless.
Hazel Rainart

Beating his thumb gently against the steering wheel as he waited for the light to turn green, Hazel glanced up into the rear-view mirror to check on his passenger and found her still gazing dreamily out the window as she had been since entering the car. As he knew the light was going to be a long one, he took a moment to reflect on when he had first been contacted for the job.

It had been mid-October when he had receive the call from Klein, a man who had given him more second chances than any one person should have, telling him he needed someone for a top priority job. The short man had stressed its importance, that it was a job he needed someone he trusted. At first Hazel had been confused as the way the man was speaking immediately made him think the job was something illegal, yet Klein had never been that kind of person. He was even more confused, and a little relieved, when Klein had told him he would be driving the young Schnee girl around.

Though of course it had not been so simple. In the following conversation Klein had explained that the girl was in need of someone discreet, someone who would be willing to lie to her father, and Hazel had almost turned the man down right then and there. While he certainly didn't despise the Schnees like many did, he certainly was not fond of them. He had grown up in the broken slums of Mantle where their factories were a vast majority of the jobs and had known many who were treated unfairly at such places. It wasn't uncommon to hear tales of people who had collapsed from exhaustion or simply been fired for no reason, and as such he had no desire to spend any time whatsoever with what he thought to be a spoilt heiress who would inevitably turn out just like her father.

But he owed Klein more than he could ever repay. The man had helped him escape Mantle and move to Vale after his younger sister had passed seventeen years ago during childbirth, had found him work in the city, and had even helped him with lawyers so that he could retain custody of his sister's child, Emerald. If putting away his own discomforts was the price to pay for helping such a man with something he clearly cared so much about, then it was certainly a cheaper price than he deserved.

But fortunately he had been wrong. After the girl had politely introduced herself, she had
cautiously given him an address to take her to and asked him to say he had taken her to the library if ever asked about it. What had followed during the drive had not been what he had expected. The moment they took off she began to fidget and at first he thought his attempts to lose the scavengers that followed her everywhere was making her worried; however as they drew closer to the address he noticed it more and more, until he finally realised what it was. Nerves.

He had seen them before on the girls he had driven to their proms, on the middle-aged women he had driven to dates, on the men he knew were about to propose. It had finally clicked when he had pulled into what looked like a rather plain residential street and he had realised the girl simply had a date; and just like every other person on the planet, she was scared. As they had arrived early, he watched her spend almost ten minutes sat in the back of the car, her eyes flitting between excited, scared and terrified; but eventually they had filled with resolve and she had stepped out of the car. When he had picked her up later the night, the smile on her face had made it hard to believe there had been a single thing wrong with her night.

After that day he had been a little more willing to drive the young girl around and had even met the young woman she was secretly dating. A blonde by the name of Yang, if he had heard correctly during the few occasions she had ridden in the back of the car, and he had once again been taken aback at first. Hazel knew what a fighter looked like, hell he had learned to count by recalling the sheer number of fights he had been in growing up, and this girl was certainly a fighter. He had watched as two girls who looked so different on first glance had happily talked and laughed until the blonde took on a more somber look and their voices had become too soft for him to hear.

Ever since that night however, Weiss had been gradually smiling more and more. Every now and again he would check his mirror and see her smiling to herself and she poured over paperwork or typed on her Scroll. While she certainly had her more sour days, as everyone did, for the most part she seemed to get happier every day and his discomfort at being her driver had quickly faded. So taking a look at the clock as the light turned yellow to see they were ahead of schedule, he pressed the lever to indicate he was turning right down a route that, while a little longer, would allow the girl to spend five more minutes in her thoughts.

* 

Weiss Schnee

Opening the door with a smile on her face, Weiss was greeted by Ciel who was sat behind her desk sorting out a small stack of paperwork. Upon hearing the door open, the navy-haired woman she looked up from her work and gave Weiss a smile smile of her own.

"Good morning, ma'am," She said cheerily and tapped her papers on the desk to straighten them out.

"It was a good morning," Weiss smiled to the Atlesian woman and shut the door behind her. "How has yours been?"

"It was quite good," Ciel hummed fondly and placed the paperwork into a tray labelled out. "I am almost done arranging these and then I will go and get your morning coffee."

"It's fine," she replied with a wave of her hand and pulled a piece of paper from the top of the stack to see it was simply a notice of construction in the next building over. "Not need to rush, I am
already pretty awake this morning; however before you go, I would like a word in my office."

"Of course, ma'am," Ciel said with a slight nod, taking the notice that Weiss handed her back and placing it back on the pile.

With another small smile to the woman, Weiss continue into her office and sat down behind her desk. As usual, there were a small stack of papers and letters in the centre that Ciel had considered urgent and with a happy sigh to herself, Weiss pulled her letter opener that was modelled after her beloved fencing rapier, Myrtenaster, from it's sheath. Picking up a bright orange letter that bore a Vacuo address, she easily sliced it open and set down to respond to her usual correspondence.

After ten minutes sorting through the usual requests for more funding which she quickly refused as the projects requested really did not need any more, and updates on production, a small knock sounded on her door and Ciel walked in with a slightly concerned look on her face. In her arms were a small stack of papers that she quickly places on the desk.

Though she considered the navy-haired woman a friend, Ciel often kept her demeanour professional until Weiss eased the tension.

"You wanted to talk, Ma'am?"

"Yes," Weiss replied with a smile and motioned to the seat that Ciel usually occupied when in the room. "How was your day off yesterday?"

"Quite wonderful actually," the woman smiled, her posture slacking slightly as she took her seat. "Sage took me to the clock museum downtown."

"He sounds like a smart guy," Weiss chuckled as she pulled the stack towards her to scan what looked to be an invoice on top. She knew from the care the woman took of her watch and just how many she seemed to own that Ciel adored timepieces, so for her boyfriend to take her to such a place truly showed that he at least understood her. "I hope it is not to forward, but how did you two meet?"

"It's fine," Ciel replied with a light smile and shook her head dismissively. "He was one of the two-week exchange students from Haven while I attended Atlas. We struck up a friendship and we have talked quite a bit ever since; however, he was transferred into Vale in July due to work and we finally decided to let it evolve into something more."

"That is actually quite sweet," Weiss smiled genuinely as Ciel let out a rare blush. "Sorry, I swear I did not ask you in here to pry into your private life."

"It's fine, ma'am," Ciel said, the worried look dropping from her face as she relaxed a little more into the chair. "So what did you ask me here to talk about?"

"Something I believe I gave my word on a few weeks ago," Weiss replied happily and leant back in her chair to watch Ciel. "I met with the liaison team during your day off and they would be delighted to have you."

"Really?" the woman replied, the excitement that slipped into her voice making Weiss smile slightly to herself.

"Yes," she said with a nod and watched a small smile take over Ciel's face. "However, there is still one thing you need to do."

"Oh," Ciel replied, her smile faltering slightly at Weiss' words. "What would that be?"
Taking a second to stare at the girl, Weiss gave her a reassuring grin while leaning forward to rest her elbows on the desk and interlock her fingers.

"Well," she said slowly and put her chin on her fingers. "Everything is set for you to transfer except *when*. That choice is up to you."

"Me?"

"Mhm," Weiss hummed at the confused look on Ciel's face. "Now I will be leaving this department in two weeks and when I do, you will be starting at your new position on the liaison team. However if you want, you can start tomorrow. The choice is yours."

Seemingly taken aback by being given the choice, Ciel sat silently in her chair as thoughts flickered behind her eyes. Not wanting to rush the woman choice, Weiss sat patiently and waited until the thoughts finally slowed and Ciel gave her a small smile.

"I would like to stay as your assistant for the time being," she answered with a nod. "If that is okay with you?"

"If that is your choice?" Weiss asked, receiving another nod and response. "Fair enough, then I shall be happy to have your continued help for the remainder of my position here. I will also be raising your pay to match the position you should be in. It may only be an extra two weeks, but the salary increase from assistant to interdepartmental liaison is quite significant."

"Th-Thank you," Ciel stuttered, her eyes widening in surprise at Weiss' statement. "But that really isn't ne..."

"Please," Weiss interrupted with a raised hand and sat back in her chair to give the woman a pointed look. "You have done more than enough to earn it."

"I..." Ciel started, only to pause and rethink her words. "Then I graciously accept, ma'am."

"Good," Weiss grinned at the happy smiled that Ciel was clearly trying to suppress. "Also, as we discussed, you will be my personal liaison. So even though we will no longer be in the same department, I expect we will still see quite a bit of each other."

"Then I look forward to continuing working with you in the future," Ciel replied, letting that smile break through slightly.

"And I you," Weiss replied and pulled the stack of papers closer to herself as she prepared to run through them. "But I think that will be all, I am sure there is plenty of work you will want to get to already."

"And I really should get your coffee."

"Yes," Weiss nodded and picked up her pen from the desk. "I may be quite awake now but I have a feeling this will be a long day. Speaking of, please send Mrs Jadis straight in when she arrives."

"Of course, ma'am," Ciel replied as she stood up, picking up the letters Weiss had already sorted before the woman had come in. "Should I bring her file through with your coffee too?"

"That would be a great help," Weiss nodded and began to skim through one of the sheets. "Thank you, Ciel."

After one final smile, Ciel turned and left the room and before the door had completely shut Weiss
witness the woman hurriedly dig into her pocket and pull out what she recognised immediately as her Scroll. With how mature and professional she always acted, Weiss often found herself forgetting that her assistant was only two years older than her but always liked to see that the woman had a more excitable side to her too.

However with a sizeable stack of paperwork before her, Weiss stretched her arm and put her attention back into reading one of the many supply requests that she would be signing off on that day.

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Stretching her back as she scanned through a letter from the Atlas headquarters of the STC, Weiss let out a small sigh and placed her pen down on the desk. Once again, they were attempting to persuade her that the tremor chip and all of Dr Polendina's work would be better taken care of in Atlas as they could work closer with the military; however despite understanding and accepting that the chip would have some military application, that was not the route she wanted her project to go. While she certainly was reaching out to the Atlesian military for funding, her main goal was the Remnant Medical Research Foundation which was based out of Vale. They certainly did outsource to the four other kingdoms, but Vale was their main location and therefore many of their higher funded projects were handled within the city.

Letting out another sigh at the narrow-minded partnership between the STC and the Atlas military, Weiss pulled out a piece of paper and wrote out the same rejection she had written multiple times in the past. Once again she took care to detail exactly why she wished the project to remain in Vale, though she knew from experience that whoever was on the other end likely didn't share her views, and scrawled her signature at the bottom. Just as she finished signing off on the letter and placing it in a pile for Ciel to type up later, a small knock came from her door.

"Come in," Weiss called, picking up a closed file labelled Abigail Jadis from the side of her desk as she knew exactly who it would be.

The door opened and a woman with shoulder-length black hair, from which a pair of small, pointed horns poked out, wearing a plain green, button up shirt and white pants cautiously walked in. As she shut the door, Weiss stood up and held out her hand towards the woman who took it with a small smile.

"Thank you for agreeing to this meeting, Mrs Jadis," Weiss said as they shook hands briefly. "My name is Weiss Schnee."

"I know who you are," the woman replied in a slight Vacuon accent that turned her I's into Ah's, her curious green eyes meeting Weiss' as if she couldn't believe who was standing before her. "And it's quite alright, though I must say I was surprised to have received the call."

"I am sure," She smiled, dropping the woman's hand as motioning to the empty seat that was quickly filled as the woman sat down. "Would you care for a drink of water or anything?"

"I'm fine, thank you," She answered politely and crossed her legs, the woman's eyes still survey her carefully.

"Fair enough," Weiss smiled softly. It was very clear that the woman was uncertain as to why she...
was there so Weiss decided it would be best if she clarified the situation. "Well then, I know you were told over the phone that this meeting is to discuss your previous application, but let me elaborate a little further."

"As I am sure you are aware, the STC is undergoing some changes," Weiss started off, noticing the flicker of disbelief in the eyes of her interviewee. "And as part of that, I have been appointed to oversee this department and make sure everything here is running to the best of its ability."

"Now while that involves quite a lot of things, I also wanted to take a look at the hiring process and make sure we are bringing in the best of the best. However as I was going through the previous applicants, something strange stood out to me."

"Strange?" The woman asked curiously.

"You," Weiss answered kindly and pulled open the woman's file. "Your resume is, in all honesty, exceptional. Graduated top of your class at Shadow Academy at seventeen, valedictorian, spent 6 years studying bioengineering at Shade Academy and landed a place in Merlot Industries upon receiving your masters degree. You have spent four years there, your previous employee says you were extremely hard working, until you finally applied to work here. Now here is where I get confused because despite all of this, you were refused a position here."

"Oh," Mrs Jadis exclaimed and straightened her back. "Well, I can't speak for the man who interviewed me..."

"... Arthur Watts?"

"Yes," The woman nodded slightly and continued. "But when I got the call to tell me I didn't get the job, I believe it was mentioned that there were concerns regarding my suitability with the team."

If Weiss was confused as to how the woman before her hadn't got the job before, then words couldn't describe how befuddled she was after that answer. Not only had Ciel described the woman as incredibly polite, but it was almost impossible to know how a new hire would fit in with a team until they had at least interacted for a while.

"Are you certain that is what was said?" Weiss asked hoping she had heard the woman wrong, only to receive a firm nod in response. "Then it appears I have given Arthur's intelligence too much credit," she sighed in annoyance and leant back in her chair. "Do you have any idea of what may have caused these concerns? An interaction, a look, anything?"

"I..." The woman began but stopped and looked down at her knees. "I don't wish to get anyone is trouble."

"And I do not want a company I will be leading in the future to turn away such promising candidates," Weiss replied quickly, her tone calm despite having her suspicions of why the woman had been turned down all but confirmed. "So please, help me understand why we would be?"

Doubt passed through the woman's eyes for a couple of minutes as she thought on what to say, but eventually she took a deep breath and looked up from her knees and put her hands together.

"After my interview," she started calmly and began to circle her thumbs. "I thought it had gone well and was running back through it in my head when I accidentally walked into someone. In a panic, I tried to pull away but... one of my horns ripped a hole in his shirt."

"That is it?" Weiss asked, sceptical that such an understandable accident would affect anything.
"Well," Mrs Jadis replied and stopped twirling her thumbs. "When I tried to apologise, he may not
have been so friendly in return."

"And you did not report it?"

"I thought speaking up against a current employee before I was even hired may have reflected
badly on me," The woman nodded and gave a small shrug.

"Well it should not have," Weiss replied gently and sat forward again. "I would however like to
know who the employee was. If there is a member of my team acting in such a way then I would
like to rectify it immediately."

"I don't believe I caught a name," the woman replied cautiously after a moment of silence. "He was
quite tall, rather muscular and had reddish-ginger hair."

"Cornell," Weiss sighed but felt a small smile tug at her lips. "If that is the case then I do not
believe we have any issues."

"Forgive me," it was Mrs Jadis' turn to be confused and it certainly showed on her face. "I'm not
sure I understand?"

"I personally fired Mr Winchester over a month for reports of such actions," Weiss clarified with a
purposeful smile.

"Oh," the woman replied, a little shock in her voice that quickly vanished as she spoke. "Well then,
I'm glad everything had turned out for the better then."

"Not quite," Weiss countered and closed the woman's file. "I would like to ask you a few more
questions, if that is alright with you?"

"That is fine," Mrs Jadis replied with a small smile and sat up a little straighter in her chair.
"Though I'm not sure what else I can help with."

"Simple curiosities is all," Weiss replied with a small chuckle as she pushed the file aside and leant
on her desk. "Your file says that when we called your employer, they told us that you were
currently up for promotion; yet you were still seeking a place here that would have been lower in
position than what Merlot Industries were offering you. I am curious as to what drove you to want
a position here so badly you would turn down what was, apparently, a very sought after position?"

"Well," the woman said and paused, clearly taking a moment to think before letting out a small
sigh and continuing. "While I have enjoyed my time at Merlot Industries, they are the world
leaders in weapons development and as such, quite a lot of projects revolve around that area.
However it is an area I never really desired to work in."

"You don't like working with weapons?"

"No, the idea of contributing to war never sat right with me," The woman nodded sincerely. "That
was why when I heard of a position opening up here I immediately jumped at the chance. For all
the news stories that depict this place rather badly, I know that your grandfather, Nicholas Schnee,
ensured that the company would never take part in weapons development."

"That is true," Weiss smiled, glad that at least someone remembered the goal her grandfather had
set out to accomplish with his company. "My grandfather despised war, he was a child during the
last one; and after he grew up, he focused his efforts on doing everything he could to prevent
another. He wanted nothing more than to make people's lives better so that wars could be avoided."
"Abstaining from weapons development was a very unusual thing for a technology company to do when he made the STC," The woman grinned in return. "He influenced a lot of companies to follow his example."

"That was my grandfather for you," Weiss chuckled happily as she took a second to once again remember exactly how incredible the man was. However, not wanting appear rude, she quickly pulled her attention back to the woman in front of her. "So aside from our policy on weapons development, were there any other reasons you wished to work here?"

"I also knew that Dr Polendina worked here too," she replied and Weiss was immediately able to discern the respect in her voice. "The chance to work with the man who revolutionized our approach to prosthetics is a something desired by everyone who studies bioengineering."

"I can see why," Weiss smiled at the desire she could hear in the woman's voice. "So is that something you still desire?"

"I'm like everyone else," the woman smiled, clearly not understanding Weiss' meaning. "To ever get to work with Dr Polendina would be an honour."

"Well then," Weiss grinned and leant back in her chair to watch the woman, just as she had with Ciel. "It is very fortunate that for the last month we had had a position open that has yet to filled. And I would like to offer it to you."

Clearly the woman had not been expecting such a proposal as her thin eyebrows rose so high that they almost disappeared beneath her black fringe. Chuckling at the surprised look on the woman's face, Weiss waited for her to fully understand what she had just been offered.

"You're offering me a job?"

"In a way," Weiss replied with a slight nod of her head. "Though I believe it would be more accurate to say that I am offering you the job you should have received when you first applied. Only if you still want it of course?"

Once again the woman took a couple of seconds to think and Weiss simply remained impassive. She already had plans for the woman, should she accept, but she didn't want to seem desperate or alter her decision at all. Fortunately, after a couple of moments in thought, the faunus gave a small smile and the look of intense thought disappeared from her eyes.

"It is still something I want," The woman said happily and Weiss gave her a small smile. "However, I will have to give two weeks notice before I can leave my current position."

"I figured as much," Weiss chuckled and let herself relax slightly. "But that will not be an issue. It is likely I will have already been transferred back into accounting when you officially start, but I shall inform Dr Watts of your employment here and I trust that Dr Polendina would be more than happy to help you get yourself situated."

"Dr Polendina?"

"Yes," Weiss replied and suppressed a grin at the shocked look on the woman's face. "He is leading up a very special project that, though I cannot tell you about it right now, is something I know he would be honoured to have more people such as yourself working on with him."

"Tha-a-a..." The woman started to reply excitedly but cut herself off from what was very clearly a bleat, embarrassment flicking across her face for a brief second before she took a deep breath and continued. "To work with Dr Polendina would be an honour I could not refuse, Miss Schnee."
"Then I shall inform him and ensure it happens," Weiss smiled and slowly stood from her chair. "However, I feel I have kept you long enough and I am sure you have Saturday plans, so I believe that will be all for today."

"That I do," the woman smiled and stood up too, her hand coming out to shake her hand and Weiss gladly accepted. "Thank you so much for this opportunity."

"It is long overdue," Weiss smiled and firmly shook the woman's hand before walking around her desk.

Taking one last look at the smile on the woman face, Weiss placed her hand on the cold door handle and pulled it open to show her out; however just as the door open fully and she looked into the small waiting area outside, Weiss' eyes immediately found themselves drawn to a head on white hair sat in one of the chairs.

Upon seeing the woman look up to her with pale blue eyes, she completely forgot why she had left the room in the first place and it was her turn to have her eyes widen as a mix of excitement and happiness immediately rushed through her body. Unfortunately, had her happiness not taken control and made her take a step forward to run and hug the white-haired woman, she would have seen the woman's eyes flick between Weiss and her guest before giving a raising an eyebrow.

"Wint..."

"You have a guest," The woman cut her off, the annoyance in her voice evident as her stare made Weiss stop in her tracks.

She had only taken three steps, but they were three steps she already regretted more than most of the things she had done in the past year. While her father usually acted in such a way, his anger and the fear that came with it were always expected; but with Winter there was no anger, only disappointment that made Weiss feel worse than her father ever could. Hanging her head slightly in shame, Weiss turned back to Abigail Jadis who was watching her with a large amount of interest and gave her a soft smile.

"Sorry," she quickly apologised to the faunus woman, trying her best to return the professionalism to her voice as the woman simply waved her hand with a smile. "Thank you for coming in, you helped me with much more than you probably realise."

"The pleasure was mine," the woman responded kindly and began to button up her jacket that she had apparently left on a nearby chair. "Though it's a shame we won't get to work together."

"I will be keeping an eye on things here," Weiss replied with a soft chuckle and held out her hand to do a final handshake. "So you will likely be seeing me around."

"Then I look forward to it," Mrs Jadis said amusedly and shook the offered hand for a second before letting go and picking up her bag that had also been left on the chair. "Have a good day, Miss Schnee."

"You too."

Once the woman had left the room, Weiss turned back to see that her sister had stood up and was watching her. Unlike both Weiss and their brother, Winter had inherited their father's height and combined with the beauty they had both inherited from their mother, she certain struck an impressive figure. Her long, white military coat that as accented with blue trimmings only added to the power she seemed to exude and only partially cover her blue waistcoat.
"Your manners still need work," she said dryly and took a step forward, her thigh-high, grey heeled boots clicking softly on the floor.

Daring to finally look up into the eyes that had been scowling at her only a moment ago, Weiss found that her elder sister's face had returned to its usual impassive state. It had been some months since Weiss had seen her sister in person but the sight was so familiar that it was as if they had never been separated. The hard blue eyes, the snow white skin, the soft lips; Weiss knew she would eventually grow to mirror them but they would her sister's would always be unique to her.

She would also always remember the fringe that infuriated their father so much. While Weiss had grown to favour her hair long, Winter preferred to cut her own much shorter with it only reaching the bottom of her shoulder-blades when released from the bun she always wore it in. The only thing Winter actually kept long was her fringe. Weiss was a child at the time but she still remembered that at some point during the woman's teen years, Winter had begun to grow the long curtain of white hair; and ever since it had always reached just below her chin.

"My apologies, Winter," Weiss replied and tried to give her sister a smile. "You just caught me off guard, is all. I wasn't expecting you until Monday."

"That was the plan," she said stiffly as she unbuckled the dark blue clasp that held her coat together and put her hand inside in search of something. "But General Ironwood thought it a good time for me to inspect the Atlas Military base here in Vale. He also asked for me to deliver this for him."

Pulling her hand from her jacket, Weiss saw a small white envelope clutched in her hands and gladly accepted it once it was held out to her. Turning it over she saw that it was indeed from General Ironwood himself and knew that the rejection to her request for funding from the Atlas military was likely to be inside.

"Thank you."

"Yes well," Winter replied simply and re-clasped her coat. "Unfortunately that is all I came by for as I must get back to base, but you will meet me near the base at midday on Monday. We can discuss your... issue... over lunch."

"O-Of course," Weiss replied with a nervous smile. "Should I bring Yang?"

"No, though it is good to finally know her name," Winter said softly, her eyes flicking to Ciel as she clearly recognised that it was free to talk around the navy-haired woman. "Me and your girlfriend shall meet another day, I would like an afternoon to catch up with my sister before we get into what I must tell you both."

"Understood," Weiss nodded with a genuine smile at Winter's desire to spend time with only her.

"Good, then I shall take my leave for today," Winter replied and turned to Ciel. "Miss Soleil, your parent send their regards." Ciel simply gave the woman a small smile and a thank you before returning to her work and Winter once again turned back to Weiss. "Until Monday then, Sister."

The smile that overcame Weiss face at the feeling of her sister's arms wrapping around made her glad her face was hidden from view, but she quickly returned the hug and let her sister's warmth wash over her for the few seconds that they embraced. Though much too soon for her liking, Winter pulled away and while she would have loved for it to have lasted longer, Weiss let her sister go and looked up to see the remnants of a soft smile fade from the older woman's lips.
Even though she knew she would see her sister again in a couple of days, she still felt a wave of sadness as she watched the woman leave the small office. However, it was quickly replaced by happiness as she remembered that she was in fact in Vale. She had called and her sister had come; so feeling the happy smile pull at her lips again, Weiss turned to Ciel with a new source of energy to help her face the rest of the day.

"Ciel, Would you tell Dr Polendina I would like to see him as soon as possible please?"

"Right away, ma'am," nodded her head as she stood and walked out of the room to go and get the man.

Looking down at the envelope, Weiss let out a small sigh at what she guessed would be inside. She had known it would've been highly unlikely that General Ironwood would approve funding while the chip was little more than an idea but it was a blow nonetheless. However, with her new hire who she knew would get along with Dr Polendina, maybe the next time that they reached out they would have something to convince him it was worth his time.

Chapter End Notes

So as you can probably tell, we are drawing to the end of Weiss' position as Overseer and as the next chapters will be more focused to somewhere you can probably guess, I really wanted this chapter to tie up the open stories in the workplace. While I wanted to keep a little monotony to this chapter, since it is just work stuff, I hope it was enjoyable enough and you were satisfied with some of the wrap-ups here.

I also really wanted to do that Hazel bit and use it as a very short section to show how Weiss had grown, so I hope that was good enough too.

But that is it from me. I hope you enjoyed the chapter and Winter's introduction. Full openness from me, I usually have these done like a day or two before upload but I hold off so I can get a little head-start on the next chapter, however, I have been struggling to write lately. Despite having had the next chapter planned since near the start, I have spent two days so far just looking at a blank page unable to put my thoughts into words; so please don't be surprised if the next chapter takes a couple extra days to come out as I get through this small bout of writers block.
Reunions

Chapter Summary

A distant family comes together.

Chapter Notes

PLEASE READ BEFORE STARTING - This chapter contains a few German sentences, not many but a few. I tried to make them as easy to understand through context as possible, but if you can't make them out then there will be translations for each one in the end notes.

Once again, much thanks to ToxicExotic for editing this chapter and offering advice.

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Weiss Schnee

As Weiss leant against her car, cold, harsh winds tore at her exposed skin like glass as small flecks of white danced listlessly in her vision. While it was only light, the gentle snowfall had been falling since morning and with the help of the wind, it had finally succeeded its week-long attempt to replace the grey pavement and green grass with a soft dusting of white. Though the sight itself was pretty, the wind was making Weiss shiver uncontrollably and she really wished her sister would hurry up.

It had been a long morning with her father being more foul than usual, and her brother making more snide remarks to match, but she was finally only minutes away from seeing her sister properly. She had even arrived a little early to the Atlas military base in the north of Vale and had intended to wait in the warm car until her sister joined her; but after five minutes of being unable to sit still, she had left the warmth to slowly pace outside. Though she had eventually stopped and came to a rest against the cold metal of her car due to the suspicious looks she had been getting from the guards.

Fortunately just as she opened her Scroll for what had to be the fifth time that minute to check the time, Weiss heard a loud buzz issue from the gate and turned just in time to see her sister walking through the slowly opening metal. Excitement immediately filled her, just as it had days earlier when Weiss had exited her office to see the woman sitting there; and no longer feeling the cold, Weiss pushed herself off the cold metal surface off the car as Winter drew closer.

"Good afternoon, Sister," Winter said simply and held out her duffel bag to Hazel who had stepped out of the car to retrieve it. "Why are you waiting outside of the car?"

"I just got out," Weiss lied and reached back to pull her door open. "It was too hot."
"So the call I received five minutes ago informing me that you were burning a gorge in the concrete with your pacing was untrue?"

"N-No," she replied and let out a sigh as Winter walked past her and took her seat in the car. "Sorry, I was just happy that we will be spending the day together."

"As am I," Winter replied and moved over as Weiss sat down too. "Yet I know how to be so without causing myself to become sick."

Smiling to herself at Winter's admission of being happy they were spending the day together, Weiss fastened her seatbelt and sat back in the seat.

"So dare I ask how much trouble Father gave you about meeting me today?"

"A little more than he did yesterday," Weiss replied with a slight groan as she remembered her father's not so kind words. "He has returned to his stance that General Ironwood only ever took an interest in you to gain favour with the STC."

"Well, father has always been fond of the classics," Winter stated offhandedly and fastened her own seatbelt over her white shirt that had the Atlas crest sewn onto the breast. "I look forward to seeing his face when he discovers I will be staying at the manor."

Turning her head sharply at that news, Weiss raised an eyebrow in disbelief. Ever since Winter had left the house at nineteen and joined the military, she had never once stayed at the mansion during her leave; instead she had chosen to stay in hotels and only visited the mansion to pick up Weiss.

"Y-You are staying?"

"Yes," Winter answered with a small nod as Hazel took his seat and started the car. "I feel it would be easier for the both of us if I stayed at the manor this time."

"Of course," she replied with a smile and gave Hazel the signal that it was okay for him to start moving.

"So how are Whitely and Mother are doing?"

"Whitely is still the same," Weiss shrugged and felt the car begin to move towards the restaurant that her and Winter always visited when she came to town. "Still trying to be as much like Father as he can."

Much to her surprise, the look in Winter's eyes as the woman turned to face her was not one of understanding; it gave her the distinct impression that she had failed at something she had never known she should have been doing. However, it faded just as quickly as it appeared and Weiss was left perplexed at what she had said to earn such a look.

"I see," Winter replied, paying Weiss' confusion no mind. "And what of Mother?"

"She..."

Weiss paused as, confusion aside, she was genuinely unsure on how to answer that question. She had been watching her mother a little closer over the weekend and had been surprised to see that, on both days, her mother had not refilled her wine-glass at all during their dinners. Alongside that, Weiss could have sworn that the woman had been watching her a little closer.

"... She seems to be acting a little different lately," Weiss said cautiously."
"In what way?" Winter asked and Weiss heard the genuine intrigue in her voice.

"I think she has stopped drinking," she replied slowly and saw her sister's eyebrow raise. "Not completely, but she definitely seems to have slowed down."

"Interesting," Winter replied thoughtfully, though what she was thinking exactly was not shared with Weiss. "Has anything changed at the manor?"

"Not that I can recall," Weiss replied after a moment of thought. "Though I have been playing the piano again recently and I believe she has been listening."

"Mother has always loved your playing," Winter replied almost absent-mindedly as she leaned to look out of her window towards the front of the car. "But I am guessing your renewed interest in music is due to this Yang girl?"

Luckily Winter was still looking forward out of her window so Weiss was able to hide the grin that spread itself on her face at both her sister's ability to understand her with ease and at the memory of her most recent time with the instrument that had filled the room with the joyous memories of their recent date.

"Ye..."

"Hold that thought, Sister," Winter interrupted and turned her attention to Hazel, who's eyes were looking back at them in the rear-view mirror. "You see them too, Mr?"

"Rainart, and yes," Hazel replied in his usual gruff voice. "I will lose th..."

"No," Winter cut the man off and sat back in her seat. "Continue along your usual route please, Mr Rainart."

"Got it."

"It seems the press have once again forgotten the example I set on my last visit," she said in an unamused voice and turned back to Weiss. "Anyway, you were about to answer my question?"

"Oh! Yes, she is," Weiss asked and turned back from the car she had been watching follow them. "Ever since I met her, my fingers just respond again."

"I guess there is something I can thank her for when we meet then," Winter replied with a short smile and visibly relaxed back in her seat a little. "So, you have yet to tell me how you met this girl? Or why it took you so long to tell me about her?"

"Well," Weiss answered, pulling out her Scroll and typing in her passcode to pull up a picture of her and Yang the blonde had taken the day before during her visit to the coffee shop. Smiling at the wide grin on Yang's face, she passed the Scroll to her sister. "She is an artist but she currently works in her friend's coffee shop. I visited a couple of months ago and she... She was really cute and didn't treat me like everyone else. So I went back."

"She certainly looks like your type," Winter commented and Weiss could see the woman's eyes scanning every inch of the beaming boxer, who was wearing her workout gear as she had only just arrived at the store and was about to go up to Blake's house to shower. "Sporty, just like that Reese girl I caught you with during our visit to Mistral last year."

"Reese was just a fling" Weiss answered, remembering the vacation she and Winter had taken to Mistral a year prior where she had dated, if that was what it could even be called, the daughter of
her favourite clothing designer. "Yang is... She's special.

"She doesn't see me as Weiss Schnee. To her I am just Weiss, and I like that. I love that when I am with her I can just let go of all the prim and proper stuff that Father told me I needed to be accepted and just be me."

"Hmm," Winter hummed and continued to inspect the photo, though her eyes were locked onto Weiss who was also smiling happily. "So why did it take so long to tell me?"

"It was all so new," Weiss sighed as hazel turned a corner and a loud horn issued behind them shortly after a car passed them. "I knew that if I contacted you then you would say I have to tell Father soon."

"You are right," Winter replied easily and gave her a short look. "Delaying it will only make him more furious when he inevitably does find out."

"I know," she groaned and let herself slump a little in her seat, her gaze turning to the window to see grey office building sliding by and knew that they would be arriving at the restaurant soon. "I just want to enjoy being happy for a while. Before he complicates everything."

"I understand how you feel, Weiss," Winter replied softly, the rare use of her name dragging Weiss' attention back to her sister's unusually gentle gaze. "But it has to be done. Though that does not mean you have to do it right now. When confronting any opponent, regardless of their strength, you must have a plan of action before you attack."

"I know," she sighed again and took her Scroll back. "But I have no idea how where to start without further risking my position in the company. That is why I called you, you are the only person who has managed to win against Father."

"I did not win, Weiss," Winter corrected her immediately, the natural hardness returning to her voice as he hand brushed her long fringe from her eyes. "I gave up more than the company to escape Father, things I still regret leaving."

"Sorry," Weiss said remorsefully, Winter turning to look out of the window again as Hazel began to slow down. "You... You have never really talked about what made you leave."

"You were too young," Winter replied quietly after a moment of silence. "You had yet to experience what was needed to truly understand, though I suppose that is no longer the case."

"Does this mea..." Weiss began to ask, the years of curiosity regarding why her sister had left finally getting the better of her.

"Not today," Winter interrupted as the car came to a full stop and they both unbuckled their seatbelts. "I do not like remembering what I must tell you and I would rather not have to tell it twice."

"Twice?"

"Yes," Winter said with a nod as she pushed the door open and Weiss saw three reporters jump out of some cars around them. "There are two more ears that must hear my story."

Though Winter had not said it outright due to the reporters being so close, Weiss understood that she meant Yang and was even more curious what her sister could possibly have to tell a girl she had never met. However as Winter stepped out of the car and the reporters began to barrage her with questions, Weiss smiled to herself and cast her curiosity aside to eagerly joined her sister.
"Winter, what're you doing in Vale?"

"Do you have any comment on your father's recent controversy with his faunus workers?"

"Is it true that the Atlesian military have been increasing their presence in Argus in an attempt to wrestle control of the city from Mistral?"

While Winter took a moment to inspect each of the reporters who had shoved their cameras and recorders into the older woman's face, Weiss grinned at the reply she knew was about to come.

"I am here to see my sister, no I do not have any comment on a situation that does not involve myself, and General Ironwood is working in tandem with the Mistral council to increase our presence in Argus as part of a renewed attempt to stop the increase of weapons trade at Mistral's black markets," she stated very clearly and turned to look at each in turn.

"However, now that I have answered your questions," Winter said and stood up to her quite impressive full height. "In accordance with the Secrecy Understanding Act negotiated between Atlas and all other kingdoms after the Great War that states all off-duty Atlas military personnel are not allowed to be interviewed without the presence of someone on-duty and higher ranked; all of your cameras, recorders and memory cards on site are now subject to seizure. Mr Rainart, if you would?"

Though Hazel was clearly taken aback at first, he quickly regained his composure and pulled a large camera from a blue-haired woman and placed it in the car. One by one he snatched the equipment from each of the glowering reporters, their reluctance to hand everything over apparent as Hazel had to tear a recorder from a man's hand but finally everything was shoved in the back of the car.

"You, or your employer, may request their return at the Atlas embassy and they shall be returned after we have made sure that nothing of note has been said," Winter instructed coldly, though a slight smirk pulled at the corner of her lips. "Though as it is almost Christmas, your request may take a couple of weeks to go through."

Grumbling to themselves as they cast Winter a dirty look, each of the reporters left and Weiss definitely saw a small smile pull at her sister's lips.

"That should handle them for the rest of my stay," she said in amusement and glanced towards Hazel. "Please deliver those things to the Atlas base while we eat, Mr Rainart."

"Will do," The man said shortly and walked back around to the driver's seat.

"I have always loved how you do that," Weiss smiled in awe at her sister after Hazel had finally driven away and they began to walk towards the restaurant he had dropped them off at.

"I am aware," Winter grinned and walked through the door that had been opened by the establishments Greeter. "Now, let us get some food, sister. And while we are at it, you can tell me more about this new controversy Father has embroiled himself in."

"Of course," Weiss replied happily and followed her sister into the well-lit building that had been there usual eating place since Winter had first come back to Vale on leave.
Weiss had heard from many a guest that had visited over the years that the driveway to the Schnee manor was a sight to behold. They had described it as both beautiful and terrifying and Weiss had thought the same many years ago. She had been a little older than seven the very first time she had arrived at the manor after moving to Vale, and the large suits of imposing white marble armour that stood in pairs had terrified her. She had known from stories told by the staff that the swords in each of the statues hands were genuine, and while they were too large for anyone to wield they were most certainly sharp. In the first few months she had lived there, she'd had plenty of nightmares of them coming to attack her; but they eventually faded and Weiss came to realise the beauty of them.

Almost half a year after, she stopped casting her gaze to the floor as her car passed them and instead took the time to appreciate them. They were her protectors, sixteen large marble giants with swords capable of cleaving a car in half protecting the place her family lived; her sister, her mother, her brother... she had even once been happy they protected her father.

But that feeling soon faded too.

Winter had left when Weiss was fourteen, her mother had shut down beyond recognition shortly after, her father became stricter than ever, and her brother was becoming someone she could barely recognise as the smiling boy she had once held. After Winter's departure, their father had begun to reinforce his rules much harder. She was no longer allowed to venture beyond the grounds walls without his say so, and being under his constant attention had slowly made her hate the manor for the mere memory of those times. Due to that, she also came to hate the statues that lined their driveway. While they were still her guards, they were no longer her protectors. Instead they served her father as her wardens, standing guard in front of the house so that she could not leave.

But as she drove past them that day after a lunch that had ended in a shopping spree with Winter, she could once again see them as the stunning beauties she once had. Impeccably maintained by the gardening staff, their white armour stood out against the marvellously, even against the snow, and the pale light of the setting sun glinted beautifully off the metal swords casing golden rays over the settling snow. She certainly still viewed them as her captors, there was no denying that they truly were beautiful. Fortunately though, she didn't have to look at the too long as Hazel pulled the car up to the front door of the mansion and came to a complete stop.

Stepping out of the car, Weiss and Winter made their way out of the car to the trunk where Hazel was pulling numerous shopping bags from it.

"We can handle those, Mr Rainart," Winter smiled politely at the man and held out her hand to take them from him.

"You sure?"

"Quite," Winter answered with a slight nod to Weiss indicating that she too should take some bags. "Though I highly suspect we shall not be carrying them far."

"Alright then," he replied and passed the bags in his hands to them both, the weight a little more than Weiss had suspected. "I shall take the car back to the garage then. Have a good night."

"You too, Hazel," Weiss smiled at the man and gave him a short wave as he drove away.

"Well then, Sister," Winter said happily and Weiss knew why there was a little anticipation in her sister's voice. "We should head inside. If we keep him waiting any longer then he may not be able to contain himself."
Smiling to herself at how right Winter was, Weiss gave a small nod and turned to follow her sister up the few steps that led to the front door. However, just as expected, the door flew open as they neared it and in the doorway stood her portly butler, Klein, with an overjoyed look on his face.

"Mein Schneeengel!" He cried happily in Atlesian the moment he came into sight. "Willkommen zu Hause, mein wunderschöner Schneeengel."

"Thank you, Klein," Winter smiled happily and placed her bag on the floor to hold out her arms. Wasting no time, Klein immediately rushed forward and wrapped his arms around the taller woman's waist in a loving hug that was quickly returned by Winter. "Atlas has still never felt like home without you."

"Well you are home now where I can take care of you," Klein replied after pulling back and rocking on the balls of his feet as he wiped a tear away from his eye. "Come in, my snow angel. Com..." His words cut off as Winter went to pick back up the bags she had put down. "No, no, Leave those to me. You two go inside where it is warm."

Placing her own bag into Klein's open hand, Weiss took a step forward into the mansion and felt herself immediately begin to warm up due to the heating likely being on full. Seconds later, Winter joined her and glanced around the foyer with a scowl before shifting aside to allow Klein to bring the bags in. Despite the man's stature, years of serving had clearly built up some strength as he carried all six large shopping bags and Winter's duffel with ease.

"Mein Schneeengel und Schneeflocke wieder zusammen!" He continued to cry happily to himself as he trotted up the stairs to take the bags to one of the spare rooms.

However as Weiss smiled to herself at Klein's tendency to launch into Atlesian when he was happy, the sound of gentle clicking caught her ear and she turned to see her mother staring at them having just exited from a nearby room. Having clearly noticed it herself, Winter turned to look at the woman who had begun to take very slow steps towards them.

"Winter?"

"Hello, Mother," Winter replied, a softness to her voice that was beyond anything she had ever shown to Weiss.

"M-My darling girl," The older woman choked and practically fell forward into Winter's waiting arms.

Since Winter never stepped foot into the house, only dropping by to pick Weiss up, and their mother rarely left it, Weiss knew it had been a couple of years since the two had actually seen each other; though she had no idea why. She was aware that her mother and Winter had had a rather good relationship before the older woman had shut down, but once Winter had left the two gave the impression that neither was too bothered by the distance.

Standing there feeling slightly awkward as the minutes passed with her mother gently sobbing in Winter's arms, Weiss looked away due to the slight feeling of jealousy that arose within her and found herself locking eyes with the sneering face of her brother who was stood at the top of the stairs. Like her, he had also been watching the two older woman embrace but his eyes turned to Weiss and the look in them made her shiver. Though Weiss had never known the reason, it was common knowledge among the family that Whitley had never liked Winter, and the sheer contempt in the boy's eyes clearly indicated that it was still the case.

"I have m-missed you so m-much," her mother sobbed, her voice pulling Weiss' gaze away from
her brother who had already begun to climb the stairs.

"I know, Mother," Winter replied gently and stroked the woman's head. "But please compose yourself, it would be a shame for the reunion of our family to be awash in tears."

"Y-You are right," the older woman choked and finally pulled back from her daughter though tears were still running down her face. "I am s-sure you have to get g-going to your hotel."

"I will actually be staying here," Winter replied and their mother's eyes flew open in surprise. "If that is okay with you and Father?"

Clearly taken aback by the news, the tears that were beginning to slow quickly regained their previous vigour as Willow placed her hand on her oldest daughter's cheek.

"This is your h-home," she answered quietly and Weiss saw Winter lean into the touch ever so slightly. "You will always be welcome."

"Thank you, Mother," Winter replied with a small smile and placed her own hand over their mother's. "Hopefully we can use this time to catch up..." She cast a quick glance in Weiss' direction and Weiss also saw her eyes dart to the stairs for the briefest of moments. "... All of us."

"Me too," their mother replied with a soft smile and let her hand fall from Winter's cheek. "Though I am sure Klein is waiting to pamper you, so you should go and see him. I shall instruct the kitchen to cook your favourite meal to celebrate."

"Is Father going to be joining us?" Weiss asked cautiously, but was happy to receive a shake of her mother's head in return.

"Your father mentioned something about working late."

"I am sure that was the truth," Winter replied shortly and turned back to Weiss. "But I do wish to clean up before dinner."

"As should I," Willow replied and took a step back to look up into her daughter's eyes. "It is so good to have you back home."

With a soft smile at the both of them, their mother turned and walked up the stairs, only to stop as the sound of something smashing in the distance caught all of them by surprise. Shaking her head as she assumed that it was likely Klein dropping something in his excitement, as he occasionally did, she continued in the opposite direction that Whitley had towards her own room.

"Well then, Sister," Winter smiled pleasantly down at her. "Shall we go and see what Klein has in store for us?"

The entire interaction she had just witnessed had thrown her through a loop slightly. Why had Whitley's eyes burned with so much hatred? Since when had her mother regained such cognition? She was unsure, but none of that mattered because Winter was finally home and with the exception of work or time with Yang, Weiss would be able to spend two weeks with the person she loved more than any other. So giving her sister a small nod, Weiss beckoned for her to follow her up the stairs in search of whatever room Klein had chosen for her.
As Weiss laid on her bed thinking about the last two hours, she was unable to recall a dinner that had been more enjoyable. After she and Winter had finished cleaning themselves up and unpacking the treasures they had bought while shopping, they had gone downstairs and found the table to be laden with rich foods that would never have been present had her father been in attendance. A large bowl of macaroni and cheese had been sat on the table and around it had been placed numerous different toppings and sides that they could help themselves too. While the food itself was almost comparable to Yang’s cooking, the thing she had enjoyed the most was the conversation.

Throughout the entire meal, she, Winter, and their mother had conversed and even laughed. Winter had told them of what it had been like in Atlas over the years and how she had been getting on in the military; while Weiss had talked about her work at the company. Her mother had even joined in and told a few stories of her time in college, where Weiss had learned from an offhand comment that General Ironwood had actually been a close friend of their mother's during their time at Atlas academy.

Unfortunately though, it had eventually come to an end as the food soon vanished and the conversation died down until Winter had finally declared that she was retiring to her room as she was feeling tired. Feeling the same, Weiss had copied her sister slightly after as the feeling of being watched wordlessly by her mother was causing her to feel a little uncomfortable. Though she certainly had enjoyed the afternoon, she still had no idea how to talk to her mother alo...

PING!

Pulling from her thoughts as her the message tone echoed around her room, Weiss felt a smile pull at her lips as she picked up the scroll that had been resting beside her leg. Upon opening it, she let out a small chuckle at the picture Yang had sent her. A rather angry Blake was stood in the garage glaring at the camera with her entire bottom half drenched in what looked to be black oil while Ruby seemed to be frantically trying to clean it off with an equally dirty rag. Seconds after opening it, another message came through and Weiss quickly scrolled down.

'Swear to god i didnt know she was holding the oil when i scared her'

Shaking her head as she smiled to herself, Weiss typed out her reply.

'Why do I not believe you?'

Grinning as she hit send and waited for a reply, Weiss scrolled through the conversation she had been having with her girlfriend for the past hour and curled up in her bed, her arm reaching down the side to pull Yang's jacket from a nearby drawer to pull it close. While she didn't know whether the smell of lavender that greeted her was actually real or not, she didn't really care and let Yang's scent wash over her as another message came in.

'maybe coz im not there to give you my puppydog eyes in person'

'People only use puppy-dog eyes when they are actually guilty.'

'wrong i also use them when i want you to kiss me'

Letting out a small laugh at that response as Yang indeed did indeed have a tendency to act much cuter when Weiss teased her, she began to type out a reply but was interrupted by a knocking at her door. Not quite sure who it would be, she changed her message to say she would be right back and pushed the jacket underneath her blanket before getting up and walking to the door.
Pulling it open, she was quite surprised to have been greeted with the sight of her younger brother looking up at her with a bored expression. The boy had been absent ever since she had seen him walk up the stairs when she and Winter had arrived as he had chosen not to come down for dinner; instead he had Klein bring him up something to eat.

"Good evening, Sister," He said in a morose tone, his hands placed behind his back.

"What do you want, Whitley?" Weiss asked impatiently as she really didn't want whatever game the boy wanted to play to ruin her day.

"I was simply wondering if you could help me with something?" He asked slowly in return, his tone even and unidentifiable causing Weiss to scowl at the boy.

"I am busy at the minute," she replied, not trusting him for a single moment.

Almost immediately, his brow lowered and anger flickered across his blue eyes.

"Of course you are," he said, his voice taking on a more annoyed note as his eyes looked past her into her room. "Who were you laughing at?"

"A video on my Scroll," Weiss replied effortlessly, but was surprised as yet another flicker of annoyance passed over his eyes.

"A... Video?" he repeated with a sneer. "You are too busy watching videos to give me a moment of your time?"

"I am trying to relax."

"Oh yes, forgive me," he said snidely, the annoyance clear as day in his voice. "Shopping all day with Winter and dinner with Mother must be extremely tiring."

"What is your problem with Winter?" Weiss asked quickly, her own annoyance seeping into her voice as it usually did when someone tried to insult her sister. "What has she ever done to you?"

Once again, the anger that had been in his eyes on the stairs returned and Weiss felt herself flinch back at the hatred in the boy's eyes.

"Nothing," he replied with venom in his voice. However before Weiss could reply, he let out a frustrated sigh and took a step back. "Well this went just as I expected."

Scowling as the fuming boy turned around and began to walk away, Weiss began to turn but the sight of something strange caught her off guard, and forced her to stop. Wrapped around the Whitley's left hand was a rather large bandage that had most certainly not been there when he had been watching them from the stairs. Despite everything, she still couldn't help herself from calling out to him.

"Whitley?" She called carefully, causing him to stop and slowly turn his head to face her. "What happened to your hand?"

While Weiss had expected many different answers ranging from a grand tale to him completely ignoring the question, what she hadn't expected was the renewed sneer that pulled at his features making him look more like their father than he usually did.

"Funny," he spat in a voice that shook with anger. "It almost sounds like you care."
Not knowing how to reply, Weiss stood there stunned as he walked away and turned the corner. Shaking her head as he disappeared from sight, Weiss walked back into her room and closed her door. The question had been asked out of concern as he was still her brother so of course she cared about him, but did he truly not believe that? Did he really hate her as much as he did Winter?

Not knowing what to think, Weiss collapsed onto her bed and opened her scroll hoping that talking to Yang would help return some of the joy had been feeling earlier. However with each message she sent and read, her mind couldn't help but turn back to the burning hatred in her brother's eyes and what could have caused it all of a sudden. Unfortunately, even talking to Yang did nothing to help her thoughts, so Weiss said goodnight to her girlfriend and closed the device, wanting nothing more

Chapter End Notes

TRANSLATIONS

"Mein schneeengel!" He cried happily in Atlesian the moment he came into sight. "Willkommen zu Hause, mein wunderschöner Schneeengel."

"My snow angel!" He cried happily in Atlesian the moment he came into sight. "Welcome home, my beautiful snow angel."

*

"Mein schneeengel und schneeflocke wieder zusammen!" He continued to cry happily to himself as he trotted up the stairs to take the bags to one of the spare rooms.

"My snow angel and snowflake back together!" He continued to cry happily to himself as he trotted up the stairs to take the bags to one of the spare rooms.

A/N

Hello, sorry for the long author notes this time but I really wanted to include the translations.

So as you can probably tell, we are now entering another Weiss story arc that will revolve heavily around her whole family this time. That will mean I get to explore some things I love about the Schnee's including a couple of my own headcanons so I really hope you enjoy. I know this was more 'introductory' for Winter and I really wanted to show them shopping but I felt it more prudent to set up the relationships here as there is a lot to cover and its always good to start with the basics.

Lastly, the next 1-2 chapters might be quite short. E3 is next week and it will mess up my sleep schedule and take up A LOT of my time as I will be watching everything they stream. This means I likely wont be writing at all so I wanna try to get a small one ready to go up during E3 (no promises there) and another smaller one after. This will also give me a little break that I have honestly been desiring, I hope you all understand.
While Weiss goes to meet her sister, Yang tries once again to secure the perfect gift.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: All characters belong to Rooster Teeth Productions

Once again, thank you to ToxicExotic for helping with the editing

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Yang Xiao Long

"Please?"

"Nope."

"Pleeease?"

"No."

"Pleeeeee..." Yang stopped her latest attempt at begging when she noticed a shift in Blake's body language, changing from stubborn to slightly tired

"Will you just go serve Neptune?" She groaned tiredly and Yang was glad to know that she was finally breaking through the girl's endless stubbornness.

"Fiiiiine," Yang groaned with a small pout to her best friend and looked back to the register, where their blue-haired friend was leaning against the counter smiling at a girl who was sitting at a nearby table. "But we aren't done here."

Receiving an eye roll from Blake as she walked through the back door to sort something out in the kitchen, Yang turned and tried to see who Neptune was smiling at. Glancing over his shoulder, she saw it was a regular named Opal who sported white hair dotted with pink, blue and green patches that would have usually would have looked tacky, but actually suited her soft, pretty features.

"She is way out of your league, dude," Yang joked as she poked him in the back.

"What?" he asked incredulously as if her statement had caused him pain. "Come on, I bet could get a number at the very least."

Letting out a laugh, Yang shook her head and set about making the drink that she knew the boy would order. While Neptune certainly had his charms, most revolved around the fact that he somehow always managed to look good, they rarely ever lasted as talking to him for more than five minutes were enough to understand he was an idiot. A kind-hearted one who cared about his
friends, but an idiot nonetheless.

"A false number sure," she continued to chuckle as the boy turned around and raised an eyebrow. "If I failed when I tried, what hope do you have?"

"Maybe she's just wasn't into you?"

"Pfft!" Yang breathed dismissively and began to steam some milk. "Everyone's into me."

"Not me," he replied with a cheeky grin and picked up some sugar from the side of the counter. "Muscular blonde guys ain't my type."

"Oh really," Yang laughed at the friendly insult and poured some caramel syrup into his cup as she waited for the milk to finish. "Could of sworn I saw you drooling when Sun took his top off last week."

"Dude's got great abs," Neptune shrugged, causing Yang to laugh. While the boy was a model, Yang knew he'd always had trouble getting in shape as he was naturally rather scrawny.

"Alright then," she smiled as an idea came to mind while she picked up the heated milk and poured it into the paper cup before adding the coffee shot. "Time to put your money where your mouth is. If you can get her number, your next week of drinks are on the house."

"And if I don't?" he asked with a voice full of confidence as he took the drink from the counter and took a sip.

"You buy the first round next time we all go to Junior's."

Though Neptune made a show of taking a moment to think about the offer, Yang knew he would accept. Partially because he likely believed he would win, and partially because the boy quite often threw around money on stupid bets with Sun; and just as expected, he gave a smirk less than half a minute later and slightly tipped the cup in her direction to seal the deal.

"You're on."

Once the boy had finally left the counter to talk to Opal, Yang turned around to push open the kitchen door and was not surprised to see Blake sitting on her stool reading a book. Even though Blake was dating Sun and Neptune was his best friend, the raven-haired faunus had never been able to stand the blue-haired boy for long. She didn't hate him by any means, but she always made a point to try and leave the room when she could.

"Ple..."

"Don't start again," Blake sighed and put her book down to look at her.

"Oh come on!" Yang replied and stepped fully into the kitchen, but left the door open so that she could see any customers that came in. "I already told you plenty of times that I would give you a new one."

"Yet you still haven't told me why you want it so badly."

Taking a second to pout at her best friend again, Yang leant back against the door and looked at her. She had been trying to not tell Blake the reason she wanted it so badly because even though it was unlikely to happen, she didn't want to potentially hurt Blake's feelings. However, seeing no other way around it, Yang let out a small sigh and crossed her arms.
"I just want to get Weiss something good for Christmas," she admitted with a small smile. "After buying the bike, I can't really afford anything great, but I know she likes that."

"I like it too," Blake said dryly, causing Yang to close her eyes at the idea that Blake might think she was choosing Weiss over her.

"I know," Yang sighed and heard the stool scrap and knew Blake had stood up. "I'm sorry, it's just... It's our first Christmas and I couldn't find anything else she would like that didn't cost more than my house."

"You know she doesn't care about expensive things right?"

"That's why that is perfect," Yang replied to the question and opened her eyes to see Blake was looking at her impassively. "It actually means something to her."

Finding the strength to look into Blake's eyes, Yang was glad to see that that they were much softer than she expected. In truth she had been unsure Blake would be willing to part with what she was asking for and would have understood why, however she was still unsure what she would do it Blake refus...

"Okay."

Caught off guard by Blake's interruption, Yang raised an eyebrow as she looked to see whether Blake was serious or not. Thankfully she saw nothing but resignation in her friends eyes and felt a smile widen on her face and pushed herself off the door to pull Blake into a hug.

"However..." Blake said and took a step back out of her reach, though the step was entirely unnecessary as Yang had already stopped due to knowing that nothing good ever followed hearing that word from her best friend. "You're going to have to do something for it."

"What?" she asked cautiously as she inspected the young faunus and felt herself shiver at the smile that pulled at the girl's lips.

"You have to do the artwork for..."

"Nooooo!"

"... My story."

"Pleeease," Yang whined at the memory of the last time she had drawn artwork for Blake as she fell to her knees and let her arms fall to her side in an attempt to show the grinning faunus her desperation. "Anything but that again."

"You want that present for Weiss, right?"

"I do," Yang pouted and shifted herself up to sit on the recently abandoned stool. "But I don't want to spend another three days hearing you say the dude's bulge isn't right."

"It was only three days because you refused to draw any more on the second one," Blake replied indignantly and crossed her arms, the grin turning into a smirk. "Besides, this one is about two girls, so you should be fine."

"I swear to Oum, Blake," Yang replied immediately upon hearing the new information as she again remembered one on Blake's past stories. "If you are writing another story based on my relationship, I wi..."
"It's not based on you and Weiss," Blake said with a shake of her head and leant against the sink. "Good," Yang scowled, still a little untrusting of her friend but standing up regardless. "And fine, I will draw it so long as we don't have another issue like the bulge one."

"Well, with how many dicks you drew on people's school books, I'm still surprised it took you so long," Blake shrugged and pulled a bag of fresh coffee beans from the cupboard next to the sink. "Dicks are easy, but a bulge is just a curve, Blake," Yang replied sassily and took the bag that was held out to her. "Since you're a writer, I would have thought you could explain things a little better than saying the curve isn't curvy enough repeatedly."

"I think you will find it was simply you not listening when I said it was bigger," Blake countered and pulled a box of sugar packets from the same cupboard. "Speaking of big dicks, is Neptune gone?"

"Wow, didn't realise you knew what he was packing," Yang replied and stuck out her tongue as Blake rolled her eyes. "But no, I send him to flirt with Opal."

"Why would you do that to her?" Blake groaned and moved away from the sink to make her way towards the door. "Free drinks when we all go out next," Yang chuckled and stood from her stool to follow her. "Anyway, you wanna stay over tonight? Me and Ruby are gonna be sorting out the bike for a bit, but then I can get started on this... Totally not porn of yours. I can finish the painting the helmet I was doing last night some other time. I swear I can't do the straight lines required for snowflakes on such a curved surface."

"Sure. And its a curved surface, Yang, why are you trying to draw straight lines?"

"It's another gift I'm working on, but more for me than Weiss. Since she refuses to get on the bike, I was thinking a helmet might help convince her" Yang said with a smirk as she turned around and headed back into the store with Blake right behind her.

Yang and Blake came back to see that Neptune once again stood at the counter looking a little disgruntled. With one small shake of his head, he dropped a small Lien card on the dark wood and stalked away defeatedly. Smiling to herself as she picked it up and placed it in the register, Yang turned to her best friend who once again rolled her eyes and went to restock the sugar. Despite it potentially having cost her her sanity, Yang was extremely thankful that Blake had been willing to part with the gift and was happy that she had finally managed to find a present that she knew her girlfriend would love.

Chapter End Notes

So as promised, a short chapter to tide you over. I have yet to start on the next so I am not sure when it will be out, but I will try not to take too much longer than usual. But that being said, at the time of starting this the Nintendo E3 Direct is about to start but I hope you enjoyed.

ToxicExotic's E/N
Thanks for the positive feedback on recent chapters, and I hope you guys/gals stick around because Raalm has some twists for you all.

Question

A quick question before I go though that really would be a huge help if you answered. Me and Toxic have been talking about going back and cleaning up the first bunch of chapters and I wanted to know how you would feel about that? They were written when I returned to writing so are very rough and could use an adjustment, however I don't want to make you feel you have to reread them. Nothing would change, they would simply be cleaned up. Please tell what you think of that idea in any comment you leave.
Weiss Schnee

Taking a deep breath as she woke up, Weiss moved her hand up to her waist and couldn't help but let out a groan and feel a little disappointed that the only thing her fingers met was the thin material of her nightgown. Though the night of sleep had not been the best she’d ever had, the dream she woke up from was easily one of her favourites. It had not been anything exciting or thrilling, no walking around her college, hand in hand with her girlfriend as she had dreamt many times before; but instead, they had simply been laying in Yang’s bed.

The dream itself was quickly fading, though from having it so often she easily recalled it from memory. Yang was behind her, her strong hand resting gently on her waist with her breath brushing lightly over her ear; while she herself enjoyed the simple comfort of being loved. However, having this dream was often a curse as well as a blessing as it meant that she had to suffer the disappointment of waking up without Yang by her side; the flip side was that her day was usually much brighter when it started with thoughts of her Sundrop's stupid, albeit wonderful, grin. The fact Weiss had spent two nights with the blonde in the last two weeks only made the feeling worse when she recalled how it felt to wake up in the boxer's arms, and how everything in the dream was accurate; as well as how infuriating it was that she could not have everything she wanted with the gorgeous blonde.

She didn't want to spend a single night with the blonde where she had to leave the next morning; she wanted a weekend, a week, or an eternity with her Sundrop would suit her just fine as well, just to have more time. But she knew she would be unable to do so until they came out to her father.

Fortunately though, there was someone who was able to help with that; and they were finally back in Vale. In fact, she was only a couple of rooms away, and would certainly already be awake; so with that in mind, she let out a sigh and removed herself from her bed to get ready for breakfast.

Half an hour later, Weiss stepped out of her bedroom feeling a little bit more refreshed and slowly made her way down the corridors to the dining room. Looking into Winter's room as she passed, she saw it was as empty as she suspected earlier, and knew the older woman was likely already eating downstairs. Continuing down that hall she quickly came to Whitley's room and found herself slightly confused as something stood out, something that took her a moment to place.

Next to the boy's door stood a small stand that usually held a vase of flowers. When they were children, she and Whitley would hide secret notes to each other under the vase, however the vase was no longer there. There was no water stain on the floor, nor shards of glass remaining, as if the vase was never there in the first place. Which was a shame because Whitley had really loved how it looked when he was younger and would often look at it in his early years, admiring its twists and turns, and how the colours were influenced by them.
Among the many consistent things in Schnee manor, the décor was never changed as her father had paid more Lien than most people earned in a year to have it decorated by the world's most renowned decorator. The only time something was ever moved was if it had been broken, and the staff always treated everything with the utmost care as they knew that breaking something would certainly mean they would be finding a new job.

Had that been what Klein had knocked over in his excitement yesterday? Weiss knew that he was likely the only member of staff that her father would not fire; though not out of love or respect, but out of fear. As Klein had been with the family for so long, he most likely knew more of the Schnee's dirty secrets than she did herself, and the idea of her father firing someone who knew all of his dirty secrets was ridiculous. Shaking her head at her father's tendency to value money over people's lives and casting the table one more look, she turned to continue down the hallway.

After descending the stairs and approaching the dining room, Weiss unfortunately heard the familiar sound of her father's condescending drawl and felt her mood drop a little further. While she would have loved to have avoided him all day, she really was quite hungry; so taking a deep breath, she pushed open the door and walked into the room.

"...deous hair of yours," Weiss heard her father drone, not bothering to look at Weiss as she sat down due to the fact he was too busy focusing on Winter and the argument they always had when in proximity to each other.

Though her mother was missing, sat on the opposite end of the table was her brother who was miserably prodding at his food, his bandaged hand clearly hurting him as he winced every time he cut through the toast on his plate. Watching him struggle slightly, a surge of sympathy went through her as she was quickly reminded of the look on his face the night before. However, as he was clearly in a world of his own, the sneer and anger were completely gone from his features and she could for once see the young boy he actually was.

"I think you will find my hair adheres to the military's regulations," she replied in a bored tone as she pulled a slice of plain toast towards herself. "Though I am unsure what my appearance has to do with you, Father."

"You represent the Schnee family in Atlas," He replied offhandedly and refilled his glass of orange juice. "It concerns me when you parade around looking like a pauper who cannot afford a proper haircut. What do you think our business partners think when they see you?"

"I assume they think I am busy defending the country."

"Do not take that tone with me," he said sharply and Weiss saw anger flash behind his eyes. Winter however, seemed rather unbothered by the threat. "I am still your father and this is my house you are staying in."

"Your house?" Winter asked in mock confusion with a raised eyebrow. "I was under the impression Grandfather left the deed to a true Schnee."

"Father is more Schn..."

Whitley's mumbled words were cut off as the sound of their father's hand striking the hardwood surface of the table echoed around the room and caused her and Whitley to flinch. Had their father been looking at Winter and not glaring daggers at his son, he might have seen that even Winter's face twitched a little.

"How many times do I have to remind you that Schnees do not mumble, boy," their father growled
at her younger sibling and Weiss saw him shrink slightly in his chair.

"Sorry, Father," he replied, the effort he put into keeping his voice firm and clear to everyone at the table.

"Grandfather used to mumble," Winter said in a soft voice, and though her hard eyes were set on their father, it was obvious her words were meant for Whitley. "He said many of his greatest ideas came to him while mumbling to himself."

"Your grandfather did not have standards to uphold," Jacques snarled as he turned back to Winter. "He ran the company like a man out of his depth, and almost lost everything multiple times on foolish pursuits that rarely worked out."

"Or maybe he understood that risks have to be taken," Weiss interjected cautiously. Though she rarely spoke when he father was in such a mood, she couldn't sit there and let someone insult her grandfather.

"Your grandfather was a naïve optimist," her father replied instantly, the anger in his tone and gaze sending a shiver down her spine. "His risks put the entire company in jeopardy multiple times. Do you think you would still worship the man had his negligence and foolishness cost thousands of employees their jobs?"

Unsure how to reply, Weiss returned her gaze to her food and continued to eat in silence. Though she hated to admit it, her father had a point. Despite everything good he did, she knew he had taken a few too many risks.

"You talk like you care about the employees," she heard Winter say at her side and dared a glance sideways.

"Whether I care or not is irrelevant," he replied, his tone making it obvious that the latter was the case. "A company does not function without workers."

"Then maybe you should stop having them fired for unjust reasons," She fired back immediately. "It would also cause less controversy that also harms the business."

"I am not sure what lies the media are telling in Atlas," he said sourly as his face pulled into a sneer. "But Mr Rodentia's accident was his own fault as it was he who started the altercation."

"And the numerous employees who say differently?"

"Are less reliable than the camera's that clearly show what happened."

"I am sure they certainly show you everything you need to know."

Though Weiss had to suppress a smile at that insult, as it had been born out of information she had given her sister, it really was a very unfortunate camera placement for Mr Rodentia. While the camera definitely did show him grabbing his co-worker and trying to push him, it didn't show that the co-worker had reportedly been about to throw something at another worker for no reason. Even more unfortunate was that though Mr Rodentia had tried to help, the man was much stronger and shoved him into a shelf that had collapsed and carved a rather nasty scar into his face that had slightly damaged the man's eye.

The worst part however, was that the company lawyers had spun the whole situation in such a way that Mr Rodentia had been painted as the cause of the whole situation; and as such, had not received a single Lien in compensation. From her understanding, the man was also unable to sue as
he was in no financial position to fight the company lawyers in court.

"That is enough," he snarled and slammed his hand against the table again, earning another flinch from Weiss and her brother. "If you are staying in my house then you will show me the respect I deserve."

"I believe have shown you respect you deserve, Father," Winter replied, the pointed judgement in her voice making it obvious what she meant.

"You ungrateful girl!" he half-shouted and stood from his chair, the glass of orange juice wobbling dangerously as his hand caught it's side. "I will not have you sit there and speak to me in such a way after everything I did for you."

"Did for me?" Winter asked, the rare anger the woman suddenly exuded making Weiss more scared of her than their father. "You still view what you did as good?"

"I tried to stop you from throwing your life away," he said condescendingly and took a step forward.

Even though Winter had indeed inherited the man's height, she was still half a head shorter and that sight reminded Weiss of what their father was capable of. Clearly Winter remembered as well, because even though she stood her ground, Weiss could see the woman's hand shaking slightly.

"Yet ever since you were a child, all you have done is throw my help away. You parade around with his hair, to spite me. You left the country to serve a fool more interested in your name than you, to spite me. You have spent your whole life trying to get back at me for what you feel I took; but tell me, child, take away your misguided father issues and your last name and what you would have?"

"I would have everything that I have earned," she sneered and squared her shoulders. "Unlike you, who married into our family to escape the filth of yo..."

Feeling her whole body tense as her father's hand swung up from the table and interrupted Winter, Weiss felt her breathing stop as Winter's own came up and caught it by the wrist. The two stood there for what felt like minutes to Weiss, each one glaring down the other until Winter pushed their father's hand away and stood up to her full height.

"I am not a little girl any more, Jacques," she spat venomously as she said his name, her voice shaking slightly as her eyes burned with the same hatred Weiss had seen in Whitley's the night before. "Try that again and you will see exactly why I earned my place by General Ironwood's side."

Giving their father one last hate filled look, the woman turned on her heel and left the room, the door slamming loudly behind her and making Weiss jump. However, even though she finally felt like she could breathe again, she knew not to say a word while her father was in such a temper; instead she returned to her food and ate in silence.

As her father sat down, she dared a slight glance up at her brother and was surprised to find that his own eyes were still locked on the door that Winter had left through. In the slight second it took him to notice her, she could see confusion in them, though it quickly faded and his face reset to its usual, impossible to read state.

She really wanted to go after her sister, to see if she was okay; but she knew if she were to try and leave the table before clearing her plate, she would almost certainly be facing the scorn filled
questioning of her father. So wanting to get away as fast as she could, she picked up her pace slightly, and tried her best to not give her father any reason to acknowledge her.

*

When Weiss was a girl, it was common to find her sister cooling off in the screening room so it had been the first place she had looked; however Winter had not been there, so Weiss spent the last thirty minutes that had passed from when she had left the dining room to search nearly every other room in the house. She supposed it was natural, Winter had not lived in the house for many years and had undoubtedly become used to completely different things over those years.

Apparently those things did not include music, swimming, or leisurely activities such as playing pool or watching television as she wasn't in any of those rooms either. As she had poked her head into every room she passed, she began to fear more and more that the woman had simply left the mansion; but as she poked her head into the room that was used for her fencing lessons, she was surprised to see Winter sat cross-legged on the floor with her eyes closed.

Seeing that the woman was clearly deep in thought, Weiss slipped into the room as quietly as possible and took a seat on one of the small chairs that lined the wall. It was very rare that Weiss got the opportunity to watch her sister in such a vulnerable state, so it was quite the intriguing sight to her. In the time it had taken Weiss to eat, Winter had changed into a white, open-back tank top and a pair of exercise leggings; both of which hugged the woman's form rather tightly and showed off just how much of an effect her military training had had on her body.

While they were not as defined as Yang's, every inch of the woman was toned muscle. The tight material clearly showed the outline of her abdominal muscles and though her arms were still quite thin, she knew the muscle that did show was likely to be extremely strong.

The most intriguing thing to her however was Winter's face. Gone was the anger that had been present earlier that day, but there was also no sternness that it usually held. Instead it was peaceful, so void of all emotion that Weiss could have never guessed that the woman had almost been struck by their father and had delivered what had felt like a very genuine threat. In fact, Weiss had been so caught up in just how blank the face was that when her sister's head slowly turned to look directly at her, she felt her breathing catch a little at how unsettling it had been.

"S-Sorry," she said quietly, knowing full well that Winter had sensed her presence. "I should have announced myself."

"It is fine," Winter replied quietly, her eyes remaining closed as she took a deep breath. "I heard you coming anyway; but yes, you should have."

"I did not know you meditated?" Weiss asked, struggling to think of anything else to say.

"It helps centre yourself before and after a fight," she replied and took another deep breath. "It is important to always keep a balanced mind."

"I know," Weiss smiled, more at a memory that sprang to mind than at Winter. "Yang does it for the same thing."

For the first time since Weiss had entered the room, Winter's face showed movement as her brow furrowed.
"I thought you said she is an artist?" she asked as one of her eyes opened and a blue eye stared directly into hers.

"She is," Weiss said with another small smile and crossed her hands on her lap. "But she is also a boxer. A pretty good one too."

"Hmm," Winter hummed thoughtfully, unfolding her legs to stand up. "Artist, boxer, works in a café... Were you hoping that in choosing a girl like her, that Father's head would explode from anger? In an attempt to not have to deal with him."

"No," she chuckled, hoping the sound would cover the nerves from knowing what she would eventually have to reveal. "And I would not exactly say I chose her. It was more than that."

"Yes, well," the woman said and turned around. As she did, Weiss had to stifle a small gasp at the large scar that ran from Winter's left shoulder blade to her lower back. "It appears there is a lot you haven't told me about this girl."

"She is the type of person where there is a lot to tell," Weiss replied, her eyes tracing the scar as Winter made her way to a chair and pulled a jacket from the back of it.

"Then maybe you should start talking when we get to the screening room," she responded as she turned around and put the jacket on, pulling her Scroll from a pocket and quickly typed out something before putting it away again. "Klein will bring us coffee while we do so."

Giving Winter a quick nod, Weiss stood from her chair and followed her sister out of the room and down the corridors. Every now and again, a member of the staff would give them each a small smile and they would return it courteously; however as they turned into the hall that led to the screening room, Winter apparently deemed it empty enough to continue their conversation.

"So you say you did not choose," Winter said curiously as they neared the room and pushed the door open. "Explain."

"It... Is somewhat hard to explain," Weiss answered and entered the room, the pitch black room slightly colder than the hallway and making her shiver a little. "Have you ever met someone and been unable to get them out of your head?"

"I have," Winter hummed and shut the door pressing the light switch so that they could see. "For a variety of reasons."

"Well, mine was awe," Weiss smiled and moved to sit on one of the many soft, black chairs that were facing the large screen. "Her personality, the aura she exudes, she was just so happy that she didn't leave my head for the whole day. I went back the next day and... I couldn't stop smiling."

"That sounds like infatuation," the woman replied and sat down in the chair next to her. "How do you know this relationship is nothing more than that?"

"I kno..."

"You said it has only been a couple of months, Weiss," Winter interrupted and though her voice was harsh, Weiss knew it was only out of concern. "You are aware you will lose the company for this, right?"

"I will get it back," she answered quickly and leaned back in her chair.

"And how do you plan to do that dear sister, when you are already asking me for advice on how to
break this to father?"

"We both know Father will not let Whitley take control of the company," she reasoned, earning a
disapprovingly raised eyebrow in return. "But, I have already begun to organize things within the
company that require my oversight. I also have an understanding with Yang that if I need to go to
Atlas to appease Father, then I will."

"A good start," Winter acknowledged with a nod of her head. "However you are misunderstanding
a few things. First, your projects can be reassigned; and second, you are underestimating your
brother. He is smarter than you give him credit for."

"I know that he is smart," Weiss countered truthfully and shifted uncomfortably in her seat. "But
you know as well as I that Father thinks of h…"

"Then that is Father's mistake too," Winter interrupted, the annoyance in her voice making shame
flood through Weiss. "I was under the assumption you did not wish to follow in his footsteps."

"I… You are right. I'm sorry," Weiss replied and hung her head in remorse.

She was slightly unsure why Winter would be defending Whitley when the boy clearly hated her;
but then again, it had been what Winter had done for her as they had grown up, so it would make
sense that she did it for Whitley too.

"Good, now continue telling me more of this girl."

"Well, she has a younger sister that she loves more than anything in the world, she's an amazing
cook, she…"

"Stop," Winter interrupted again, though this time with a sigh. "I am not looking to employ this
girl, Sister. It is of no interest to me that she has a sister or is an amazing cook; what is of interest to
me is what makes you know that this is not simply a passing fancy."

Looking her sister in the eye, Weiss took a moment to think. She knew she loved Yang more than
most people in the world, but she was admittedly still new to such feelings and putting them into
words that someone else could understand was difficult for her. Thankfully her sister was
incredibly patient and was clearly giving her as much time as she needed. The time she needed
turned out to be almost five minutes; but finally after some thought, Weiss swallowed and tried her
best to explain.

"I have been with a few women before, but none have ever felt even close to what i have with
Yang. At first it was just that I was just happy being around her, when she smiled at me I unable to
help myself from smiling back. But after a while there were other things. She was always honest
with me, she never sugar coats things or made exceptions; she even scolded me on our second date
for doing something Father would have done. She's good, and kind, and open. She isn't afraid to be
vulnerable and encourages me to be so too. When I'm with her, I just feel like I have finally found
where I belong."

She was unsure if her words were enough to convince Winter, but they had been the best she had.
Her feelings were so much deeper, but that depth was not something that could be put into words,
so she had settled for what could be. Fortunately, she felt a finger wipe away one of the tears from
her eyes and looked up from her lap where her gaze had fallen to see her sister smiling gently at
her. Feeling a hand close over hers, she returned it and let out a wet chuckle for having teared up
over something so stupid.
"Okay," Winter said softly with a slight nod as she gave her hand a small squeeze. "You are risking a lot, so I had to be sure you were serious."

"We are," she replied, doing her best to convey how she felt.

"Good," Winter said with a sigh and pulled her hand back. "Because you will need to be to survive what will come."

Weiss was about the ask what her sister meant, or how she knew what was to come; but before she could, there was a small knock on the door to the room and Winter called for them to enter. As expected, Klein's tiny form came into view and balanced in one of his hands was a tray. Walking carefully to avoid spilling the pot that rested on top, he approached them and placed the silver plate on the little table between the chairs.

"Klein?" Winter said with a knowing smile and looked up at the man. "You know everything that goes on around here. Tell me, what are your impressions of this girl that has stolen my sister's heart?"

A wide smile immediately overtook the butler's face and he rocked into the balls of his feet in happiness.

"The impression I got when I met her was that she appears to quite a fine, young woman," he replied, Weiss feeling herself blush a little as his words caused Winter to give her a sidelong glance. "And she makes our little snowflake smile more than I have seen in a long time."

"A glowing review," Winter grinned at him and poured some coffee into the china cups. "Though I often fear your tendency to see the best in people may be your undoing one day, Klein."

"Rest assured, my little snow angel. Even to me there are lost causes," he said, his eyes meeting Winter's and earning a knowing nod in response. "Now, would you like me to start up a film before I leave? I managed to save a couple from your father's purge."

"You saved my favourite?" she asked and received a nod in return. "Then that shall do. And please bring us the controller."

With a slight bow, he turned and left the room, leaving Weiss alone with her sister again. The moment he was gone, Winter picked up her coffee and raised it to her lips, her eyes surveying her keenly over the white china. Feeling herself blush slightly as she thought about what the woman was thinking, Weiss picked up her own and hurriedly took a sip and burnt her tongue a little in the process.

"So..." Winter said curiously as Weiss massaged her tongue into the roof of her mouth to ease the burning. "She's been to the house already?"

"Y-Yeah," Weiss stuttered once her tongue had stopped pulsing. "She was having a rough day and I couldn't let her be alone."

"So was this stay just a couple of hours? Or longer?"

"She stayed the night," Weiss admitted and took another, more cautious, sip of her drink.

"And has this happened frequently?"

"Once here, twice at hers," Weiss replied with a nod and received another curious look from her sister.
"I see," Winter said and placed her cup down on the tray. "Exactly how far has this relationship progressed, Weiss?"

"We…" Taking a breath, Weiss was felt herself blush again and hid herself behind her cup as she spoke. "A-All the way."

"And how was it?"

"Winter!"

Clearly her sister could see the deep red blush that rose to Weiss' cheeks as she quickly let out a small laugh. All of a sudden, the woman looked nothing like the twenty-three year old she was; and instead, looked much younger as her face lit up.

"Relax, dear sister," Winter chuckled and leaned back in her chair as the large screen on the wall flicker slightly to indicate it had been turned on. "I am not interested in hearing about your sex life."

"Then why ask?" Weiss pouted, even though she enjoyed seeing her sister look so happy.

"You are my little sister," Winter replied nonchalantly and turned to face the door as Klein walked in and handed her the control before quickly leaving again. "Though many things will change in our lives, teasing you shall always be fun. Now, it has been some time since I last saw this film, so let us enjoy the occasion."

Rolling her eyes at her sister, Weiss couldn't help but feel a smile pull at her lips. It had indeed been too long since they had both seen a film together, so the idea of spending a quiet morning relaxing and watching what appeared to be an old black and white movie was incredibly appealing to her. Giving her smirking sister one last scowl, she leaned back in her chair and settled in for the film as Winter pressed a button of the controller to turn the lights off.

Chapter End Notes

Hello there... again. So this chapter took a little bit of work to get feeling right as I fell into bad habits again, fortunately Toxic was there to help me recover from them so much love to him. I wanted to expand on some relationships in this chapter in preparation for the coming ones so I hope you enjoyed it. I know you are all waiting for 'the talk', and I promise it is coming soon so just bare with me a little longer as I have something special planned.

However, I do have a little bit of other news. Recently I have been finding myself in a bit of a rut with this story, the story isn't going to stop but it is something that tends to happen when I only have one thing going at a time. Fortunately, Me and Toxic have been working on something together that has been helping me take a breather between chapters and refresh myself. I cant say what pairing it will be about just yet or whether it will be a long one-shot or a short series, but it has been really fun to write and I am looking forward to sharing it with you all.

We have also begun to edit the older chapters so they read better, In the future, I will be updating the old chapters we have done with each new chapter I upload and will be notifying you of which chapters have been updated in the notes.
But I think that is about, I am trying to keep these a little shorter so I don't keep those of you that read these notes too long; so yeah, I hope you enjoyed and I hope you are looking forward to what's to come.

Oh just a last note for those of you who may not know who the character is (I don't blame you honestly as his name was never mentioned in show), Saber Rodentia is the gerbil faunus in Menagerie with the huge scar on his eye that talks to Ghira after Ilia's attack on the house fails.
Feeling the silk strands of golden hair run through her fingers as she kissed her girlfriend, Weiss felt content in the fact that she was finally back in the blonde's arms. In the week since Winter's arrival, Weiss' schedule had not only been exceptionally busy finalizing things at the company, as well as using what little time remained to spend some time with her sister. While she loved spending time with her sister, she's missed Yang more than she ever had before; but even though she was enjoying the gentle kisses that her girlfriend was placing on her, Weiss had been struggling to get herself into the mood for anything more. Fortunately, Yang seemed to have understood and hadn't tried for anything more, instead seeming happy with the small bits of affection the Weiss was able to return.

However, after a couple more minutes, she finally felt Yang let out a soft hum and begin to lean back on Blake's couch; and while Weiss was about to stop her and tell her she wasn't feeling it, she was surprised when Yang broke the kiss and rolled to her side, simply letting Weiss lay beside her against the cushions.

"Something's wrong?" Yang whispered gently, an arm slipping under Weiss head to stroke through her ponytail. "You wanna talk about it?"

Staring into the soft lilac eyes and feeling Yang's hand rest on her waist to hold her, as she had dreamed of so many times before, Weiss let out a small sigh and raised a hand to run a thumb over her sundrop's cheek.

"It's just more family stuff," Weiss said quietly, enjoying the way Yang's eyes fluttered at her touch.

"The issue with Whitley still bugging you?"
"A little," Weiss admitted and closed her eyes, simply letting the feel of her one and only comfort wash over her. "He has just been so angry since Winter arrived and I don't know why. I don't know why he hates her so much or why he was so mad after he came to my door."

"Don't think I'm taking his side with this," Yang sighed, the slight breath tickling her cheek. "But from what you told me, it did sound like you turned him down when he was asking for help."

"But that has always been our relationship," Weiss countered, knowing exactly how she was making it sound. "He knows I care but we have never been the type of siblings to help each other. I know it not the healthiest relationship and I wish it was better, but he's never been mad about that before."

"Maybe something changed?" Yang said thoughtfully and shifted slightly. "Have you talked to him since?"

"I've tried," Weiss said, opening her eyes the gain a small bit of happiness from the lilac orbs in front of her. "We were the only two at breakfast this morning and he wouldn't even look at me."

As the blonde clearly took a moment to think, Weiss took advantage to look over the beautiful face of her girlfriend for what had to be the millionth time. She had always loved how soft it was, how despite the muscles and well-built stature, the woman's face gave away how kind she truly was. Running her thumb over smooth skin once again, she admired how with each blink the boxer's eye shone a little brighter for a second.

"Well," Yang finally breathed, the gentle voice interrupting her inspection of the beloved features. "Whenever Ruby is in that sort of mood, she just needs some time to calm down. Maybe just let him know that you are there if he wants to talk, then give him some space and hope he comes to you."

"What if he doesn't," Weiss said, voicing a real concern she had been having for the past couple of days. "The impact Father has had on him is already clear. What if in giving him space, he just becomes more like Father? I know I haven't been the best sister, but I do not want that for him."

"I know you don't," Yang replied carefully and Weiss felt the hand on her waist tighten a little. "But pushing him could make him go that way regardless. When I told Ruby I was in the White Fang, she wasn't happy. She need space but I didn't give it to her, and she blew up at me. We didn't talk for almost two weeks after that, but she finally came to talk to me and I explained everything properly. Sometimes you just have to hope things work out."

As she took in what Yang had said, Weiss remembered a time when she too had been mad at Winter for leaving. However, at that point, the only thing she could have was distance and in time, she had realised just how much she missed her sister. So deciding that Yang was right, as she had been so many times before, Weiss pressed her lips gently against her girlfriend's to show her appreciation of the words.

"Thank you," Weiss whispered as the kiss ended and she pulled back to look Yang in the eye.

"You don't have to thank me for anything, Weiss," Yang replied and placed their foreheads together. "You know I'll always listen."

"I know."

"Good," Yang smiled and gave her another fleeting peck. "So, about my White Fang days. Have you told Winter yet?"
"I am telling her today," Weiss said carefully with a gentle nod, knowing that it was something Yang was very worried about. "I still doubt it will change anything, but I still wanted to get her to like you, or at least the idea of you, before I brought it up."

"I can tell her, if you don't want too?"

"No," Weiss replied, knowing that it had to be her who told Winter. "I want to do it before she meets you; but once she knows, you should expect her to want to meet you as soon as she can."

Seeing a shimmer of worry pass over her girlfriend's beautiful eyes, Weiss moved her hand back to run it through the shining, gold locks. Thankfully, the worry lasted only moments and Yang gave a resolute nod.

"I'll make sure I have tomorrow off," she said slowly, her eyes closing as she clearly enjoyed the attention. "Do you know where she will want to meet?"

"Somewhere private," was the only definite answer Weiss could give. "Maybe our townhouse, or a restaurant she trusts."

"Hmm," she hummed and moved a little closer. "Just let me know when you've told her, okay? And how she takes it."

"I will," Weiss confirmed and slide down a little so that she could melt into the woman's body properly, the smell of lavender increasing tenfold and warming her whole body.

"Good," Yang said softly as Weiss felt the woman's chin rest gently on top of her head. "So how long till you have to leave?"

"Twenty minutes," Weiss breathed quietly into the brawler's work top. "But I think I can spare an extra ten for you, Sundrop."

"Sundrop?" Yang asked, her chest rising and falling as she giggled slightly. "Not a bad name... Snowflake."

Keeping her pace slow as she walked aimlessly through the halls of the oversized mansion, Weiss thought back on her afternoon. She was happy that she had managed to have an afternoon with Yang and as usual, she'd left feeling happier than when she had that morning; however since arriving home, there was once again very little to do as Winter was out visiting an old acquaintance.

In an attempt to alleviate her boredom, she had tried to focus on her coursework but failed miserably to maintain any amount of focus, so having given up, the last hour was spent glancing into random rooms to find something to entertain here. Passing the pool, she didn't bother to look in as she wasn't interested in the slightest due to the fact that while it would likely be much warmer than the outdoor one, it was still too cold for such an activity to be enjoyable. So leaving the room behind her, she sought something else to do.

It took yet another fifteen minutes of searching until Weiss finally found herself tucked into a soft armchair in the back corner of the library, a book in hand and easily finding herself invested in the story. It was a cute tale, a story of warrior girls fighting against dark monsters formed of hatred and malice; but Weiss found herself relating heavily to one of the characters who was trying to escape a family that was trying its best to control her every action. However, just as she reached a rather
entertaining part where two of the characters were about to finally meet, the door to the library opened and a gentle voice reached her ears.

"... A chance, Master Whitley," said a voice that Weiss instantly recognised as Klein's. "They may surprise you."

"You know how little I like surprises," said her brother's voice, though much calmer than it had been all week.

Hearing her brother's voice, Weiss was reminded of Yang's words and decided to remain quiet, not wanting her brother to leave the room; as he'd done every time they she had entered a room he was in.

"That tone may fool others, but do not think it will work on me," Klein replied in a short tone Weiss had only heard a few times before from the man.

"So what would you have me do, Klein?" Her brother sighed as the sound of him rummaging through books on a nearby shelves grew louder. "I already took your advice and remember how that worked out."

"You may have simply caught her at a bad time," the man countered, his voice clearly trying to reason something he didn't believe. However, shortly after there was a short scoff followed by a sharp intake of breath. "You really should have that checked out, Master Whitley. There could be small pie..."

"You know why I cannot, Klein," Whitley interrupted quickly, a slight hint of something to his voice that Weiss couldn't place. "If Father were to find out..." As the boy paused, Weiss' brain furiously racked itself to figure out what they were talking about. "I am sorry I let you took the blame though."

Suddenly everything clicked in her head. The loud smash when Winter had arrived, the missing vase outside of Whitley's room, his bandaged hand. As everything came together in her head, Weiss felt herself feel slightly sick at the image of her brother being angry enough to punch what she knew to be quite a thick piece of china.

"I would rather take the blame than let you take it," Klein said easily, nothing but complete sincerity in his voice. "And I am not the only one."

"I appreciate your help, Klein; but please drop this," he replied and Weiss heard the familiar sound of a book being dusted off. "They have made it very clear how they feel, I do not see why I should continue as I have when they do not show me the same courtesy."

"They do not know what you do."

"They shouldn't have to," Whitley replied quickly, Weiss recognising the slight amount of annoyance that entered his voice. "Now, are you certain this is the correct book you said would help with my homework?"

By the short uncomfortable silence that followed, Weiss knew that Klein was deliberating on whether to drop the conversation and Weiss found herself hoping that he did, as she was more than curious by what Whitley had been doing. Unfortunately, the man let out a loud sigh and she knew he was not going to continue it.

"The very same that your sisters used when they were your age."
"Thank you."

Even though the gratitude from the boy was said in a hard tone, it was clear that he had meant the words; and after another short silence, Weiss heard the door open and close. Feeling uncomfortable at having overheard such a conversation, Weiss was about to stand up and pace when she heard shuffling from where her brother had just been. Stopping in her tracks, she heard a tired sigh followed by Klein's voice.

"Was ein anstrengender kleiner Schnee-Fuchs."

Keeping very still as she wasn't keen on being caught eavesdropping, Weiss remained seated until the man had finished his thoughts; fortunately, it didn't take long and the door soon opened and closed once again seconds later.

What she'd heard had rather unnerved her. Not only did she learn that her brother had purposely injured himself so badly on the day that Winter had arrived, but he was also up to something that Weiss couldn't work out. From the way Klein was talking, it sounded almost as if the thing her brother was doing affected her; but she could never remember the boy doing anything to her benefit.

Racking her brain as she stood from her chair and placed her book aside, she moved towards the shelf the conversing pair had been stood at and ran her finger along a shelf in search of the missing book. Recognizing the missing book immediately as *Rise and Fall: Atlesian Businesses and Their Failure*, Weiss let out a soft hum as she realised what Klein had done.

While the book itself was great for detailing the many companies that had failed in Atlas, it was woefully lacking in any real information about why they had failed. When Weiss had used it years ago for her homework, she'd been ended up going to Winter for help, and she also knew for a fact that it was Klein that had helped Winter when she had taken the book.

Fortunately, thanks to Klein's clear intentions, Weiss knew she was set up for the perfect chance to do as Yang had suggested and make it clear she was there for the boy if he ever needed to talk. So determined to think of a way she could broach the topic, she walked back to her room to think it over while she waited for Winter to return.

While Weiss certainly liked having so many clothes, the fact her closet was almost as big as her room quite often led to it taking forever to find anything she was looking for. As such, Weiss didn't know how long she had been pulling things out of her closet for in search of her old school things, but she knew it had to have been at least an hour. In that time, many lost things had been uncovered, such as a pair of white boots with red lining, a picture of her mother with her grandfather, and a small music box she bought for Winter but never gave her due to it being right before she left; however right at the back of the room, she finally stumbled upon a box labelled *Sophomore* and quickly pulled it free.

Wishing that Yang was around to help as she picked up the rather heavy box, Weiss exited the closet; and placing the box on her desk, she pulled the lid off and placed it on the floor. Thumbing through the mass of neatly organised books, she was reminded of just how much she had strived to over-achieve; counting over twenty for mathematics alone. Pulling one of them free, she opened it and examined the work she once found to be quite difficult and was happy to see that while she had been taking courses beyond her age, the equations appeared exceptionally simple to her now. Smiling to herself at the knowledge of how far she had come, she put the book back and searched
through the rest until she found the ones containing all her business studies work.

Freeing them from their tightly wedged space, she quickly flicked through them to find the ones she needed. Thankfully Weiss knew the homework Whiley was currently working on, as he was taking the same course and had likely been assigned was to detail three companies and their downfall; so in keeping with being an overachiever, she had taken an extra step and detailed five. As she found the three books containing all her notes, she placed them in a drawer and returned the rest to the box. However, just as she was putting the lid back onto the box, a small knock sounded from her door and before she had a chance to call them in, the door opened to reveal Winter stood in the entryway.

"Good afternoon, Sister," the snowy-haired woman said calmly as she entered, her eyes sweeping the room and locking onto the small mess near the closet door. "Are you spring cleaning?"

"I was just looking for my old schoolwork," Weiss replied and picked up the box, the weight of it causing her arms to scream at her as she did so for the second time in quick succession.

"For any particular reason?" Winter asked, her arms reaching out to take the box from her and lifting it with ease.

"Well," Weiss breathed, and stretched her arms. "Whitley has been avoiding me lately, but I was in the library earlier and he came in to get Rise and Fall."

"I assume Klein is responsible for recommending that waste of time?"

"Yes," Weiss said with a nod as she watched her sister place the box just inside the closet and stand back up. "And since I knew exactly how unhelpful the book is, I figured he may be interested in my own notes."

"A clever plan, Sister," Winter said slowly and sat down in the desk chair.

"Thank you," Weiss replied with a smile that quickly faltered as she remembered the rest of the overheard conversation. "Winter?" She asked cautiously, wanting to test a theory she'd had on it while looking for her school books. "You know what happened to Whitley's hand, don't you?"

Slowly turning her gaze from the picture she had been inspecting on the desk, Winter's steady eyes locked onto hers, and Weiss was clearly able to see the sorrow in them. "I had my suspicions. Though he also turned down my attempts to talk to him about it."

"Oh," she sighed, a little sad that she had been the only one who couldn't see the truth. "I don't suppose you have any idea why he hates us, do you?"

"Hmm."

For some reason, Weiss detected a hint of disappointed in the woman's hum as she turned back to pick up a picture of them outside of Haven academy. Waiting patiently as the Winter though over the answer, she sat down on her bed and looked over her sister's shoulder at the picture of the last fun trip she remembered.

"I certainly know why he feels that way towards me," She said slowly and placed the photograph back down in favor of picking up one of their mother. "It is something that is my fault and I hope that I am able to correct one day; however, while his recent actions towards you may feel give off the impression, I do not believe he hates you as he does me."

"I wouldn't be so sure," Weiss said, uncertainty tingeing her voice as she folded her legs. "The way
he talked to Klein made it seem like he was done with me."

"You really should break your habit of eavesdropping," Winter scolded her, though Weiss could tell the woman didn't put as much effort into it as she used to. "But trust me when I say that it is not yet too late for you to salvage your relationship with our brother."

"I hope so."

"Good," Winter replied and placed and put the picture back in its place. "So, apart from prying into private matters, how did you spend your day?"

"With Yang," Weiss replied quietly, a smile overtaking her face as it usually did when thinking of her girlfriend.

"Sounds like you had fun" Winter teased with an uncharacteristic smirk on her face.

"It wasn't like that Winter, w-well it was for a little bit, then we stopped and talked for a bit," Weiss replied and felt her face flush a little in response to the teasing. "She actually gave me some advice on what to do with Whitley."

"Hmm," Winter hummed and stood up, clearly about to make her way out of the room. "It is good to know that she is also able to help you with such things. However, dinner will be soon, so let us not giv…"

"Winter."

Watching the woman stop with her hand on the door handle, it was clear that Winter had heard the urgency in Weiss' voice as she turned to look at her with a raised eyebrow. Having struggled just to get that word out, Weiss looked back down at her legs as she figured out how to say what she needed to; fortunately, Winter didn't rush her and simply held her place.

"Do… Do you like Yang?"

The words sounded childish, even to herself, but it was a question she needed to know the answer to before she pushed forward.

"I have yet to meet her," Winter replied thoughtfully and dropped her hand from the door as she turned to look at her properly. "Though from how much you like here and how you say she has acted towards you, I guess I would be willing to say I think favourably of her for now."

"Good," Weiss sighed happily and began to wring her hands together nervously as she knew what was going to come. "But… What if she did… something… in her past. Something that makes everything so much more complicated."

"Like what?"

The question was short and to the point, but Weiss felt her resolve fade for a brief moment.

"Please remember that I rea…"

"Stop stalling and tell me, Weiss."

Clasping her hands together tightly as she once again steeled herself, she took a deep breath and looked at her sister.

"She was… She was in the White Fang."
The silence that filled the room after her revelation caused the blood pumping in her ears to be almost deafening, and as she watched her sister's previously soft, or at least soft by Schnee standards, face turn to stone, she worried she had made a huge mistake by telling her; but it was too late to take it back. Feeling her body began to shake as her breathing stuttered, she patiently waited for her sister to speak; however the first words out of her sister's mouth took her by surprise.

"You did not mention she was a faunus?"

The tone behind the words was impossible to decipher. Weiss could have recorded it and been given a million years to study and describe it, but she knew that even then she would be unable too.

"She's not."

"Then why was she a part of it?"

Again, the woman's voice was impossible to decipher, but a hardness had set in behind her eyes; and unable to look at them any longer, Weiss looked away.

"Her best friend joined, and she followed. But she wasn't part of the attack and never hurt anyone."

"And you think that makes it alright!"

There it was, the anger that she had expected. An anger that she feared more than she had ever feared her father. An anger that made her flinch and a tear push its way to her eye.

"N-No," Weiss stuttered and tried to come up with an argument that might cool the woman's temper. "But she regrets it, Winter. She really does."

"REGRET DOES NOT CHANGE THINGS!" Winter shouted angrily and Weiss felt herself shrink before the woman's rage. "After everything they did to you, and everything worse that they have done in Atlas. The siege of mantle that took hundreds of lives, the poisoning of the Atlas council, the burning of Lithos academy. What on Remnant are you thinking?"

"She's not like that," Weiss stuttered and tried to come up with an argument that might cool the woman's temper. "But she regrets it, Winter. She really does."

"You think others haven't trusted them before?" Winter growled and took a step forward. "The head of the Atlas council was poisoned by someone he had been friends with for years, someone with no record, no priors. They have already come after our family multiple times, so what proof do you have that this is not another attempt at your life?"

"It's not!" For the first time since telling Winter the truth, Weiss found her voice to be strong. "I know it's not."

"Or perhaps you are too blinded by love to see how dangerous this is," Winter replied coldly and pulled her Scroll from her pocket, her fingers rapidly typing out something that Weiss couldn't see.

"I'm not blinded by anything," Weiss replied, finally standing up and looking at her sister.

"How would you know? You do not have my experience, you have not seen them act of I have, you do not have the years of training that the military as taught me."

"But I have had Father!" Weiss cried, feeling tears spill down her cheeks at the fear that Winter might actually go further than she expected and tell her not to see Yang. "Four years of him without you. I know evil and Yang isn't that."
"You do not know evil," Winter snarled as her hand visibly gripped the scroll tighter. "Father is vile and cruel, but you have not stared into the eyes of these animals. You have not watched their savagery as entire groups charge you without fear of their lives."

"You saw one man in a cloud of dust and suffered nightmares for years. I have had their blood on my hands, I have seen a poor homeless woman that I rescued from a battle turn and attack me seconds later without a care, I watched her continue to try and claw at me as she died when I was forced to defend myself."

"These people, Weiss, they are insidious and willing to do anything for the cause," Winter said, her snarling tone turning into something much more scary to Weiss, something she never recalled hearing from her sister before. Fear. "How? How do you know that she is not them?"

Feeling a tear drop from her chin as she understood why her sister was so angry, Weiss struggled to come up with any reason she could that would work, any reason that could reassure her sister; but there was none. There was nothing she could say, no words that would ease the woman's fear. So taking a deep and looking up into her sister eyes with as much confidence as she could muster, she said the one thing that she knew with her whole heart was true.

"Because we love each other."

Once again, silence filled the room and Winter's face turned to stone. Seconds later, the woman's scroll let out a loud ping and she immediately opened it, shoving it back into her pockets seconds later and looking her in the eye.

"Well that is not enough for me," She said her voice shaking slightly. "So I will meet this girl tomorrow. I do not care what prior engagements she has, you will make it happen and I will see for myself. But as for right now, I have to go and meet someone."

Before she could even nod, Winter turned on her heel and threw open the door, the sounds of her heels clicking hurriedly down the hallway; and feeling her body finally give out, Weiss dropped to her knees and wiped the tears from her face as she reached for her own Scroll, wanting nothing more than the reassurance of her girlfriend.

Chapter End Notes

Translation

"Was ein anstrengender kleiner Schnee-Fuchs."

"What a troublesome little snow fox."

A/N

So this chapter originally started very different to how it turned out, but it didn't feel right at all and after talking with Toxic, I decided to rewrite it so I hope it's good. I know a bunch of you have been waiting for the the Winter/Yang meeting, and as you can tell, it is finally here; however the next chapter will be a little short as I have special plans for the discussion, and by making the next chapter shorter, it gives me more time to work on that. I hope you will understand when you get there though.
As stated in the notes of the last chapter, the first 10 chapters have been updated and given a little more polish. Nothing has changed in them and no additional context has been added so don't feel obligated to re-read them. It was more for new people coming in and if people wanna re-read the story someday.

Announcement

So as I also said last chapter, me and ToxicExotic have been working on another story together but weren't able to announce what it was at the time. Now however, we have made it to a point where we feel comfortable telling you that it is actually going to be a Ladybug (Ruby x Blake) short-series set somewhat post V3 where Beacon wasn't attacked. We both really love the pairing and have had a lot of fun writing it, so we really hope you enjoy it when we finally publish; and no promises, but the first chapter might go up within a week of now if we feel we are ready.
Weiss Schnee

The gentle back-and-forth bending of her books as Weiss slowly walked down the hallway toward her brother's room helped to somewhat settle her nerves. She had spent almost the entire morning trying to work out the best way to approach the boy, to offer him her help in a way that he might accept it; but even then, every plan she came up with felt wrong. They all felt hollow, like the perceptive young boy would see them as nothing more than an act; and that was the last thing Weiss wanted. She needed him to know she was serious, so in the end, she had simply decided to go in without a plan.

That didn't mean she wasn't still thinking about what to say as she approached Whitley's room, in fact the reason for her nerves was because she had no idea what to say, and was mainly just hoping it would come to her when she got there. Which unfortunately, even with her extremely slow pace, happened far too soon for her liking. As she turned onto the last stretch that led to the boy's room, she saw that the door was wide open, which at least meant he wouldn't be able to slam it in her face as easily.

Seconds later, Weiss stopped just to the side of the door frame and took a deep breath while sneaking a glance into the room. Much like hers, it very very plain, a bed and a few cupboards being the only furniture inside, along with a desk that sat against the wall. Sitting at the desk pouring over a stack of paper was her brother.

As usual, he was wearing a white, half-sleeved shirt and blue dress pants, however the blue vest and black tie that he always wore were slung over the back of his chair. His hair also seemed a little more relaxed, falling gently over his forehead instead of brushed to the left as he normally preferred it. In his right hand was a pen, and the very sight of it made her stomach churn a little. While their father had taught them to be ambidextrous, her entire family are naturally left-handed, so to see him using his right told her that his left was still causing him a lot of pain.

However, she knew she didn't have long before having to pick Yang up for the meeting with her sister, who she had not seen return to the house since their talk the night before, a talk that had left her with nightmares. So taking a deep breath, she steeled herself to potentially be shouted at again and stepped into the doorway, knocking on the door as she entered.
"Whitl…"

"Go away," his bored voice interrupted instantly without bothering to look up from his work.

"I just want to talk to you for a minute," Weiss replied, keeping her voice as kind as she could. "And then, I promise I'll leave."

Though he didn't reply, she also noted that he made no movement to get up and close the door, so taking it as permission, she carefully stepped into the sparse room. As she drew closer to his bed, she looked over at the boy's desk and saw the book he had taken from the library open at his side. It also struck her that it, and the papers, were the only things on his desk. There were no family pictures, no small figures that occasionally littered it when he was younger; just a clock and a plain marble paperweight.

"How is the studying going?" Not replying instantly, the boy continued to write on the paper in front of him, and after a minute of silence, Weiss tried again. "Whit…"

"The studying is going fine," she said, annoyance tinged his voice so that, had Weiss not known the book he was studying from, she might not have caught the lie. "But much like you have a tendency to be, I am busy."

"Oh," She sighed quietly at his very pointed words. She hadn't expected it to be easy, but to hear him talk to her in such a way still hurt her a little. "I probably deserved that."

Letting the silence capture them again, Weiss bent the books a little more as it dawned on her that her brother was not going to talk to her, and that all she could do was as Yang had said. Let him know that she was there whenever he felt like he needed to talk. So steeling herself, she tried her best to put that sentiment into words.

"Look, Whitley. I know I haven't been the best sister, not for a while now," She started and took the fact that his pen slowed its movements to mean he was at least listening. "But that doesn't mean I don't care about you. You are my brother, and I know we don't see eye to eye on a lot of things and that I have been blowing you off a lot lately; but I want to change that."

Placing her old school books containing her own research on the edge of the boy's desk, she saw his head turn curiously towards them.

"I know how tough that assignment is, and that book doesn't help very much; but these are my notes from when I did it. Everything I worked out, everything Winter helped me with, is in there, and they should help... If you want to use them."

Tapping her fingers on the top of the books, she took another deep breath and continued.

"And I am here for you too, if you ever need it. I know I haven't been lately, and that's my fault; but if you ever want to talk to me, just call or knock and I will make time for you."

Having said all she felt was necessary, she gave her brother one last look and saw that his pen had started moving properly once again. Letting out a small sigh and hoping that she had succeeded, Weiss turned and made her way back to the door, leaving the boy in peace.

While her first visit to Black Cat Coffee was simply for food on a day where she was rather annoyed at being made to wait on her father; the store was quickly becoming one of her favourite


places in Vale. The way the warm smell of coffee filled her nostrils and washed away her tiredness, the way the soft browns of the room exuded a cozy warmth, while the paintings of forest landscapes offered a pleasant viewing experience; especially Yang's paintings, which she could now recognise on sight. There were three around the walls, there should have been four, but unfortunately her favourite drawing of the Atlesian pines was missing because someone had apparently fell over and ripped it. However the thing she loved about the store the most was that it was where she had met her incredible girlfriend.

Since meeting Yang, everything in her life had been better. She felt happier than she ever had, she no longer felt alone, and she liked to think that some of the confidence she lost two years ago had returned; and as such, Weiss felt she was performing far better at her job than she expected because of it. Eager to see her again, she made her way towards the counter, where Blake was already giving her a small wave.

"Afternoon," She said with a smile as she approached the young faunus and accepted the paper cup that was handed to her.

"It's on the house today," Blake said kindly and pulled out a cloth to clean the counter.

"Thank you," taking a small sip of the coffee, she let out a pleasant sigh as the liquid quickly warmed her. "$\text{Is Yang upstairs?}$"

"Yeah," the young faunus replied with a nod and a small frown. "$\text{And only freaking out a little bit. I hear Winter didn't take the news very well?}\$"

"A bit of an understatement," Weiss groaned, a slight sadness falling over her as she remembered how angry her sister had been the night before. "$\text{I knew she had a history with the White Fang, but not that much.}\$"

"Well," Blake sighed and threw the cloth back under the counter. "$\text{I remember hearing that the Solitas branch has always been much more fanatical. Apparently it was some of them who visited Vale and organised the attack on your building.}\$"

Weiss had also read the reports from the attack and knew Blake was telling the truth. The bodies of two White fang operatives well known throughout Atlas had been found in the rubble, and a third had been apprehended and taken to prison. Worst still was that one of them had been an ex-STC employee.

"Mhm," She hummed and took another sip of her coffee. "$\text{Well I should go and get Yang. Winter is waiting for us and given how she reacted, I would rather not keep her waiting.}\$

"Go on through."

Giving the girl an appreciative nod, Weiss made her way around through to the kitchen. She had felt weird when she first started going through to the back, but as time progressed, that feeling had faded as Blake seemed to not care at all. Returning the greeting that Blake's mom, Kali, gave her as she made her way through the kitchen, Weiss quickly jogged up the stairs and knocked on the door to Blake's apartment. Waiting for the door to open, she pulled nervously at her sleeves; and, after what felt like five minutes, the door finally opened and stood in the entryway was her girlfriend wearing the same qipao shirt and long flowing pants she had during their second date.

"Are you okay?" Weiss asked, seeing the worried expression on the blonde's face despite the nod she gave in response. "$\text{We can push it back an hour or two if you want?}\$"
"No," Yang replied, shaking her head and stepping out of the apartment to close the door. "If we push it back, I'll just get in my head even more than I already have."

"Okay," she said with a gentle smile and took her girlfriend's hand. "I don't know how this will go; but I promise you, no matter what, nothing is going to come between us."

"I know," the blonde replied with a nervous smile, Weiss noting that the hand she had taken squeezed her own a little tighter than usual as they made their way down the stairs and out into the alleyway.

Stopping before the doorway to the Schnee townhouse, Weiss took a deep breath and turned to face the blonde at her side. For the entirety of the drive, Yang had barely said a word; instead choosing to gaze out of the tinted windows with an almost morose look on her face. Weiss knew she was scared, and what she was scared of; but hated there was nothing she could do, nothing she could say to ease the fears going through the girl's mind. All she had been able to do was make sure her hand didn't leave her girlfriend's, not even when they had stepped out of the car to take the short walk to the front door.

It was there they had been stood for almost five minutes, Yang's hand shaking slightly more with every minute that passed, and wanting to at least provide a little more reassurance than she had on the drive over, Weiss took a look around before turning to her and giving her the best smile she could.

"Yang, look at me."

"Wha…"

Cutting the blonde off by pushing herself up onto her toes and pressing her lips against the woman's in a gentle kiss, she tried her best to make Yang understand. Fortunately, though the pressure returned was only slight, it was still returned; and Weiss felt Yang's hand steady. Pulling back and looking into her sundrop's eyes, she let out a short breath and gave her a smile.

"I love you, Yang; and nothing that happens in there is going to change that. Okay?"

Feeling Yang's deep sigh breeze through her hair, she watched as Yang gave her a nervous tilt of the head. Knowing that they couldn't stall any longer, Weiss reached into her pocket and pulled out the key, slipped it into the door, and pushed it open.

While the townhouse was rarely used by the family, staff teams were still paid to upkeep it as if it were. As such everything about it was just as pristine as the mansion was, possibly more so as the townhouse was quite a bit smaller than the mansion. There was no atrium, instead they were met by a small, narrow hallway that split into two rooms, one one either end; only being a dining room and kitchen, the other being the living room. It was the latter that Weiss intended to pull the blonde to first, but before she could take more than two steps forward, Winter walked out from the kitchen with a cup of coffee in her hand and a stony look on her face.

Very slowly, the older woman's eyes locked onto them and Weiss took note of the fact her sister was wearing the same military outfit that she had been when she had first arrived in Vale.

"Good afternoon, Sister," Weiss said automatically, the nerves spiking for a split second to make her voice a little higher pitched than usual.
"Sister," Winter said in acknowledgment before her eyes turned pointedly to Yang. "Miss Xiao Long."

It was a small thing, but Weiss understood that it was meant for her. She had never told her sister Yang's last name, so for her to know it only meant one thing, and that knowledge sent a shiver down her back.

"I-It's nic…"

"Follow me."

Once her sister was out of sight, Weiss turned and gave Yang a small, though admittedly it was a little more nervous than it was before. However, the voice in which her sister had spoken was very clear, so taking a deep breath, she walked forward and gently pulled her girlfriend with her.

As they entered the front room, which was decorated a little more homely than the mansion, she saw Winter waiting next to another corridor than Weiss knew lead to a smaller lounging room. This time much closer behind, they followed Winter and cautiously slipped into the room behind her.

The room was smaller than the main one, but was still easily capable of holding at least ten people. Comfy white chairs sat gathered around a table in the middle; and while three of the walls were painted a pale blue, one was made entirely of glass with a door that opened into a room that contained the house pool.

Though Weiss never really cared for custom around her sister, unless their father was present, this time she felt it was necessary; so as custom dictated, she waited for her older sister to take her seat first. Thankfully, the woman chose one of the single chairs, however the placement of it was directly opposite of the couch. Knowing that it was an unspoken order, Weiss gently led Yang over to where Winter wanted them and sat down.

A couple of minutes passed in silence, the only noise the slight clinking of Winter's cup against it's saucer, and much like she had felt Yang do outside, she felt herself begin to shake slightly. Finally, after the woman had finished her coffee, she placed her empty cup on the table in front of them and sat back to inspect them both; her eyes flicking to their hands that were still clasping each other.

"So," The woman said as her eyes settled on Yang, her voice cutting through the tension and almost making Weiss jump despite knowing it would eventually come. "My sister has told me a lot about you, Miss Xiao Long. Even things that took her some time to admit."

Feeling Yang's hand grip her own tighter, she watched as Yang's throat bulged from a nervous swallow before she talked.

"Sh… She's talked a lot about you too," Yang said, her voice cracking slightly before correcting itself. "I know you're opinion means a lot to her."

"And yet she fought me last night," Winter replied quickly, her eyes narrowing sharply at both of them. "Something she has never done before." Clearly knowing that it was not something Winter wanted a response to, Yang remained quiet and waited for the woman to continue. "So obviously you mean a lot to her too."

"Weiss means a lot to me too," Yang replied just as fast as Winter had and with much more certainty in her voice than she's had before.

"I'm sure," the tone in which Winter said the words made it hard to believe if she really did believe
Yang's words or not, though her next statement made it much clearer. "But given my experiences, forgive me if I am skeptical of your words."

Again, it was clear that she didn't want a response, so none was given. Another minute passed with Winter eyeing them both until finally, Winter let out a deep sigh and sat back in her chair.

"However, right now is not the time for such a discussion," the older woman said plainly as she continued to watch them. "Weiss, you called me here to ask for help on revealing this to Father, in hopes that I can help make it smoother. This will not happen."

"No matter what aid I give you, Father will come after you both in ruthless attempts to separate you," she paused and took a deep breath, as if her next words were tough for her to say. "I know this from experience."

Taken aback by her sister's final words, Weiss simply blinked her eyes and waited with bated breath for her sister to continue. Thankfully, she didn't have to wait long as her sister took another deep breath and kept going.

"I have been meaning to tell you a story about myself, one that you have no knowledge of because I personally made sure that you were purposely kept unaware of it; as I believed you were not yet ready to hear it," Winter said with a small sigh and closed her eyes. "Now I feel my choice was a mistake; and that given the situation, you can no longer be kept in the dark.

Just as she took seen Yang do seconds ago, Weiss saw her sister's throat bulge slightly and remembered Winter had told her that the memory was one she did not wish to tell more than once. Finally after a couple of seconds, Winter reached up a tenderly touch the long fringe that hung down the left side of her face and opened her eyes again to look at them with steely determination.

"It is time I told you of my first love, a man by the name of Roman Torchwick; and of how Father tore us apart."

Chapter End Notes

Alrighty, first things first just a little announcement. While the new outfits for RWBY V7 have been revealed (Weiss looking beautiful as ever), I understand some people may want to go in as blind as possible, so none of them will be making an appearance in this story in any way. I also ask that you please keep them out of any comments you decide to leave.

Now for this chapter. It is rather short, as I said it would be, but I promise you the conversation between them is not over. From this chapter though, you can probably guess what the next chapter will be about. However, while I have had it planned for a while now, it's quite long and is really kicking my butt xD So though I will try to get it up at a usual schedule, don't be surprised if it take a day or two longer.

I really hope that the clues I have laid out along the way for Winter's reveal there worked, I purposely mentioned a certain physical aspect of her a lot and gave some indication that it was somewhat like Weiss' situation, but I know that not everyone will have picked up on that. Hopefully if you ever decide to go back and read it again, you may see them.
But that is it from me I'm afraid. I hope you enjoyed and will continue to stick around, and as you know, any feedback you have to offer is greatly appreciated.
Winter's Tale

Winter Schnee

Six Years Ago

It had been an hour. An hour of attempted studying that had been constantly interrupted by the stupid laughter and guffawing of a small group sitting at a table near the gate of the school. From their clothes, Winter could tell that they most likely were not students of Beacon academy; so for them to have snuck their way on campus was enough to annoy her, let alone their constant jeering paired with the foul smelling smoke that was carried on the gentle wind that blew from their direction. She would have loved to have been studying in her favoured spot in the library, a small desk with a comfy chair positioned by a large window to let through plenty of light, but unfortunately the library was under renovations and the only other place she could enjoy the sunlight and gentle breeze was the table she had chosen outside.

Ugh, she groaned in disgust as one of the loud group, a tall boy with jet black hair, called out for a girl who was walking nearby to come and join them. Much like every girl that he had tried it with, his attempt failed as the girl gave him a scalding glare and continued on her way as the rest of the group once again ridiculed him for his failure. Thankfully, the boy calmed down for a few minutes after that and, brushing the annoying hairs that hung in front of her face behind her ear, Winter attempted to once again focus on her studies.

As she studied, the noise from the group once again rose steadily until their conversation was impossible to block out, and finally losing her patience, she slammed her book shut and stood from her seat. Instantly, she was aware that the eyes from all her fellow students were on her, as they had clearly been expecting her to act much sooner, owing to the fact that she was the student council president and had publicly scolded others for such behavior before. So pushing her chair away and moving out from behind the table, she made her way over to the rambunctious teens.

They noticed her before she was even halfway, and the look of joy that took over their faces only grew with every step she took towards them. Eventually, she came to a stop before them and all four turned to give her their full attention.

"What are you doing on Beacon grounds?" She asked harshly, straightening her back and raising up to her full height. "You hardly look like the type of people who would attend such a prestigious academy."
"Damn," a boy with obviously dyed, gunmetal grey hair said with a smirk. "I think rich bitch just tried to insult us."

While the words were clearly meant to cause a rise out of her, she had been called far worse and simply raised an eyebrow in response. "With a tongue that foul, it's hardly surprising that every girl here has turned down your advances."

"She's got you there, Merc," the only girl of the group laughed, a girl who looked a little older than she appeared with glowing gold eyes and black hair that faded to grey at the tips, earning a sneer from the boy. "Not like their missing much either."

"Shut up," he spat as he laid back on the table and put his hands behind his head. "Besides, didn't hear you complaining at Junior's party last week."

"Ahem!" Winter coughed pointedly, drawing the attention back onto herself as she had no interest in listening to such a topic. "I would like you to leave, before I go and get campus security."

"And I would like you to join us," the boy with jet black hair grinned and patted his lap suggestively. "If your mouth can put Merc in his place, I wouldn't mind seeing wh..."

Before he could finish whatever foul sentence was about to leave his mouth, the fourth member of their group, a boy with bright orange hair wearing a white coat with red linings and a thin grey scarf, smacked him sharply on the back of the head.

"Ignore my testosterone filled friend here," he said as he smiled a smile that was effortless compared to his companions. "Junior is the muscle of the group, so we don't really expect anything intelligent to come from that mouth of his."

"I can hardly see anything intelligent coming from any of your mouths," Winter retorted, and to her surprise received a genuine laugh from the orange-haired teen.

"Touche," he chuckled and put a cigarette to his lips, taking a long drag and blowing out smoke as he pushed himself off the table to stand up. "Though finding intelligent people to associate with is hard work."

"Like you have ever worked a day in your life, Roman," the girl laughed, and despite her earlier statement, turned to lay against the chest of the boy they had called Merc.

"Well that, Cinder, depends on your definition of work," the orange-haired teen, that she now knew to be called Roman, retorted as effortlessly as he smiled.

"I would say work is doing something that contributes to society," Winter interrupted and crossed her arms impatiently. "But at first glance, you hardly seem to offer much."

"Careful, rich bitch," the guy laying back on the table said with a chuckle.

"Last girl to talk to him like that had him following her on all fours around like a lovesick puppy," the girl called Cinder finished with a chuckle that match the boy she was laying against.

"Not my fault I like girls who can keep up with me," he laughed with what even Winter, much to her chagrin, had to admit was a rather charming smile. "And at least I was on all four for love, and not for money."

"Dick," the girl replied and threw a chip of wood at him that he smoothly dodged with a graceful spin that left him slightly closer to where Winter was stood.
Losing her patience with the group's antics, she straightened herself and made sure that her next words carried the dangerous undertone that she often used when people were not responding how she liked.

"I have grown tired of this," She said pointedly and took a step away from Roman. "If you do not leave now, I..."

"Yes, yes," Roman interrupted her, put his hands in his pocket and tilting his head to the side a little in what was clearly amusement. "You will go and get security. However... It's a nice day and we really have nowhere else to go, so how about we strike a deal instead?"

"I doubt I will be willing to strike any deal you have to offer."

"Humor me, please?"

With it being the first sign of manners she had experienced from the group all day, Winter decided that such behaviour should at least be encouraged and raised an eyebrow for the boy to continue.

"Now you want us to leave while we want to stay, certainly a tricky situation to resolve, however, I think we can meet in the middle. We," He motioned to his friends with a simple shrug of his shoulder. "Will promise to keep ourselves to ourselves, if you give me one thing."

"And that would be?" Winter asked, preparing her arm to slap the man for the request she knew was likely to come.

"The name of such a beautiful woman like yourself," the man replied confidently, that smile back on his face.

Taken aback for a second as that was most certainly not the request she had been expecting, she found herself, for some reason, considering the offer. The boy had in fact been much more polite than his friends and seemed to at least carry himself with a little more dignity, but the more she thought, the more she remembered that she had absolutely no reason to take the offer. So giving the boy grinning teen one last, she turned on her heel and slowly began to walk away.

"There is a fine for trespassing on Beacon grounds," she called as she walked away. "So I would recommend you be gone before I return with security."

Hearing no movement behind her, likely because she was now too far away, she turned back to see if her words had an effect; and fortunately it had, as the group seemed to be gathering their things. Or at least everyone was except Roman, who was still giving her a wide smile. A smile that oddly stuck with her as she turned the corner out of their sight.

Winter had been enjoying the day so far. While the library was still under renovation, the sun was still shining outside and for the first time in days, a gentle wind blew across the campus. While she would certainly have rather been relaxing and enjoying the warmth of Vale's spring, she did unfortunately have plenty of coursework to still finish; and it was that coursework she had spent most of the day peacefully working on. Much to her displeasure however, just as she was putting the finishing touches on a rather thorough explanation for her business coursework, she heard a familiar chuckle from behind her a let out a small groan.

"I've been looking for you."

"How unfortunate for me," Winter replied instinctively and continued with her work as if the boy was not there.
It had been just over a week since she had confronted Roman and his friends, and she was starting to regret not giving their names to the security guard. Ever since that day, Roman had begun to sporadically show up to interrupt her study sessions; and while he was never rude, in fact he was rather polite every time, his insistence on learning her name had become a little annoying.

"So I've been asking around about you, since you refuse to give me you name and all," He said and sat down next to her, though she still refused to look at him.

"I wish you wouldn't," she replied bluntly and continued her work. "People might get the wrong idea and actually start to think were friends."

"You wound me, Winter," he replied, the victory in his voice as he said her name enough to make her give in and turn to look at him.

Instantly she regretted it as she was met with the same charming smile he had given he when they first met and every time they had seen each other since, the same smile that had once interrupted her dream and left her question herself why she would dream of such a thing. Nonetheless, she kept the scowl on her face as she addressed him.

"Who told you my name?" she demanded, wanting to know who she would have to kill later that day.

"Didn't get her name," he grinned and sat backwards on the seat so that he could face her better while basking in the sun that set his orange hair ablaze. "Simply asked for the name of someone on campus who was incredibly stuck up in a way that made her all the more beautiful."

"I am not stuck up," Winter countered as she squinted her eyes at the teen.

"Really?" he scoffed and picked up one of her books to look at it, Winter quickly snatching it back. "You sure act like it. Kinda kills the fun, you know?"

"You sure act like you know anything about me," Winter fired back and put the book back on the table. "It is not stuck up for me up uphold the rules set by the college. Just because I do not allow your idiocy, does not mean I cannot have fun."

"Then how about you show me how fun you can be?" he chuckled, and Winter instantly chastised herself as she realised that he had played into his hands. "Say over dinner and a movie?"

It was her turn to scoff and she turned back away from the boy. "In your dreams."

"You won't find me denying that."

Only adding to her annoyance, the tone and honesty of his voice almost pulled a smile from her. While she did always find his advances annoying, there was also a part of her that rather enjoyed them, though she would never admit that secret to anyone. It had been some time since anyone had even glanced in her direction, and not because she was unattractive because she knew for a fact she was, but because of her name. Admittedly, her attitude was usually described as quite standoffish, so also often made them think there was no point in even trying. In recent years however, she was beginning to tire of that perception and that was part of the reason she had never expressly told Roman to leave her alone.

"Well maybe you should find a new girl to dream about," She replied and began to pack up her books. "Because you and I will never happen, for more reasons than you can imagine."

"Not with that attitude," her grinned, standing up and walking alongside her as she made her way
back to the main building. However as they came close to the door, he quickly stepped in front of her. "Come on, give me one good reason?"

"Just one?" Winter asked, stopping just before him and slinging her bag over shoulder as he gave her a nod. "I don't like you."

Unfortunately, though she tried to believe she had spoken the truth, the words felt like a lie. So not looking at him, she moved to the side and walked into the building; but much like she had when they had first met, she found herself looking back to the boy out of interest and was a little saddened to see him walking away.

Two weeks had passed since she had watched Roman walk away, and in those two weeks, Winter had found herself a little gloomier than she usually was. He had not visited since and in the boys absence, she had noticed something she never had before. No-one talked to her. She had realised it wasn't just that boys weren't interested in her, it was that no-one was. It had never really bothered her before as she had never really had anything to compare it too, she had always been alone after all; but having had someone who actively sought her out, someone who seemed genuinely eager to see her, it had been a new experience that she quite missed.

Caught up in her thoughts, she started slightly as the bell sounded throughout the room and her professor called for an end to the class. Standing up, she slowly made her way out of the class, she made her way to her usual spot in the courtyard; thankfully the renovations to the library were almost done so she would be able to return there soon. As she walked, for reasons unknown to her, she found herself hoping that she would at least see a hint of orange hair.

It was stupid and she knew it, after all she hadn't given him a reason to visit again, but she had been finding herself looking behind her at the slightest of sounds ever since she had noticed his absence; and every time she had been disappointed to see nothing but fellow classmates.

Maybe that's the problem, she thought to herself as she pushed her way out of the door and looked up to see her usual spot taken by a group of girl and let out a sigh upon noticing every other table was also occupied. Maybe I should just ask to sit at one of them.

But she knew that would never work. One of her biggest annoyances was chatter while she was studying, ignoring the fact that Roman had done it constantly, so to sit at the same table as a group of friends chattering to each other would only set her nerves on fire and put her in a bad mood. So letting out a frustrated breath, she turned away from the courtyard and made her way towards the dining area located near Beacon's waterfall.

Reaching the large enclosed area and seeing it was deserted due to lunch being over hours ago, Winter quickly entered and placed her books on one of the small tables and sat down in the chair. The area wasn't as beautiful as the courtyard, but it had its charms. The wide, open archways let plenty of light inside as well as the fresh smell of the shrubbery that surround the building. In the centre of the room was a small fountain that gently trickled water and gave off a more calming atmosphere. Deciding it was satisfactory, she opened her book and started to study.

It was actually rather peaceful for the first hour, but she was halfway through the second hour when she heard a voice behind her that caused her stomach to flip; a result that left her slightly confused.

"If you're trying to make it harder to find you, then I'm just gunna search longer."

Turning the face the voice, she found Roman leaning against one of the pillars surrounding the
room, the same charming grin on his face as he inspected the fountain in the room.

"Or were you just trying to lure me to a more private place?"

"You wish," Winter replied, trying her best to not show that she actually happy that he was there, though fearing the smile she felt attempting to pull at her lips might give her away.

"You know me so well," he chuckled and pushed himself off the wall to make his way over, his confident walk clearly a show. "But I guess I got someone listening to my wishes because here we are."

"Clearly not listening to mine then," Winter lied instinctively, though even she could hear that it was half-hearted at best.

"And here I was hoping you missed me," He laughed and sat down in the seat opposite her and pointed to the fountain. "Do you know how fountains I've seen today? Six, all running."

Confused as to what he was getting at, she raised an eyebrow and received a shrug in return. "Your point?"

"Just pointing out how long I searched for you," he smiled and leaned back in the chair.

"Hmm," she hummed and scowled at him, knowing he was lying by the dismissive tone in which it was said.

Not knowing what to say as she was never really one for unnecessary conversation, Winter returned her eyes to her coursework, more in an attempt to take her eyes off the boy's smile. After a few minutes of silence however, she felt it necessary to ask the big question she had. "So where have you been?"

"Well look at that," he replied jovially and placed his foot on the table to push himself back on the chair's back legs. "Maybe you did miss me after all."

"Or maybe I want to know what I did so I can do it again," again, the insult was half-hearted and she received a laugh in return.

"Sorry, Snow Queen," he laughed and rocked the chair gently in place. "Wasn't anything to do with you. My niece was ill and I had to take care of her while my father worked."

"Oh," Winter replied quietly, looking up as the tenderness to Roman's voice took her by surprise. "I'm sorry."

"She's fine now," he shrugged, though even she could hear the slight relief in his voice.

"What's her name?"

"Neo," he replied with a smile. "But you're awfully talkative today?"

Winter knew an attempt to divert a conversation when she heard it; after all, she had used it plenty of times on her father. Knowing he likely wanted to change topic for a reason, she happily obliged. "Maybe because you are not trying to get into my pants and are actually talking properly for once."

"I have never once tried to get into your pants," he said quickly and let his chair fall back onto the floor with a little creak. "I mean… If you offer then it would be foolish to refuse; but my offers to take you on a date are genuine."
"Why?" Winter asked, not even bothering to feign interest in her coursework now. "You don't even know me."

"True," Roman smiled as he gave a nod. "But that's the point of a date, right? To get to know each other. But as for why I want one, you're not afraid to insult me and I find it fun. As Cinder said, I like a woman who can keep up with me."

Staring at the boy for a moment, she saw that he was serious and, for a split second, had the crazy thought of agreeing.

"Well I'm sorry to disappoint you, Roman," she sighed and looked down at her work. "But agreeing to go on a date you would be a very bad idea."

"Why?"

Surprised that the question had been turned on her, Winter returned her gaze to him and saw that the smile was gone from his face, replaced by actual disappointment instead. Not wanting to lie, she gave another sigh and sat back in her chair.

"Because it would not go anywhere," Winter explained slowly. "My father would never allow it."

"I see," he hummed and stood up with a groan. "However, I have nothing to do tomorrow so it's likely you will see me again. Might pop by the waterfall for lunch, not a date or anything, but if you wanna join me then feel free."

"Do not hold your breath," Winter said as he leapt over the low wall of an archway and gave a small wave with one of his charming smiles.

As she watched him walk away and turn a corner, she let out a groan and let her head fall into her book. Why am I even considering it? She thought to herself.

This is a bad idea, Winter said to herself as she stood behind a pillar, the sandwich she had bought from the cafeteria gripped in her hand. Taking a small peak around the large hunk of stone that hid her from view, she saw someone sitting on the small bench near the low wall that blocked off the waterfall, the head of bright orange hair making it obvious exactly who it was. The entirety of the night before, Winter tried her best to focus on her work and had even skipped dinner to do so, though that was partially because her father was in a worse temper than usual; but every time she had tried to focus, her thoughts had instead turned to Roman.

It wasn't the first time it had happened, as it was quite frequent during the two weeks in which she found herself missing the company he offered, and though the boy tended to be rather polite, it was the first time the thoughts had not been primarily annoyance. Instead her thoughts had been egging her on to take him up on his offer. Why? She had no idea. As charming as the boy seemed to be, she had no idea how he had managed to worm his way into her head so much, and also knew there would be nothing that could develop from their interactions.

But that didn't stop her from thinking about it.

Ugh... This is so stupid, she sighed to herself as she took a foolish step out from behind the pillar and slowly made her way over too the boy. The closer she got, the more she told herself to turn back, to stop what she was doing, but before she had the chance, the head of orange hair turned to face her with a knowing smile.

"Is that pillar painted to your standards?" he chuckled lightly, the gentle wind causing his long
"It will be when someone removes the graffiti from it," Winter lied quickly, feeling a small amount of heat rise to her cheeks at the knowledge that Roman had seen her hesitancy.

"Taggers at Beacon?" he grinned and pulled a couple of fries from a container at his side. "Weird, thought all of you were too posh for such a thing. Want some chips?"

"Chips?"

"Oh right, your from Atlas," he said with an amused shake of his head. "Uhh, I think you call them freets?"

"Fritten," Winter corrected him as she sat down on the bench and held up her sandwich. "And no thank you, I would rather not upset my stomach with how much grease those things have."

"Your loss," he shrugged and ate a few more. "They might have gone cold though if you had taken any longer."

"You are lucky I joined you at all," Winter said with a raised eyebrow as she unwrapped her own food.

"Maybe," he smiled and turned around to rest his back against the arm rest. "Though I'm starting to think you actually like hanging out with me."

"And once again you reinforce my belief that nothing intelligent will ever come out of your mouth," Winter replied before taking a bite of her sandwich, and just like the first time she had insulted him in such a way, he only laughed in response.

"Well, maybe I'll prove you wrong at some point during this date."

"This is not a date," Winter countered stubbornly, despite being very aware that it did fulfil most of the requirements to be considered one.

"If you insist."

The words were said with a form of arrogance that portrayed exactly how little he believed her; and she could hardly blame him as she barely believed herself. Thankfully, he decided not to push the point and instead continued to eat his fries.

"So how were your classes?" he asked and placed a few more fries into his mouth. "Worth the money?"

"You want to know about my classes?" She asked, a little surprised by the tame question.

"Not really," he shrugged with a smile. "I want to know about you, but that might be too close to date talk."

"My classes were fine," she scowled at the boy out of the corner of her eye and took another bite of her sandwich. "Should I even bother to ask how yours were?"

"I don't think my answer will make you think any better of me," he laughed with a small shrug. "I decided to find my place outside of academics."

"Then I think you will find the amount of places will be much more limited," she replied, trying her best to not sound judgemental.
"True, but there are more important places for me to be right now the college."

"Like where?"

"Now look who's asking personal questions," he grinned victoriously, like she had somehow proved a point; to which she simply rolled her eyes at him. "But to answer your question… Home."

"With your niece?" Winter asked, remembering that she had been the reason he had not shown up for a while was because he had to look after the girl while his father worked. "Where are her parents?"

For the first time since she had met the boy, his reply was not immediate and she saw his face visibly drop; however before she even think of what may have caused such a reaction to her question, his mask came back on and he gave a shrug.

"Not around anymore," he replied and even though his smile was back on his face, his voice held a darker undertone that told her to not press further. "What about your family? Your dad seems like a jackass from what I hear on the news."

"Dieser Abartige, hinterlistige bastard," Winter spat coldly, earning a surprised, albeit confused look from the boy. "The media knows nothing of his true nature."

"Wow!" Roman said as he let out a breath of relief. "I was half expecting you to smack me for badmouthing your family."

"You will find no love for my father from me," Winter said after calming herself a little, the mention or presence of the man she called Father always causing anger to flood her veins like molten fury. "Not after everything he has done."

"Sorry," he sighed, though Winter noted a hint of genuineness in his tone. "Things not good at home I take it?"

"Things have never been good at home," Winter sighed and leant back on the bench, putting her sandwich aside due to her sudden loss of appetite. "Father has seen to that."

"Fathers are just assholes, I guess," he said sympathetically, putting some more fries in his mouth. "What about your mom?"

Winter shook her head at that question, not wanting to think about everything that was happening with her mother, and fortunately the boy seemed to understand.

"Another sore subject, I guess," clearly not used to striking out so much, the boy sighed. "I'm guessing your brother and sister are a sore subject as well then?"

With the boy having touched on a subject that she was perfectly willing to talk about, Winter let the thoughts of her mother drift from her mind and turned back to the boy.

"They're fine."

"Finally," he chuckled, stretching his arms exaggeratedly. "So what are they like?"

"Well, Whitley is eight, but already quite smart," she said proudly and gave Roman a smile. "And Weiss is almost twelve yet can already play the piano rather well. It's pretty much all she does lately to be honest."
"Sound like they'll be a fearsome duo one day."

"Hopefully," Winter agreed and wrapped up her sandwich as the boy placed the last of his fries in his mouth and crushed the container in his hands.

"So..." he grinned and put the cardboard box in his pocket. "Can I ask about you now? Or is that still a little too date like?"

Feeling a smile pull at her lips at the knowledge that he had been waiting patiently, Winter raised her arm to pointedly check her watch and let out an exaggerated sigh. There was only ten minutes of her lunch break left as she had wasted fifteen minutes hiding behind the pillar.

"I suppose I have time for a question or two."

"Then I better make them good," he laughed and sat up a little straighter.

Watching the boy think, Winter took a moment to inspect him properly. To her annoyance, she had to admit to herself that he was quite attractive. The bright green eyes, the vibrant orange hair with a fringe that hung low over his left eye, the long eyebrows, each aspect alone worked to the boy's favour, but his pale skin made them all stand out even more. Every dash of color on him drew the eye and made Winter have to force hers away so as to not appear too engrossed in him.

"Alright then," he finally said with a mischievous grin. "So what classes do you take?"

Staring at the boy incredulously, Winter couldn't stop the small chuckle that pushed its way from her lips as she shook her head in disbelief.

"What's so funny?" he continued to grin. "I'm genuinely curious now."

"Business and Law," Winter replied, standing up as she knew she would have to leave soon to be on time for her next class. "As well as the usual classes."

"And here I was hoping it would be a little more exciting," he laughed and stood up to join her. "Though hearing you laugh made the question worth it."

Caught off guard by the compliment, Winter blinked rapidly at the boy and gave him the first genuine smile since meeting him.

"Well, thank you," she said, a small amount heat rising to her cheeks as she took a step backwards towards the building. "But I must be going, or I will be late."

"Hold up," He replied and put his hands in his pocket. "I recall you saying that you have time for two questions."

"Fine," Winter rolled her eyes and while she didn't stop moving, she did slow pace. "But be quick."

"Alright," he said a little louder due to the distance. "Will I see you here tomorrow?"

Stopping at the question, Winter knew this time that she would return. However, not wanting to give that away, she gave the boy a mischievous smile of her own and mimicked the boys regular habit of shrugging his shoulders.

"I guess you will have to wait and see."

Seeing a flash of eagerness behind his eyes, Winter turned around to hide the smile that was on her face and began to walk back to the building. She still knew that it was a bad idea, that it would only
end horribly, but for the first time in her life, she had someone to spend time with; and she actually quite liked it.

Having spent the vast majority of her day sorting through the immense amount of summer coursework she had been giving and doing her internship at the STC, Winter was feeling exceptionally tired; so as she walked through the small, silent breezeway that led to Beacon's dormitories, Winter took a deep breath of warm, floral summer air in the hope that it might invigorate her. Unfortunately it did nothing, instead the shifting caused her arm, that supporting holding a heavy folder, to move slightly and make her even more aware of how heavy the thing was. So as she approached one of the many benches in the deserted path, she placed it down and stretched out her sore arm.

As she rested, Winter took a look around at the area she rarely visited and had to admit it was actually quite beautiful. On either side of the pavement was a lush green lawn, with small rose bushes lining the point where the stone and dirt met, the red roses that rested in them standing out marvelously among the sea of green. Dotted throughout the lawn were large trees topped with bright green leaves that Winter knew had been transferred at great cost from the forest behind Beacon academy, and underneath many of them were tables so that students could study in the shade. Knowing that she could spare another five minutes, she leaned against the back of the bench to take a breather.

It was after a few moments of letting herself relax that she felt the bench creak a little more from a weight that wasn't her own and before she could jump up and away from whoever had snuck up on her, she felt a pair of warm hands rest over her own and a voice speak close to her ear.

"Hello there, Snow Queen."

Recognising the voice immediately, she felt herself relax a little and stopped trying to move away; though she did turn to throw an annoyed look in his direction. "Could you not try to give me a heart attack?"

"But if I don't, what other excuse will you use for why your heart beats so fast when you see me?" Roman chuckled lightly and let her hands go to walk around the bench and lean against it next to her. "So what're you doing around here?"

"You tell me?" She replied with a raised eyebrow. "After all, you seem to be the one following me."

"Well I was waiting at our usual spot, but you were a no show."

"What..." Checking her watch she did indeed see that it was past the time in which she usually met him. "I'm sorry, it has been such a long day that I completely forgot."

Ever since the first time they had shared lunch at the waterfall almost a month ago, they had begun to meet rather frequently. Every time they met, she found herself enjoying her time spent with the boy more and more; and while his tendency to annoy her was still intact, she had rather enjoyed that she had someone who challenged her, though in a fun way. However things had certainly gone a little further than she had ever intended to let it.

She remembered the first time they had kissed, how Roman had been the first to lean in and while she was hesitant and knew she should have stopped him, she hadn't. She remembered expecting it to taste horrible due to his smoking, even though she had noted that he only smoked occasionally, but was pleasantly surprised when there was no hint of his worst habit; in fact, he tasted like the
oranges he had just eaten. She had even let herself enjoy it for a moment before pulling away, and
while she had certainly tried her best to not make a habit of it, that had not been the only time such
things had happened.

"Don't sweat it," he shrugged with a smile, his voice pulling Winter from her thoughts. "So what's
been so tiring about it?"

"Well, apart from college, Father has made me start an internship at the company," Winter sighed
in frustration. "He still refuses to accept that I want to go into law instead."

"So why don't you just tell him to get lost and leave?" Roman asked and leaned back to pick up the
files she had been carrying. "I mean, you've said you don't want the company."

"Thank you," Winter said as the boy tucked the file under one of his arms and she pushed herself
off the bench to continue walking to the dormitories. "And I can't. If I leave then my father's
attention will turn to Weiss, and even Whitley. I do not want to do that to them."

Letting out a short sigh at her predicament, she let her head drop to look at her feet.

"Besides, it's not like he will let me go that easily. If I leave home, he will just make my life
difficult from afar until I come back, and there is not really anywhere I can go that his reach will
not find me."

"I guess that's probably the shittiest thing about your dad being one of the richest men in the
world," he hummed after a minute of silence, during which her had matched her slower pace.

Giving the boy a short nod as they rounded the corner and the dormitory came into view, Winter
held her hand out for the files Roman was carrying; however instead of passing them to her, she
felt fingers entwine with hers. Confused by the action as she was still unsure of what they were
exactly, her hand automatically began to pull away; only for her to stop it. She hated that she
always reacting the same way, that it always took two attempts for her to be able to let her guard
down.

Ever since she had turned sixteen, her father had taken to organising dates for her, and while she
had tried her best to talk him down, he had been rather insistent. A couple were okay, some were
pretty good even though there was never a spark, but there had been a few where the boy she had
been on a date with had taken things a little too far, been a little more handsy that she was willing
to put up with; and ever since, she had found herself preferring not to be touched.

But she knew Roman wasn't like that. Sure he could be quite forward and very flirty, but he always
understood her boundaries; furthermore, as much as she hated to admit it, she actually did like him.
So letting out a small sigh of annoyance as she chastised herself, she let the hand slowly close back
around his.

"So are you just going to stay at the company forever?"

"Not if I can help it," Winter replied, feeling herself relax a little since she had pushed herself past
the hesitation.

"And what would you do if you did leave?" he asked with a mischievous grin and a slight glint in
his eye. "As great as you would look in a short skirt, I can't imagine you waiting tables to pay for
Beacon."

"I would never be in a skirt," Winter replied, throwing the boy a smirk as she loosened her finger
threateningly from his. "And my father does not pay for Beacon as I refused to take the business
course. I pay my tuition with the money my grandfather left me."

"Well that's one good way to give him the middle finger," Roman laughed amusedly and reclaimed his grip on her hand, pulling her a little closer as he lifted his arm up to rest it over her shoulders. "Though not seeing you in a skirt is a real downer."

Rolling her eyes at him, Winter felt a smile pull at her lips as she looked away. "I am sure you will live."

"Maybe, but some illnesses have some really weird cures."

"Is there a cure for stupidity?"

"Smart and beautiful women generally cure my stupidity."

Letting out a small laugh as his carefree idiocy, Winter let herself be pulled and a little closer so that they were close enough to smell the deodorant the boy wore. It was a smell she actually quite liked, never to harsh like most men used, but gentle with a slight vanilla hint to it.

"Then clearly you do not know your medicine as well as you think you do, because I am both, yet you are still an idiot."

"Well you see, Snow Queen, I'm also a fool for a girl that I need to impress," he grinned wickedly and stopped walking, spinning her around so that she came to a stop in his arms. "So a double dose might be needed."

Knowing what he meant by those words, Winter bit her lip and took a quick look around the area, as even though she really care to hide anything, it would be unfortunate for people to start whispering before she even knew what they were. Seeing that they were still alone, she cocked an eyebrow at the boy and received a soft chuckle in return. Before she could persuade herself not to, she pressed her lips softly against his.

As usual, tension ran through her at the touch, though none of it had to do with Roman, and having learned that was normal, the boy didn't return the pressure; instead waiting for her to relax a little. After a couple of seconds, she finally pushed the annoying reservation down and her body relaxed a little. Clearly sensing it, Roman's hand left her own and landed on her waist, pulling her into his body a little deeper as he finally returned the pressure.

He had clearly smoked just before meeting her and she could taste it on him, but it wasn't terrible as most of it was cut out by the strong taste of orange chocolate; and while she wasn't the biggest fan of sweet things, she was more than happy to let the pleasant taste fill her senses for a few seconds. As she did, she felt Roman's hand snake its way around to her back, where he had a better grip and allowed her body to collide with his for a moment, the boy's excitement obvious. However feeling that and knowing they could be interrupted at any moment, she cut the kiss short and pulled back to give him a cheeky grin.

"Too bad you can only have a double dose once a day," she said and reached around to her back to take his hand.

"Well, dear lady," he replied in a faux posh voice. "I think you will find that one dose is more than enough to cure idiocy for twelve hours."

Laughing as, despite his word, the usual charming, stupid grin spread across his face, they began to walk again toward her destination. While she walked, she let herself fall in a little closer to the boy to enjoy the small moment of joy that he gave her, knowing that she would likely not feel it for the
rest of the day due to meeting her father at the office once she was done delivering the files.

_Dieser Bastard_, Winter swore inwardly as she stepped out of the car and pushed the door shut with a little more force than was necessary. _Dieser arrogante, egoistische Bastard._

Not bothering to thank the driver, as she was more often than not rather rude herself, Winter simply stalked away from the car as it drove off, throwing out more curse words under her breath. What on earth made him think she would ever go through with that? with Him of all people.

Feeling anger pulse through her veins as she stormed her way into Beacon, she completely missed the boy that was stood next gate; and as she felt a hand catch hers, her anger at the current situation caused a large wave of revulsion to rip through her. Tearing her hand free from whoever had grabbed it, she span around ready to shout them down for daring to do such a thing.

"What do you th..." she began, stopping short as her eyes caught the green of Roman's. Staring into the concerned eyes for a moment, it suddenly registered just how heavy her breathing was.

"Hey?" he said quickly, has armed help up as if to surrender as a smile dropped from his face. "What's wrong?"

"Nothing," she snapped hashly at him, the logical part of her mind speaking up to tell her that he didn't deserve such a thing and immediately making her regret doing so.

"See while I normally find you playfully snapping at me attractive, I'm not as big a fan when you are serious and I have done nothing to earn it," he fired back quickly, his tone taking on the darker undertones she had only ever heard when he talked of his niece's parents weeks ago.

Staring at the boy and noticing that the mischievous glint she liked so much was missing from his eyes, Winter swallowed the lump in her throat and took a deep breath. Roman was right, he hadn't done anything to deserve that. Once again, she had allowed her emotions to get the better of her and had accidentally lashed out.

"Sorry," she mumbled once she had finally gained enough control of herself. "I just had a bad morning."

"Clearly," he remarked, the annoyance dropping from his face and making it impassive. "Wanna talk about it?"

"I have class," she replied, making sure to keep her voice calm.

"You could skip?"

"I can't skip, Roman," Winter sighed and turned around to make her way through the gate, only for Roman to step in front of her.

"Why not?" He said, as if the question was a satisfactory retort. Though as she raised an eyebrow at him, he rolled his eyes at her. "I mean, you pay for those classes so you can choose not to go; and you're clearly pissed off, so do you really think you will get much done today?"

Staring at the boy but not moving, Winter thought over his words. He was right in a way. She rarely ever got work done when she was angry as she was too often more focused on what had annoyed her than her class; and she certainly did pay for those classes so what she did was up to her. But she had never skipped before, she had barely even taken a sick day. So while she knew her day would be unproductive, she shook her head at the boy.
"I still need to attend," she sighed, and made to walk around him; however before she did, she noticed the mischievous glint was back in his eye.

"That's a shame," he shrugged as he stepped aside to let her pass. "Because I'm pretty sure it would piss your father off."

At that sentence, her body stopped halfway through its step towards the gate, and she turned to look at him properly. From the smug smile on his face, it was clear his words had the desired effect and Winter couldn't help but scowl at him. Where her father issues really that obvious?

"Come on," he said coaxingly, his hands working their way into his pockets. "It's a win win situation. You're likely way ahead in your classes anyway."

Just like many times since meeting Roman, she once again asked herself why she was even considering entertaining the idea. It was reckless, stupid, and would absolutely bring her nothing but trouble in the future; but at that moment, after what her father had arranged without even considering her input, she found herself taking a step away from the gate. Looking at him cautiously, she crossed her arms and squinted at him.

"So what are we going to do?"

"I'm sure we can find something," he grinned and turned away from the gate himself, walking slowly towards the dropoff car park in a way that was clearly meant to persuade her to follow him.

A little hesitant at first, she watched as he slowly walked away and truly considered if she wanted to do it. Her father would most certainly find out, and there would be hell to pay when he did; but wasn't that what she wanted? To let him know that he can't control her like he did everything else? To show in any way she could that she hated him? Knowing it was, she took one last look at her college, wondering which of her teachers he had in his pocket, before turning to follow Roman.

In the time it took her to catch up, Roman had already come to a stop next to a car the could not be more different to the one that had dropped her off moments ago. Where hers had been a brand new model of a car not yet released to the public, the pure white untainted metal by a single spec of dirt; Roman's was likely older than both of them with it's blue paint chipped and half ripped away to show rusted metal beneath.

"Not exactly the same as the one you pulled up in, but she still runs," he shrugged, his words mirroring her thoughts. "Mostly."

Raising an eyebrow as he pulled the door open for her, she cautiously approached and took a look inside. Just like the outside, everything was tarnished. The seats had large rips in them, some covered by duct tape but others just left to leak the cushioning foam, and empty food containers and papers littered both the dashboard and the backseat, causing the slight smell of old food that clung to the air to invade her nostrils.

"You know there is such a thing as a brush that helps you clean things, right?" Winter said as she looked back to Roman to see him shaking his head.

"I have probably held more brushes than you have, Snow Queen," he replied humorously as she slowly climbed inside, making sure that there was nothing on the seat before sitting down.

Shutting the door after her, she watched Roman quickly jog around the front of the car and slip himself into the front seat. If she were uneasy about being in a car that she was sure would give her tetanus should she even brush her finger against it before, the fact that the car took three tries to
start did nothing to make her feel any better. Finally however, the engine revved to life and with a sidelong glance at her, he pulled out of the car park.

For the first ten minutes, nothing was said. Having rolled down the windows so that some of the old fast food smell, she had been more focused on the passing building and trying to enjoy the cool summer wind of her face. However, as they entered the rundown area of west Vale, they came to a stop at a traffic light and she heard Roman's voice to her side.

"So what did your dick of a dad do this time?" he asked, his voice a little more careful than usual.

"Same thing he always does," Winter replied plainly, the gentle rhythm of Roman's fingers drumming against the steering wheel helping to calm her slightly. "Decided that what he wants matters more than what I feel comfortable doing."

"And I'm guessing you can't just tell him no?"

"It's not like I didn't try that," she replied and leaned back a little in her seat as the light turned orange. "But he refuses to listen."

"Hmm," Roman hummed, the sound barely audible over the vibrating engine. "So what is it he wants you to do?"

Letting out a sigh as she remembered the conversation that morning, she turned to look at him. To his credit, even though they were stopped, his eyes were watching the road and that sight made her ease up a little.

"He's throwing a summer ball at the mansion next weekend," She replied her grip tightening on the doors handhold as she spoke. "And he wants me to accompany the son of a business associate he is hoping to secure a merger with."

"And I'm guessing from how annoyed you are that this guy's a dick too?"

"He is a stuck up, pompous rich kid, like all the rest," she spat as a reply before sinking back into her seat. "But he also doesn't like to take no for an answer."

"What!" His eyes actually shifted from the road slightly and for the first time since meeting him, she heard anger tinge his voice. "You've been out with him before?" Winter gave him a small nod.

"No," Winter interrupted him quickly. "He wouldn't dare. But doesn't mean he didn't try and that his gentlemanly facade didn't fade the moment I pushed him away."

"Cunt," Roman swore, his eyes returning to the road. "And your dad is still doing this after that?"

"Like I said, he doesn't care," Winter replied, hating that the admission still hurt her a little. "The only thing he cares about is that stupid merger with *Marigold Innovations.*"

"Well fuck him," Roman said bitterly as the light finally turned green and he once again started to drive. "Just don't go."

"It's not that simple," Winter replied with a saddened sigh. "When father is angry, he's very difficult to deal with. Me skipping college will annoy him but he will just say I'm wasting my money, but if I skip the ball..."

Cutting herself off as she didn't want to say aloud that her father might take it out on her siblings, or
even her mother, Winter just shook her head and looked down at her lap.

"Sorry," Roman sighed after a couple of minutes, turning left into a small residential area with multiple apartment buildings. "Keep forgetting that it's more difficult for you than that."

"It's fine," she said quietly, wanting to move on from the conversation. "So where are we?"

"My house."

"What?"

"Well, it's an apartment," Roman elaborated, clearly ignoring the true meaning of her surprise as he drove into a nearby parking lot and pulled into an empty spot. "But where I live regardless."

"And what are we doing at your home?" she asked, eyeing him suspiciously as he turned off the engine.

"Not that," Roman chuckled and pushed his door open and pausing to look at her. "Just gunna hang out for a bit, or we could go downtown to a restaurant or something, but I'm broke and... well... kinda barred from a lot of places."

"Do I even want to know why?"

"Probably not," he laughed while stepping out of the car and leaning down to look at her. "You coming?"

Taking another second to look at the boy, she rolled her eyes and rolled up the window before pushing her own door open. Stepping out of the car, Winter took a quick look around the area. While most of it was tall apartment buildings, there were a few derelict houses, their windows smashing in with plywood blocking the doors. The slight smell of garbage and rotten fruit hung in the air and caused her nose to wrinkle slightly.

"Sorry, the market was yesterday so kinda stinks at the minute," Roman said and locked the car up.

"It's fine," she replied, following the boy towards a large grey tower apartment. "My grandfather grew up in a place like this in mantle during the war. I visited it a few times before he passed."

"Well then," he laughed as they approached the door and walked through into the entryway, the white-tiled walls almost indiscernible underneath the sheer amount of graffiti. "Glad to know me being poor doesn't bother you."

"Poor people are, most often than not, more hard working than rich people," she replied and followed him up a narrow staircase. "Unless they do not even try, it is very rarely their fault that they must live in squalor."

"Squalor or not, it's a roof over our head," Roman shrugged as they reached the second floor and walked through the door.

Trailing behind him slightly as they approached a door with a couple of leaflets sticking out from the letterbox, she watched him rip them from the hole and shove them into his jacket pocket before pulling a key from his jeans and put it in the lock.

"Now don't get jealous when you see my home, alright?" he grinned and twisted the key. "I know you live in a mansion, but this small apartment is pretty great."
Rolling her eyes playfully as he pushed the door open and stood aside to allow her to enter first, Winter took a step forward into Roman's home. Though she was met with another small entryway, at first glance it was rather nice. Unlike the hallway she had just stepped from, the walls were completely graffiti-free, instead they were a pleasant shade of orange with white streaks. A long, deep divot ran along the wall where a bowl was placed, the edges painted with very messy pictures of icecream; clearly the work of a child. Smiling to herself, she began to turn back to Roman, but just as she was about to spin, a young, barefooted child with light, brown hair jumped into the hallway with her hand up like claws and almost made her scream.

Stumbling backwards a little at the surprised and feeling Roman's hands catch her, she quickly made about straightening herself and looked to see the girl now staring at her, just as confused as Winter was herself. She also noticed another thing that took her by surprise, and that was that the girl had two different eye colours; her left being a dark brown and her right being a light pink.

"Totally forgot to warn you about that," Roman chuckled behind her.

"Liar," She breathed at him as her heart calmed it's pace from the fright.

"Is dad in the kitchen, Small Scoop?" He said to the little girl, the humor of the situation still clear in his tone. In response, the girl gave a shake of her head and pointed towards the door behind them. "He went out?" he asked, letting out an annoyed sigh as he received a nod from the girl. "How long ago?"

While Winter had noticed the interaction had been a little weird since the beginning, it was the girl's response the Roman's final question that caused her the most confusion. Instead of saying the answer, like most children would have, the girl looked up in thought for a moment and then held out her hands to hold up seven fingers, two of which she hesitantly put halfway down as if she thought it was wrong.

"Dammit, I told him I wouldn't be long," the boy said sigh a resigned groan and threw his keys into the painted dish. "Winter, this is my niece, Neo Torchw..." Cut off by the sudden rapid shaking of the little girl's head. Letting out a small chuckled, he held up his hand to signal her to stop. "Sorry, Neo Politan. Neo, this is Winter."

Watching a wide smile take over the girl's face as Roman corrected himself, Winter was taken aback a little as the girl held her hand out. It was such an odd gesture to see a child her age do, but she happily leaned down and shook it nonetheless. "It's nice to meet you, Neo."

Receiving a short nod from the girl, that she took as her returning the sentiment, she let go and felt Roman walk up beside her.

"I'm guessing you were just watching cartoons?" he asked the girl, who once again gave him a small nod. "Alright, well me and Winter are gunna hang out in my room. If you need a drink then come and ask. I can't have you flooding the kitchen floor with juice again."

With a small wave to them both, Neo ran back into the front room and the sound of the television floated out through the ajar door. Smiling slightly at the little girl, Winter turned to Roman with a raised eyebrow.

"Neo Politan?"

"She's hooked on icecream at the minute," he laughed and started to walk into the apartment a little before stopping at a door with a large pumpkin drawn on it in black marker. "She's insisted we call her that for the past month."
"Cute," Winter chuckled as Roman reached up and ran his hand along the top of the door frame. "You said she's five, right?"

Roman hadn't talked about Neo too much in the time she had known him, but she did know a couple of things. She was his older brother's kid, though what happened to him she had no idea, and that she was frequently ill and kept home from school. Every other time she asked about the boy's family, he would simply shrug and say they were fine.

"Yup," he replied, finding what he was looking for and pulling a key down. Slipping it into the door, he quickly pushed it open and allowed her to enter.

"She's rather quiet?" she asked cautiously, looking around the room that was much cleaner than she had expected.

"Yeah," Roman sighed and entered the room, leaving the door open behind him. "She's been mute for the last year and a half. Kinda frustrating as it makes it harder to know when she isn't feeling well."

"Mute?" Winter asked in surprise, having thought that the girl was just rather quiet. "She never speaks?"

"Sometimes a word will slip out if she's feeling really bad or really happy," the boy answered as he collapsed on his bed. Not seeing anywhere else to sit in the room, Winter simply stood in place. "She understands everything and can speak fine for the most part, doctors say that she just doesn't want to for some reason. Probably my brother's doing."

"What happened with him?" She paused as Roman swung himself up into a sitting position and rummaged around a small desk to pull out a control for the television in the corner.

"I don't know," he shrugged and tapped the bed to show she could sit down. Hesitantly, she sat on the edge of the bed. "We went to his apartment one day and saw all his clothes gone, figured he just took Neo and left. Turns he didn't even bother with her. We found her two days later bundled up in some clothes in her closet."

"That's awful," Winter replied, unable to keep the appalled tone from her voice.

"That's my brother for you," he said dismissively and sat back against the wall. "But she's been like that ever since. I'm pretty sure it doesn't help that my dad keeps leaving her alone as well, even though he knew I was gunna be back before he needed to leave for work. Anyway, enough about that, you can relax you know."

"I know," Winter replied, despite the fact that she was still barely sitting on the bed. Telling herself to sit back at least a little, she tried to move but was held back by the fact that if she did, then she would be right next to Roman; and on his bed no less.

"Winter," Roman said softly, sitting forward a little and placing a hand on the bed just behind her. "I promise I'm not trying for anything here. The door's open, Neo can come in whenever. I just want you to relax for a bit, but if you'll feel more comfortable in the front room, or even going somewhere else, then we can."

"No," Winter replied quickly, and turned around to look at him properly. "I know you're not and I'm fine here, I just…" Shaking her head as she cut herself off, she let out a small sigh of frustration and before her body could stop her, she pushed herself backwards. "See, I'm fine."

"I'm you say so," he replied, looking at her carefully before sitting back against the wall himself.
Holding up the remote, he turned the small television on and quickly turned it to an old movies channel, a silent, black and white film pushed its way through the slight static. As she watched a man with a very small mustache, heavy eyeliner and a bowler hat being chased by the police, Roman's slight chuckles sounding next to her whenever something slapstick happened, she found it rather easy to relax. After a couple of minutes, she even let herself fall in a little closer to the boy; her head falling sideways onto his shoulder to enjoy his scent.

It was only as the film ended that she realised she had felt something she hadn't in a while, something that she hadn't noticed creep up on her as they watched them film silently. Sat there, her head on Roman's shoulder and her fingers lightly touching his, she finally felt at ease for once.

Ignoring the pain as her knuckles rapped roughly on the door to where Roman lived, Winter waited impatiently for the door to be answered. She had no idea how he could be so stupid, how he could ever think that was the way things should be done. Thankfully however, she didn't have to wait long for her answer, as seconds later the door opened and an older man she recognised as Roman's father stood in the doorway.

"I'll go get him," the man said in a tired voice the moment he saw her.

Before she could even thank him, he disappeared from the door and shouted for his son. Crossing her arms as she waited, she heard Roman and the older man talk a little before the door opened fully to reveal her smiling friend.

"To what do I ow…"

"What on earth were you thinking!" The smile immediately dropped from his face and he gave her an exasperated sigh. "Were you even thinking?"

"I don't kn…"

"Don't you dare lie to me, Roman," Winter cut him off again, the false innocence in his voice only annoying her further. "Did you really think he wouldn't mention the group of people that cornered him and warned him not to touch me? Threatening Henry like that has to be the stupidest thing I have ever seen you do!"

"Well what would you have me do?" he fired back, all the feigned innocence gone from his voice. "Let him try and get all handsy with you again?"

"It was a public ball, Roman!" she argued back angrily. "I may not have liked going with him, but even if he wanted to, he couldn't."

"I was just trying to ensure that was the case," Roman shot back, a little anger tinging his own voice.

"I don't need to be protected!"

"Really?" he asked, stepping outside and closing the door slightly behind him. "Because it's very clear him, and people like him, have had a lasting impact on you."

"And what does that mean?" she fumed angrily. "Do you think threatening him will get rid of the fact I hate being touched and make me sleep with you quicker?"

The moment she said it she regretted it. Roman had never pushed for that and she knew it, but it didn't stop those fears; and in her anger, she had accidentally used them against him. To make it
worse, the dangerous tone of voice she had only ever heard once before was clear as day when he replied.

"If that is what you think I'm after, then you clearly don't know me."

"Rom…"

Before she could finish her sentence, the boy had already disappeared into the apartment and slammed the door closed. A painful silence followed and it was only then that Winter realised that, in the heat of the argument, tears had begun to gently spill down her cheeks. Again she had ruined things. Her anger, her trust issues, had hurt the only person who seemed to actually care about her; so swiping at the tears to clear them from her face, she turned on her heel and made her way back to the car.

Pulling open the door of the salon, Winter watched the small child she was with jump happily down the steps first before following, the girl's freshly coloured hair bouncing as she did. The moment she reached the pavement, she took off at a sprint towards the orange-haired boy sitting on the bench and stopped in front of him to excitedly point to her hair. Quickly catching up, Winter gave Roman a smile as she drew near; the mere fact that she was still able to do such a thing after their argument almost three weeks ago making her smile just that little bit wider.

The first few days had been rough after their fight, she cried more than she was even willing to admit to herself and had once again felt the misery of being alone when the boy had not shown up at Beacon for just over a week. But thankfully, just as she was beginning to contemplate whether going to his apartment to make amends was a good idea, she walked out of her class to see him waiting for her. If the feeling so long ago of seeing him again after his two weeks absence had been happiness, then the feeling of seeing him there after their fight surely had to have been elation.

The conversation had been difficult at first, the awkwardness and stubbornness of them both making it tough for either to talk, but eventually they had settled it and Winter had explained she had been worried that Henry could contact the police. While it still took some adjusting afterwards, they had eventually fallen back into their old relationship; though she still had no idea what that relationship was.

"It looks great, Small Scoop," Roman grinned at that girl and ruffled the pink side of her hair that hung over her brown eye, causing the girl to shake her head as she stepped backwards out of his reach and towards Winter. "You gunna thank Winter for getting it done for you?"

With a wide smile, the girl wrapped her arms around the top of her legs for a couple of seconds before letting go and running off towards a nearby store window to look at herself in the reflection.

"Thanks for this," the boy said once the girl was out of earshot and Winter turned to see him standing up.

"It's fine," She smiled back at him. "Though it won't last long. She's too young to have it dyed properly so it's just a little colour that will wash out in a week or two."

"That's more than I could give her anyway," he smiled and took a step towards her. Despite the traffic, both vehicular and pedestrian, she didn't move away from him. Instead she let him sidle up to her as they both turned to face the girl who was still happily twisting locks of pink hair between her fingers. "You sure you do…"

"I already said it's my treat," Winter interjected firmly and began to walk towards the girl with
Roman at her side. "Think of it as my way of making up for upsetting her."

"You weren't the only one shouting," he shrugged dismissively, tapping Neo on the shoulder as they passed her so that she followed them. "But at least that past us now."

"Mhm," She hummed, and despite all the traffic, she moved a little closer to him so that their arms were brushing against each other, something that he certainly noticed. "Though maybe I could make it up to you with a haircut of your own? That fringe is terrible."

"What?" he asked incredulously and moved his hand up to give the hair that hung in front of his face a small flick. "This adds to my mystique."

"It makes you look like those kids who hang out by that vampire shop," Winter laughed in response, earning a hurt glare from the boy.

"Did you just call Hot Topic a vampire shop?"

"Of course you know the name of it," she teased with a raised eyebrow, laughing at the crinkle that ran across his brow.

"Everyone knows the name of it, Snow Queen," he replied, the amusement in his voice fighting the shaking of his head. "And I will have you know, it's a pretty great shop."

It was her turn to shake her head at that statement as she had seen some of the ghastly t-shirts Roman owned from that shop, but even as she did the smile did not leave her face. Furthermore, as they started to round a corner, she felt his hand bump against her own. As usual, the flinch occurred, though less so than before; and gripped by a desire that she was tired of suppressing she raised her arm and hooked it around Roman's.

"Woah," he said as she felt his arm seize up a little but not move away. "Isn't this a little publ…"

"No," she interrupted shakily, not wanting to be talked out of finally doing what she wanted. "I don't care anymore."

"Are you sure? What about your father?"

"It is time he learned that this life is mine," She replied stubbornly, gritting her teeth and moving a little closer to him. "Not his."

For a couple of moments longer, she felt his hesitation; but as they came to a stop at a traffic light, she finally felt his arm relax and let out a small sigh. She doubted it had gone unnoticed, that there would not be some reporter around one of the corners that would snap their picture, but she didn't care. She was done with her father, done being his puppet and losing everything because she was angry at him. She wanted freedom and happiness, and while the boy was certainly a little rough around the edges, Roman gave her that.

Winter could see the reporters out of the corner of her eye, the plain white van far less suspicious than they thought it was, and she knew that they would likely be snapping as many pictures of her and Roman as they could; though while she didn't care, the fact that nothing had been reported yet did make her a little anxious.

It had been over a week since she had noticed the first reporter snap a picture of them together, something that occurred a little more than a day after she had decided she didn't care anymore, and she had even been asked about him by one or two who were not content with simply getting the
pictures. Normally, even her haircut would reach the magazines within hours, but there had been nothing. No headlines, no articles, no pictures published; and Winter knew what was likely causing the hold up. Her father.

While they had not spoken in over a week, the man was clearly informed as her internship at the STC had been swiftly ended, not that the extra free time bothered her at all; but he had been making himself exceedingly scarce over the past few days. When she did see him, he refused to acknowledge her with anything other than sneers and snide remarks that were clearly made at her expense. However, she wasn't stupid, she knew he was up to something and that it would all come to a head soon. Unfortunately for Winter though, as she walked out of the gate with her arm hooked through Roman's, rolling her eyes at another cheesy compliment, she saw it.

A gleaming white car that sat in the car park.

She knew it on sight. Unlike the one what drove her around that was pure white, this car had a snowflake imprinted on the door. There was only one car that the family own was marked in such a way, so that everyone who saw it knew who sat inside; and the moment she stepped out from the gate, the back door opened and a small chill ran through her.

"Well," she sighed, both of them stopping in their tracks as Roman had clearly seen it too. "I guess it's finally time to have this out."

"Do you want me to come with you?" He asked, a smile on his face that was clearly only for show. "He might need a good punch in the face?"

"Though the offer is appreciated and he certainly deserves it, I would rather you not give him a reason to have you arrested," Winter said and turned to face him.

Ignoring the fact that her father was likely watching her and the small amount of hesitation as she leaned in to press her lips against his, she enjoyed the moment for what it was as she knew future ones would be very hard to come by soon. Not holding it too long, she pulled away and gave him a smile.

"I will see you tomorrow?"

"Sure, Neo's got the dentist a little before you finish class, so I'll probably bring her along with me."

"Alright," Winter replied, giving him another small peck on the cheek before letting out a small sigh to herself as she started towards the car. "Here goes."

As she approached the car, she took a deep breath, and steeling herself, she placed her hand on the door to pull it fully open. Sat inside, not even looking at her, was her father, his white suit standing out even in the darkness created by the tinted windows.

"Get in, now!" he said while looking out the window, his voice carrying it's usual drawl but with a threatening undertone.

Letting out her breath, she reluctantly obeyed and slipped into the seat. Waving a quick goodbye to Roman, she shut the door and the car took off before she could even buckle her seatbelt.

The entire drive to the Schnee manor had been silent, neither of them willing to be the first to address the other, the man did however did make sure to sneer at her every opportunity he got until they got to the house. Once they had arrived, he immediately shouldered his way out of the car and stormed into the house, muttering only one word. Office.
So that was where she stood. In the cold, plain office the her father spent a majority of her time. Unlike most of the Schnee manor, the floor and walls were a dark brown. Along each side were bookshelves, each one lines with more books than anyone could read on business and law, among many other things. In the center of the room was a couch and two chairs, a small glass table resting between them, that she knew were often used for meetings with shareholders and other business partners the man consorted with. At the end of the room was a long brown desk, the chair facing the door with a large picture of himself hanging on the wall.

Hearing the door slam behind her, she turned to see her father stalking his way across the room with a foul look on his face as he moved to sit at his desk. Once seated, he quickly dug through one of his drawers; and after a couple of seconds searching, he pulled out a thin file and slammed it on the table.

"I would ask for your excuse on these," he said, his dull voice low and menacing. "But after that display, I hardly feel it would be necessary."

Glancing down at the photographs that had spilled from the file as he placed it, she saw multiple different shots of her and Roman.

"Is it against the rules for me to have friends now?" She asked sardonically, crossing her arms stubbornly.

"You call this friends?" He sneered, picking up an image of her and Roman kissing. "If that is what you do with all your friends, then clearly I have raised you wrong."

"Or maybe it just runs in the family," Jacques eyes narrowed menacingly at her, but she didn't care. Arguments were more frequent than conversations between the both of them and Winter had grown accustomed to the looks her father used in an attempt to intimidate her. "Besides, I fail to see how mine and Roman's relationship is anything to do with you."

"You think it has nothing to do with me?" Jacques snarled and pulled a piece of paper from the file. "You think your... friendship… with this boy does not affect me when he has three arrests under his belt already?"

"You think it does not affect how our business partners view our family? How our shareholders view our competency? Like it or not, child, every action you take that becomes public knowledge has an effect on our family; and this deviant will do nothing but affect the public image of this company and cast doubt on your claim to it."

Winter rolled her eyes in annoyance at the mans words and crossed her arms.

"How many times do I have to tell you that I do not want to run the company?" She countered heatedly. "And if we are talking of crimes committed, how many times would you have been arrested if you didn't have half of Vale in your pocket? The only person who embarrasses this family is you, Father."

"I have committed no crimes," the man replied angrily, his moustache quivering as his voice rose. "But I have grown grown weary of this attitude. Thankfully, however, I now have a good idea of where it is coming from; and if this is the influence such a boy has on you, then I do not think it wise that I continue to allow your friendship."

"My issues with you go much further back than me meeting Roman and you know it," Winter snarled back, her anger growing further as she finally tired of the man's false ignorance of everything he had done to her. "As for me not seeing him any more, that is something you have no
control over."

"Is that what you believe?"

"Yes," She argued back, taking a step towards the desk and pointedly picking up one of the candids to put in her pocket. "This is my life, Father, and I am through with letting you control it. I will not be taking the company, I will not be doing anything you expect of me, and I will most certainly not stop seeing Roman because you say so. If that is a problem with you, then strip me of my title and all your so called support, I do not care. Grandfather at least saw what you were towards the end and made sure that I alone have sole access to the money he left for me."

With one last glare into her father's cold, blue eyes, Winter ripped another picture from the deck and turned around, striding quickly towards the door. Once she reached it, she twisted the door handle and ripped it open; however, before she could walk out and slam it behind her, she heard her father's malicious drawl once more.

"I will not let you throw your life away and embarrass this family, child," he said, the voice sending a chill down her spine despite her anger. "See this reprobate again, and you will leave me no choice but to take action."

Stopping for only a second, she felt a sneer pull at her face and stepped outside of the office and slammed the door shut behind her. She was under no illusion that what she had just done wouldn't have consequences, but whatever they were she would face them. All that mattered was that she had finally stood up to him.

As the sounds of laughter floated from the television, and the girl at her side, Winter felt a small smile pull at her lips. It had been almost two weeks since the argument with her father, and in that time, she had done exactly as she told her father she would. When she was not at college or spending time with her siblings, she had taken to spending as much time with Roman as she could. Not just because she knew it would annoy her father all the more, but because she was finally able to freely admit to herself that she really did enjoy his company.

So to be sat in Roman's living room on a saturday morning, her head resting on the boys shoulder as Neo sat on his lap carving a candle with a toothpick and watching cartoons, Winter found herself happy; even if she did know that the future would soon get rather rough.

"What's got you smiling?" Roman asked gently, grinning at her as brushed away a piece of wax from Neo's hair, which had almost completely returned to its usual light brown. "Finally realised how devilishly handsome I am?"

"You wish," she chuckled and shook her head. "I was actually just admiring how good Neo's carving is."

Technically the last statement was a lie, as her best guess at what the girl was carving into the pink wax was something ice-cream related; and even that was merely a guess based on how much the girl loved the food. Though Neo still gladly accepted the compliment by giving her a wide smile.

"Wow!" Roman exclaimed in surprise. "Did you just compliment someone?"

"I compliment people quite frequently," Winter replied smugly with a roll of her eyes. While she was now willing to admit she liked the boy, she was hardly going to make things easy for him and let his head get even bigger. "Though I do have to like them to compliment them."

"Really?" he chuckled and went to move his arm from around her shoulders and disturbing how
comfortable she was. "Then this may be giving me the wrong impression."

Quickly reaching up, she grabbed his wrist and returned it to her shoulders before relaxing into him a little more. Since they had been in the open and spent more time together, she had slowly been trying to get past her reservations about being touched; and while there was still some level of discomfort when initiated, she found that it faded much quicker than it used to.

"Maybe you're just warm."

"It's hotter than an oven in here."

"I get cold easily," Winter shrugged, despite Roman being right about how hot it was without any air conditioning.

"If you say so," he chuckled, giving up and turning back to watch the girl who was still happily scratching patterns into her candle. "So has your dad done anything yet?"

"No," Winter replied easily as Roman had asked the same question every time they had been together that week. "Are you nervous?"

"Nah," Roman said dismissively and brushed away a small clump of wax that had gathered in one of Neo's older etchings. "What's he gonna do? Get me arrested for kissing his daughter? Would probably be the most worthwhile thing I've spent time in a cell for."

"That's not funny," she scolded him with a raised eyebrow. "You already have a record he could use to do it."

"My record is shoplifting and petty theft," Roman shrugged as Neo handed him the toothpick and he started to scratch what looked to be a misshapen pumpkin next to what looked to be an ice-cream cone.

Caught off guard by that last one, she raised her head and turned to look at him properly. "That last one?"

"Relax, it's nothing," the boy said in a reassuring voice. "We sold our old TV to some girl who used to live around here and she gave us counterfeit Lien. So when she refused to return it, I took it. Plus, she was a bitch who treated everyone like shit anyway."

"That doesn't make it okay."

"Things work a little differently around…"

Roman was cut off by a loud bang from the hallway, and though he reacted quickly by picking Neo up from his lap as he stood and dumped her behind the couch, he visibly relaxed after a loud swear issued from the hallway that Winter recognised as the boy's father. For a couple of moments, she had actually been a little frightened by the reaction, but knowing the stories her grandfather had told her about where he had grown up, it didn't surprise her.

What did surprise her however was that Roman's father quickly came into the room with a furious expression on his face. She had met the man a couple of times in the last month since she had first visited Roman's house, and while he wasn't the most affectionate man, he certainly didn't seem bad. Tired? Certainly. A little irritable? Sure. But whenever she visited and he was home, he was usually either playing with Neo or watching television.

"Dad?" Roman said, clearly as confused as she was. "What's up?"
"Read it for yourself," he growled, holding up a brown envelope that he quickly slammed down on the table. "I need a drink."

As the man stormed off towards the kitchen, Roman reached out and picked up the letter; only for his brow to quickly start to crease. While the boy read what she assumed was bad news, Winter turned around and looked behind the chair expecting to see Neo, but was met with nothing but a confusing empty space.

"Neo?" She called carefully and watched in surprise as the girl's brown and faded pink hair began to emerge from a small flap in the back of the couch. Once her head was fully exposed, the girl looked out at her with curious eyes. "It's okay, it was just your grandfather."

Seeing a little relief pass through the Neo's mismatched eyes, Winter held her hand out and pulled the girl back up over the couch to sit down; and by the time she had finished, she heard Roman let out a cuss word that actually made Winter want to cover her own ears.

"What is it?"

"Our building's been sold," he said with barely suppressed anger. "And the new owners are tearing it down. We have two weeks to leave."

"What!"

Snatching the letter from his hand as she knew the new owner would be required to give more notice than that, she quickly read through and felt her heart drop as her eyes latched onto the name of the company that had bought it, Bronzewing Motors. She knew the name, and not because they were the largest manufacturers of luxury vehicles in all of Atlas, the very same who had provided her family with the cars that drove them around; but because she knew for a fact they were a subsidiary of the STC.

"You're tearing down his house!"

The words had flown from her mouth before the sound of the office door slamming shut could stop reverberating around the cold, square room. The entire drive back to the house after reassuring Roman that she would sort it had felt like the longest in her life as anger and impatience had coursed through her veins; so to arrive and see him completely unphased by her accusation only annoyed her even more.

"What house?" he said in his normal monotone drawl, not bothering to even look up from the papers on his desk.

"Roman's," Winter snarled and slammed the eviction notice on the desk.

Looking up from his papers this time, he reached out and picked up the letter and gave it a once over. After a couple of seconds, he gave a brief, noncommittal shrug and put it back down.

"Mr Bronzewing has been looking to expand into Vale for some time now," he said, returning to the papers he had been working on prior. "We simply helped him find a suitable location for his new factory."

"Suitable location?" Winter replied incredulously, snatching the pen from her father's hand and tossing it aside. "You expect me to believe this is mere coincidence?"

"I could not care less what you believe."
"You cannot do this, Father!" She fired back, changing course as she knew her father's statement was true. "This kind of action requires council permission, revolving of tenancy agreements. These things take longer than two weeks."

"It is quite funny you mention tenancy agreements," Jacques replied, leaning back in his chair with an amused look on his face. "They have none, none of the residents in the area do. Though I believe that is hardly my fault and more an issue with how the previous owner handled things."

"As for the council issue, well there wasn't any. As it turns out, that area has been a problem for a while despite numerous attempt to clean it up. Crime, drugs, you name it and that place is home to it. So when I pitched them an idea that would resolve that and create plenty of jobs for the... poor... surrounding areas, they were all for it. In fact, they were rather eager to get started as soon as we could."

"And I am sure you didn't sign any of them a hefty check," Winter replied sarcastically, appalled by how flippant her was about the whole situation. "You would unhouse hundreds of people because you are not getting your way? People who have nowhere else to go."

"The STC is a business, daughter," he said callously and pressed the tips of his fingers together. "If I were to try to please everyone, then nothing would ever get done. But you never know, maybe your friend could return there in a couple of years? I am sure there will be an open space on the workforce. After all, creating jobs are what we are trying to here."

"Du Bastard," Winter spat angrily at him, slamming her hand on the table and ignoring the pain that shot through her wrist. "You vile, manipulative bastard"

"Watch your to…"

"No!" Winter sneered, cutting the man off as he began to stand up. "Do you think that treading in these people will remove who you were? That it will change where you come from? Because you know it won't. You may act like you are better than them now, but you will always be the son of a coked up whore th…"

Winter heard the crack that echoed around the room before she felt the sting; but as she fell over from the force of the hit, the burning on her cheek quickly began to grow hotter. Feeling tears sting her eyes from the pain that coursed through her body, she looked up at her father through blurred vision to see her father adjusting his tie, not an ounce of remorse on his face at all.

"I have allowed this attitude to continue too long," he said, the bored tone of his voice tinged with disappointment. "Clearly that speaks to my failure as a parent, but that changes now. It is time you learned that there are consequences to your actions, that I am your father and that you will do as you are told!"

Standing up slowly and raising a hand her her cheek, Winter stared her father in the eyes and felt her resolve bolstered by the fact that she no longer cared about the uncaring gaze they held. Feeling a sneer pull at her face, she straightened up and prepared for what she knew would come. "Fick dich."

As she knew it would, another loud crack sounded through the room, and though she remained standing while her face whipped to the side, the struck cheek began to burn just as the other did. Yet again, there was nothing in the man's eyes but a bored expression.

"What a disappointment you have turned out to be," he said coldly, the sentiment enforced by how clear it was in his voice. "After everything I have given you, everything I offered you, this is how
you repay me? No matter, it doesn't do to waste time on a lost cause."

"Since you clearly do not want it, I will revoke your claim to the company and you will be free to
galavant around with whoever you choose, though when you see how difficult your life is without
my support, I expect you will come crawling back."

The threat in her father's voice was clear as day. She could go, but she would never be free. He
would make her life a hell, Roman's too, until she came back.

"In the meantime, however," A spine-chilling coldness captures his voice as he slowly walked his
way back around the desk and took his seat. "Weiss will take your place as heiress to the Schnee
company. Hopefully she will not disappoint me as you have."

For the second time that day, her heart dropped and her stomach churned. The thought of her sister
one day receiving the same treatment if she ever let their father down, or even worse, turning into
the man before her made her feel sick. But if she stayed, then he would win. He would get
everything he wanted and she would be left with nothing again. How did she choose? Her life or
her sister? Was there a more cruel choice the world could force upon her?

"Now that you have your freedom and your money," he said and pulled out another pen from his
draw. "I think it is time you left my house."

What did she do

Roman or Weiss?

Freedom or her sister?

Screaming for both filled her head and she felt a tear spill down her cheek, the warmth of it
soothing the line that it drew on her burning cheek. She was stuck, she had no idea what she would
do. She wanted freedom more than anything, away from her father and everything he represented;
but she loved Weiss with everything she had and had sworn to never let her suffer. Feeling
hopelessness begin to set in, she wrapped her arms around her chest and let the tears flow freely;
and as she did, a single question filled her thoughts.

What do I do?

________________________________________

"I'm sorry."

Despite having ran countless scenarios through her head over the past couple of days, none of them
had prepared her for just how much it hurt her to say those words; but then again, none of what she
had planned over the last day had hurt as much as the goodbye they both knew they were sharing
on a nondescript bench in downtown Vale.

"I know," Roman replied, his voice low and filled with sadness that he was clearly trying to cover
up.

"I... I can't leave her," she choked out, feeling the need to make sure the boy understood why she
had made the choice she had.

"I get it, Winter," Roman said softly, his hand coming out to takes hers lightly. "Your sister comes
first. This isn't your fault."

"But it is," Winter sighed and let her head drop to stare at her lap. "I was stupid. I got arrogant and
didn't think things through; and worst of all, I underestimated Father despite knowing what he was capable and you're going to lose your home because of it."

"Still not your fault," he said firmly and sat back on the bench. "You wanted away from him, but he put you between a rock and a hard place. Everything that happened is because of him."

"Maybe I should never have confronted you that day."

A long silence filled the space between them, a silence that made Winter fear that Roman was inwardly agreeing with that sentence. So turning to look, she was surprised to find him smiling to himself.

"Nah, I'm glad you did," he chuckled and looked up at the sky fondly. "I got to know you, that's worth it to me."

"I'm pretty sure meeting me is not worth your house," Winter countered, not believing that Roman was as okay with it he was acting.

"You would be surprised," he shrugged in his usual carefree dismissive tone. "Plus, we were constantly behind on rent so it was bound to happen sooner or later."

"Roman, you don…"

"Stop, Winter," he interrupted, the smile fading from his face slightly. "What's done is done. You can't stop him, I certainly can't, we just have to roll with the punches. My family is pretty used to it honestly."

"I would still prefer you hate me," Winter said honestly. Though the idea of Roman hating her made her feel sick, she still felt like she deserved it.

"Never gonna happen, Snow Queen," he replied gently and gave her hand a squeeze.

Letting out a sigh at the boys stubbornness, she felt him move a little closer and let her head drop to his shoulder for what she knew would be the last time. She didn't care that people gave them glances as they passed, the only thing she wanted was to remember the light scent of vanilla and orange that constantly surrounded him.

"So what are you going to do now?" She asked cautiously, trying to stretch out their final conversation a little longer so that she could enjoy the moment as long as she could. "About your living situation."

"We're gonna stay at a friend's for a while," He said after a second and put and arm around her shoulders. "At least until dad find a new place."

"Do you need any help," Winter offered, feeling like it was the very least he was owed. "I can give you some mo…"

"No!"

The voice in which he cut her off was firmer than any she had heard him use before, as if the very idea was impossible for him to even consider.

"I have ple…"

"I don't care if you have enough," he cut her off again, his head resting against hers. "I don't want
you giving me money to be the last memory we have of each other.”

While she knew the boy was right about it being their last memory together, to hear Roman say it felt like she had been punched in the stomach, and as that thought invaded her mind more and more, she felt a wetness running down her cheek.

"Just promise me one thing, okay?" he continued, clearly not caring that her mascara-blackened tears were running onto his favourite white jacket. "I know your sister means a lot to you, but if it ever gets too bad, if you can't cope with it any more and you feel like there is nothing left, get out. Be selfish and put yourself first like you tried to do this time and get away from him. Please promise me that."

Unable to say a word due to the lump in her throat, Winter gave a short nod of her head. It was all she could manage, but thankfully it was enough.

"Good."

Feeling his arm give her a small squeeze, she let out a small sob as she remembered that it was likely going to be the last time she felt such a thing from him. As the minutes passed, she felt the tears flow steadily; and when she felt his arm slacken slightly, she couldn't stop another sob that pushed its way from her throat.

"I wish I had more time to stay here with you," he sighed, the sadness in his voice clear this time. "But I need to pick up Neo from kindergarten."

Despite the sadness that overtook her, she understood and slowly pulled away to look him in his beautiful green eyes, one covered by the orange fringe as always. There was a sadness there too, a sadness that told her he too didn't want to leave; but they both knew he would have too eventually, so giving him a small nod that splashed the tears that had collected on her chin down his shirt.

Standing with him as he slung a small backpack over his shoulder, they turned to face each other and she felt him pull her into a one armed hug.

"I'm going to m-miss you," she sobbed out in a quiet croak.

"Me too, Snow Queen," he replied, his voice cracking slightly as he pulled away. "But maybe you'll find me again one day."

Looking up into his green eyes once again, she knew it was her last chance to show how much he meant to her, so despite her tear streaked face and her quivering lips, she ran her fingers through his fringe and pressed her lips against his.

The instant she did she regretted it, not because of the usual instinctual reason but because it was nowhere to be seen. As their lips met, there was no awkwardness, no reservations that held her back. Everything she normally felt when simply being touched was gone, and in that moment she knew why; but the realisation hurt her all the more.

She loved him.

So as he pulled away and looked down at her from the very slight height advantage he had over her, she dreaded the next words that were going to leave his mouth.

"Goodbye, Winter."

Composing herself just enough as her whole body began begging to break down, she gave a loud
sniff and tried her best to give him a smile in return.

"G-Goodbye, Roman."

If the words had hurt, the feel of his hand slipping from hers had to be the worst agony imaginable, she was certain of it. But just as there was always more cruelty her father was capable of, there were worse feelings than seeing him walk away; a point that was proven as he walked around the corner with one last wave to never been seen by her again. Never again would she hear his voice, never again would she see his smile, never again would his crack jokes that made her eyes roll.

As all of that realisation finally crashed down on her, she found she no longer had the strength to stand and collapsed to the bench they had both been sat at moments ago, not caring who of the people passing by saw her cry.

It had been a month since she had watched Roman walk away, a month of loneliness like she had never known before. A month of crying and pain, of putting up with her father and trying to be strong for her sister; but with every day that passed, with every day she tried to tell herself she was doing better, Winter knew she wasn't. Every day at college was miserable, she could see the glances while sat alone eating lunch and hear the whispered rumors that were carried on the wind; and while she had never cared for them before, each one reminded her that the happiest thing she had in some time was gone, and he was never coming back.

Worst was that nothing at home had changed. Since she had chosen to stay, her father had chosen not to remove her title, therefore keeping her as the heiress to the company, the only person who could have helped her was falling deeper and deeper into alcohol. Weiss and Whitley were thankfully still unaware that anything had happened, though Whitley had walked in on her crying to herself a few times, but she had always managed to compose herself and told him to go play elsewhere.

However she knew those days couldn't last, especially not since it was Weiss' birthday and she had promised to take her shopping. So reluctantly she had pulled herself together and dressed herself to leave the house. She had made sure to leave before her father had woken, to avoid the usual sneers and snide remarks he had taken to giving her, and had spent the last five hours in various clothing and music store with her sister. However, at some point in the day, they had passed by a mirror and she had seen that her hair had grown a little longer than she usually liked it without her monthly trim; so decided that would be a good first step, she had pulled Weiss into the same barber shop she had visited with Neo and Roman and dropped herself into a chair.

And that was where she had been sitting for the last couple of minutes, looking at the dark rings that circled her eyes watching as the man delicately tended to her hair, careful not to make a single mistake; but as she watched the man slowly move his scissors to the front of her hair, she felt her stomach churn as a word ripped itself from her throat.

"Stop!"

Immediately he complied, the sharp metal hovering just over her fringe. Usually she would have him trim that too as she hated having hair in her eyes, but as she had watched the scissors move towards the hair, the idea of cutting it off just didn't sit right with her.

"Leave it."

"Are you sure, Miss Schnee?"
Taking another look in the mirror at the white hair that just touched her eyebrows, she felt a lump in her throat begin to form as her nose wrinkle with a slight anger that began to gently pump through her. If her Father was going to act as he did, then she would make damn sure that he didn't forget that she hated his guts. She would make sure that he never forgot what she truly thought of him and his company, and while she wasn't capable of much, this small act of defiance was more than enough for now. So steeling herself as she settled on that decision, she gave that man a short nod and answered firmly.

"Yes."

Yang Xiao Long

Present day

Not a word had been said as Winter told her story, but the longer she talked, the tighter she had felt Weiss' hand grip hers. She didn't blame her for being angry, Yang had only just met the woman that sat before her but even she felt bad for what had been done to her. To have a parent rip away something so cruelly was inconceivable to her. Though as angry she was at the man she had never met, it was nothing compared to what she had watched grow on her girlfriend's face, so she was not surprised that once Winter finally stopped talking, Weiss stood from the couch and stormed out of the room, slamming the door hard enough behind her that Winter's abandoned cup shook where it stood on the table.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry but I have to keep this quick as I have to go to bed in like twenty minutes to be up for my brother's wedding. This was supposed to be up yesterday but life got in the way and while I usually don't upload this late, if I didn't then it wouldn't be up until Sunday night (for me)

So I have had this chapter planned for a while and I really wanted to do the character's justice here. Roman gave me quite a lot of trouble with trying to keep him charming, but make him also have that depth I needed while keeping him true to the show. With Winter I tried to show that she has hated her father for a long time and has just been looking for a reason to escape, Roman being a free spirit who finally broke past all the walls she had built up. I know also haven't shown Jacques in the story much as I have been trying for more of an ever present feel with him that become very real when he takes action, but this is you first true look at him so please let me know how you found him here.

But that is all for more, I would have talked a little longer but I am rather rushed right now. I hope you enjoyed so please tell me what you though in as every comment means a lot to me.
Yang Xiao Long

"Weiss?"

Pushing open the door of a room, Yang took a quick look inside to see that it was just as empty as the last three she had checked and closed it again to continue her search. While the house wasn't anywhere as large as the mansion, the number of rooms it still managed to hold was astounding; though as she was trying to find her girlfriend, who had stormed angrily from the room they been sat in, it was slightly more annoying than she would have normally found it to be.

She could only imagine what was going through Weiss' mind at that moment, as even though Yang didn't really know Winter, the story still made her feel a little sick. The cruelty Winter's' father had apparently shown towards his own daughter for just wanting to live her own life was horrible. The way he had twisted situations, used the people she loved against her, could he even still be called a father? Or would the Monster be a more fitting description? Yang was leaning more towards the latter than ever. But what about Weiss?

From the story Winter told them and the way she spoke of her father, it seemed like the woman had never liked the man anyway; but Weiss had never spoken of him like that. She had expressed annoyance, even exasperation, but she had never said she hated him. In truth, Yang doubted whether she did hate him, that a part of her still cared for him; however, after having heard the story, after how Weiss had reacted throughout its telling, Yang didn't know if those beliefs were correct any more.

Letting out a deep sigh, Yang pushed open another door to be met with a small lounge but no white-haired girl sat on its chairs. Fortunately though, as she gently closed the door, Yang heard a small bang from a nearby room and quickly made her way towards it. Turning the corner, she found herself in the kitchen she had seen when they had first arrived; and while normally she would have found it funny that she had somehow managed to get lost in the house, the fact that Weiss was facing away from her slamming cupboard while she prepared a glass of water took up more of her attention.
"There you are," Yang said gently, standing in the archway watching the girl take a glass from the cupboard, her grip on it so tight that Yang was half worried it would smash. "Are you okay?"

"No!" The snowy-haired girl replied shortly and shoved the glass into a small opening in the fridge door to fill it with ice and water. "I am not okay, Yang!"

"Figured that hoping for a yes was…"

"Every time I think he cannot do anything worse," Weiss interrupted her, clearly not listening. "Every time I think he has done everything he can to destroy the reputation of my grandfather's company, I discover yet another thing that he has kept buried."

"Yeah, th…"

"Underpaid faunus labour, aggressive acquisition tactics, almost doubling the price of the medical technology we develop," Weiss continued angrily, taking the full glass from the opening and placing it on the table. "But this! Using the company to actively go out of his way to ruin hundreds of people's lives for no other reason than because someone defied him."

"My grandfather started it to help people! He put everything he had into making life better for everyone and that is what I want to take over, that is the company I want to run; but I don't know if the STC is even that anymore. Every year it strays further and further away, and I don't know if I can even fix it when I take over."

Watching the girl bend over the table, Yang saw a droplet hit the hardwood surface and felt her heart drop. She hated that Weiss was questioning herself, and wanting to try and make her feel better, she walked over and placed her hand over Weiss'.

"If anyone can change the company, it's you, Weiss," she said quietly and sat down on the stool, Weiss quickly sitting down on the one next to her. "But…" Yang cut herself off, unsure as to what she was going to suggest.

"But what?" The woman sighed and took a sip of her drink.

"Well… I don't really know much about business," Yang said slowly and felt Weiss' fingers part so that hers could slip between them. "But if you really don't think you can change it, if you think it's too far gone, why not start your own one?"

For the first time since she had found her, Weiss' face turned to look at her. There was surprise in the woman's beautiful blue eyes, and thankfully far fewer tears than Yang had expected, but after a couple of seconds, a gentle smile pulled at her girlfriend's lips.

"I can't," she said with a small shrug and a shake of her head as she turned away. "The company means too much to me… My grandfather means too much."

"I don't think he would be disappointed if you tried to honour him with something else, Weiss."

"I know that," Weiss softly and looked down at her drink. "But there's more to it. I was five when my grandfather passed away, I don't remember much of the days I spent with him, but he was such a good man; and the company is all I have left of him. It was his gift to the world, and I cannot leave it in the hands of my father."

"I see," Yang hummed. Despite disagreeing and feeling Weiss really could honor the man with anything she did, she also understood how important it was for her, so chose not to go any further. "So what are you going to do?"
"I have no idea," Weiss replied with a deep sigh and took another sip of her drink. "But I know that I am done waiting for it to be handed to me."

"What does that mean?" She asked cautiously, raising an eyebrow at the woman. "Are you going to take it or something?"

"If I have too," Weiss said with a resolute nod. "I don't know how I am going to do it yet, but if Father used the company against Winter, then he will certainly use it against you; so I don't really have a choice, because I am not giving up either of you."

At Weiss' declaration, Yang felt her heart flutter and squeezed her girlfriend's hand reassuring. If that was the path Weiss was determined to take, then she was determined to travel it with her.

"Well," Yang hummed and reached for the glass of water to take a swig. "He can't do to me what he did to that Roman guy. We own our house and Dad wouldn't sell it to anyone."

"True, but that doesn't mean he can't do other things, Yang," Weiss said and turned to face her. "I highly doubt you being former White Fang won't come into play at some point."

"Then I'll deal with it when it comes," Yang said firmly and gave Weiss a nervous smile. "Though if I'm being honest, your sister scares me more at the minute. You never told me she was so terrifying."

"Because she isn't," Weiss said, finally giving a small chuckle. "I am pretty sure she's just wearing her military clothes to scare you; but when you get to know her, she's actually really supportive. In her own way."

"I hope she eventually likes me enough for me to get to know that side of her," Yang smiled at the certainty in her girlfriend's voice. "But if she left Roman to keep you safe, then I can believe it. I actually expected you to be more angry about that part, honestly."

"I am angry about that," Weiss said, though her calm tone carried some form of understanding to it. "I hate that Father used me to control her, and that she put her life on hold for me; but I've always known that's how Father is since he uses Mother against me all the time, so it doesn't surprise me. I also know that him and Winter have always been at each other's throats, but I guess this sheds some light on some of the reasons why."

A little unnerved by how easily Weiss talked about it, Yang rubbed her thumb over the back of the woman's hand and felt Weiss lean on her head on her shoulder. Picking up the water, Yang took another sip and let Weiss clear her thoughts in peace; but after a couple of seconds, she heard the woman let out a small sigh.

"Yang?"

"Mmm?"

"I know you don't like me asking this, but I have to make sure," Weiss said slowly, Yang knowing the question that she had expected to come since the woman had stormed from the room. "With everything you just heard, are you still certain this is what you want?"

"Without a doubt," Yang replied the moment Weiss had finished asking and wrapped an arm around her hearing a relieved sigh.

"Good," Weiss said as she lifted her head off Yang's shoulder.
Turning to look at the girl, Yang was surprised by a pair of lips suddenly pressing softly against her own, and never being one to turn down some affection from her snowflake, she happily sank into the moment. A slight disappointment filled her as Weiss pulled away seconds later, but it quickly faded as she saw the smile on the woman's face.

"I love being able to do that in one of my family's houses."

Grinning in return, Yang pressed her lips back against Weiss' for a second before also pulling back. "So do I."

"Good," she smiled and stood up, picking up the glass of water with her. "But I think we should get back to my sister. I'm pretty sure she had more to tell us."

"Alrighty," Yang replied as she stood up with her, only to realise she was stood in front of the blue-eyed woman who was waiting for her to move first. "Uhh... You can lead the way, I already kinda got lost once while looking for you."

Weiss let out a soft chuckled as she rolled her eyes and took her hand, guiding them both back through the house to the room where Winter was likely still waiting for them. Watching Weiss hesitate slightly before pushing the door open, Yang gave the woman a small smile that was quickly returned as she took an audible breath and pushed it open for them to enter.

Upon entering, they saw that Winter was no longer sat in her chair, instead she stood by the window that looked out over the pool. From the slight reflection Yang could see in the glass, there was a look on the woman's face that she couldn't quite place, a look that was somewhere between fondness and sadness. Taking a seat on the couch they had been sitting on before, they waited for Winter, who had not even acknowledged their return, to join them; and after a couple of minutes of tense silence, she finally turned to face them.

"Have you finally calmed down?" She asked Weiss, her tone blunt but not unkind.

"Sorry," Weiss replied, a little disappointment at herself evident in her tone.

"It is understandable," Winter sighed, walking around the chair and dropping back into it. "It's not like I expected you to take it lightly."

The way Winter's eyes surveyed them both sent a small chill through Yang, like the woman was seeing more about them than Yang had ever known existed. Fortunately, the eyes did not linger on them too long, as Winter let out a low sigh and interlocked her fingers.

"While Father's actions were cruel," Winter continued, breaking to brief silence that had arisen in the room. "I too am responsible for some of the mistakes made. I was arrogant, I knew what father was capable of and believed I would be able to handle it; but all I had was my anger. My anger at how he treated us, at how he broke our mother, and at how he ruined our name. If only I had known back then that anger alone does not win you a battle. While emotions can grant you strength, it is never wise to let them overpower you; yet I did, and in doing so I forgot that I had no leverage."

"Then how am I supposed to beat him," Weiss asked, a hint of uncertainty tinting her tone.

"By being smarter than I was," Winter countered sharply, her eyes narrowing on her sister. "Fortunately I believe that you already are, due to the fact that you reached out for my help. It shows that you are taking this seriously, that you are not underestimating our father."

"All I have done so far is hide us from him," Weiss sighed and Yang tighten her grip on the girl
hand reassuring, as Weiss had done to her that morning. "Even if I am careful, I don't have any leverage yet either."

"You sell yourself short, Sister," Winter replied shortly, raising an eyebrow at her. "You have more leverage than you think you do."

"Despite growing up with Grandfather being a prevalent figure in my life, I was never interested in running company, so I never had reason to fight for it; but that is not the case for you, Weiss. Ever when you were a child, you were enthralled with Grandfather's tales, and the company has been your goal ever since. You have taken your role as heiress to heart but Heiress to the Schnee Technology Company is a title that means people are watching; as such, even your short time as overseer of the research and development department has caused people to take an interest."

Looking to her side, Yang saw Weiss' brow furrowed in confusion, and apparently so did Winter as the older woman continued.

"In the past couple of months, you have done a number of things to catch the attention of certain people. It is no secret that the Atlesian military works closely with Merlot Industries, and therefore we keep a very close on what happens there; the convincing of one of their top researchers to join the STC is not something we simply gloss over. There is also Dr Polendina, who has not had cause to be in contact with the Remnant Medical Research Foundation for a couple of years, but recently reached out for a new project that begin around your appointment to his department; the same project that General Ironwood is interested in, if I am not mistaken."

"But the General turned down our request for funding."

"Because it would be unwise for the military to invest in an uncertainty, but that does not mean he is not interested and won't reconsider when further results are shown," Winter countered quickly with a stern look. "I also had the luxury of meeting an old business associate of Grandfather's shortly before I came to Vale, a man who has not shown any interest in the STC since Father began to take control. Yet even he seemed interested in what you have been doing there lately."

"As I said, Sister," Winter said with finality and leaned back in her chair. "Your title means you are being watched closely, and people are impressed by what they have seen so far."

Though Winter was only talking to Weiss, Yang couldn't help but smile as pride for her girlfriend welled within her. Looking to her side, she saw that Weiss was smiling too, and though Yang wanted to wrap the snowy-haired girl in a tight hug, she didn't know how Winter would react so settled for stroking circles on the back of the woman's hand with her thumb.

"I tell you this for two reasons," Winter continued after a couple of seconds. "The first is so you know that should you capitalize on this favourable impression, reach out and continue to make these connections, then you will have leverage you need as Father will not be able to oust you from the company as easily."

"Understood," Weiss replied with a short nod. "And the second reason?"

Winter's face fell before answering and her eyes turned to Yang, the pale blue orbs so much like her sister's but holding a hint of coldness that she had never seen in the younger woman's. The moment they locked on to hers, Yang felt like she had been plunged into ice-cold water and knew that her next words were going to be a harsh truth.

"The second is because of you, Miss Xiao Long," Winter answered, her gaze unblinking and her voice hard as stone. "I want you to know that this is what my sister is capable of at just eighteen,
that she is already making great strides to turn her dream a reality that are already being noticed."

Despite the cold tone, Yang heard something else in the woman's voice and she doubted any sister wouldn't have recognised it instantly. Pride. However, that tone quickly turned darker as she leaned forward in her chair.

"And I also want you to know that it is for you that she is putting all of that it risk," At those words, Yang felt Weiss' hand tense and glanced to see the woman at her side open her mouth to retort, only to shut it again as Winter held up a finger in warning. "Now I swore years ago that I would never force my sister's hand on something, that every decision she makes will be her own; but that does not mean I will approve of them all, nor does it mean that I will give her my blessing on all of them."

"Even without your past affiliations, this upcoming fight will be tough, but with them it will cast doubt on everything she does. So I will ask you this one time, Miss Xiao Long, how do I know you are worth it?"

Yang had no idea what to say. The question was a difficult one at the best of times when she didn't even know if she was worth it, but with Winter staring right into her eyes, she knew the woman would spot a lie the instant it was told. Glancing slightly to her side at Weiss, she knew that there could be no help from her girlfriend as it was a question that only she could answer. So looking back at the older Schnee, Yang took a deep and decided that the only thing she could do was be honest.

"You can't," she said plainly, earning a raised eyebrow from the woman. "If I'm honest, I still don't think I am worth it. All I know for certain is that I love Weiss."

Giving her girlfriend's hand a squeeze, she received a small smile that spurred her on.

"I've been unable to think about anyone else since she stepped into the store, and every day I've spent with her, everything I've learned about her since, had just made me more and more certain that she is everything I need. I know that you probably still doubt that I'm worth it, but I also know that I can't do anything to change your mind; all I can do is show Weiss exactly how much I love her everyday and hope that, one day, you believe it too."

Once she finished, Yang turned to look at Weiss and was surprised as a pair of lips pressed ever so gently against her own. Before she could react, Weiss pulled away and gave her a happy smile.

"I love you too," the woman whispered, causing Yang's heart to flutter a little as she returned the smile, after which Weiss turned to look at her sister who had been watching them intently. "I already told you, she is worth the risk to me."

Winter continued to watch them for a couple of seconds before sitting back in her chair and giving a slight nod, though Yang doubted that the woman's mind had been changed very much. However, Weiss still let out a sigh of relief from beside her.

"Fair enough," The older woman said plainly and interlocked her fingers again. "As you both seem certain this is a fight you are willing to undertake, then I shall help you where I can; though what good it will do, I don't know."

"Whatever help you can give will be greatly appreciated," Yang replied, Weiss giving a short nod at her side. "I don't want Weiss to lose the company for me."

"Then my first suggestion would be to continue as you have been, Weiss," Winter said firmly.
"Cement yourself as an asset to the company. Reach out and connect where you can so that Father has to weigh the odds of losing you.

"Second would be something that I attempted, yet failed at. While Father must be made aware first, as soon as he is, make your relationship known to the public. This will be difficult since I learned the hard way that Father has his hands in the media, but like with every other controversy he has had, you only need one to report the story; and then the rest will have to print it or be exposed for taking money to cover stuff up."

"Third," This time, Winter turned to look at Yang instead of Weiss and she knew what was to come. "Do not attempt to hide your past. If it will come out regardless and play a part in how Father reacts, so hiding it with only cast more doubt."

Giving Winter a short nod, the woman's eyes lingered on her a little longer before turning to look at both her and Weiss in turn.

"Lastly," She said, her voice taking on a much more serious tone than it had before. "Do not underestimate Jacques Schnee. Be it your job, your house, or your family, there is nothing that is off limits to him. He will attack you from every angle he can to get his way, so you had better make sure that everyone you love is aware and willing to take that risk with you."

As Winter said that, Yang's most immediate worry was Ruby. While she knew Ruby wouldn't care and would tell her to go ahead anyway, the idea of something happening still made her uncomfortable enough that she knew it would have to be talked about at some point. Fortunately, Weiss seemed to have understood her thoughts as Yang felt her hand being squeezed gently and turned to look at her girlfriend.

"I won't let anything happen to Ruby," she said with a smile. "I promise."

"I know," Yang replied softly, only for Winter to say what they both knew to be the truth.

"You may find that promise hard to keep." Giving Winter an appreciative nod, Yang sat back on the couch and felt Weiss lean into her a little earning a slight stare from the older woman. "Well then, unless you have any more questions for me, I have things that must be taken care of downtown."

As she felt Weiss shaking her head, a question came to Yang mind; and though she was hesitant to ask it, she cautiously raised her hand slightly. Feeling stupid at the action, like she was back in school again, she watched Winter raise an eyebrow as permission to ask.

"Umm…" Yang paused for a second, thinking how best to phrase the question so that it didn't sound like an accusation. "You said you left Roman to keep Weiss safe, but you still left? I'm just curious why?"

Winter looked her in the eye as she asked her, the ice-blue eyes holding a chilling intensity to them; but for what felt like the first time they were not unkind, more understanding than anything. After a minute, that could have in fact been hours in that capturing gaze, Winter gave a small nod and let out a resigned sigh.

"I promise you, I did not do so lightly," she said, a gentleness Yang hadn't heard before seeping into the woman's voice. "I tried to stay for as long as I could, but Roman's prediction about the situation at home becoming more and more unbearable came true. Barely a day passed where Father didn't purposely remind me that he had beaten me, I watched Mother slowly fall more and more into alcohol; and despite my attempts to stay composed, more nights than I care to admit
were spent crying at the hopelessness of my situation."

"I was tired of fighting Father, tired of the beatings that came from it, tired of crying every night," Winter said quietly and looked at her lap, as though what she was about to say was something she was ashamed of. "So I finally fulfilled my promise to Roman. It had grown to be too much, so I allowed myself to be selfish. I turned to the only person who could help, Mother."

"I begged her to help me, day after day until I somehow managed to break through the alcohol. I guess she finally saw how desperate I was and reached out to General Ironwood since he was an old college friend. She knew that the military was the only thing that the STC didn't have its claws into, they did business but it was the only place that Father had no sway; so she convinced General Ironwood to allow me into basic training. I think sending me off to the military is finally what made her fully succumb to drink."

Once Winter was finished, Yang regretted having even asked. Looking to the girl at her side, she saw Weiss watching her older sister with intrigue until she finally gave a brief nod.

"I'm glad you left," Weiss said suddenly, causing both Yang and Winter to look at her in interest. "I mean, I missed you every day, but you made the right decision."

"Thank you, Sister," Winter said, and gave a smile that actually lit up her features and made her seem much less scary for once. "Any other questions?"

With nothing else to ask, not that she would dare after hearing that answer, Yang gave small shake of her head, Weiss doing the same at her side. Seemingly satisfied with that reply, Winter stood from her chair and picked up her cup and saucer, holding the small pieces of china out to Weiss. A small look of confusion passed over the younger sister's face and Winter raised an eyebrow as if her request was clear.

"Please take this back to the kitchen for me," Winter said in a firm voice. "And fetch my scarf from the upstairs closet."

The intention behind the request was very clear to both of them, and in truth, Yang had been expecting it. She had highly doubted that the day would pass without Winter cornering her for a one-to-one conversation, so after receiving a small look from Weiss, Yang gave her a brief nod. Feeling slightly nervous as her girlfriend took the cup and walked out of the room, she watched Winter walk over to a cabinet along the wall and fiddle with something that she couldn't see before walking back with a closed fist and sitting down opposite her.

"I will keep the brief as I really do not have long, so you will stay quiet and listen to every word I have to say," the woman ordered darkly and reached into her jacket's inner pocket to pull out a brown folder which she placed on the table. "This is your file, and I made sure to study of completely this morning when it was given to me."

Swallowing slightly as she looked at the small brown folder, Yang quickly looked back up as Winter began to speak.

"While not a lot in there suggests you truly are a threat, that does not mean you are not one," holding out the fist, Winter dropped what she had retrieved from the cupboard, something that was unmistakable to anyone. A single bullet. "You have a sister, so I am sure you will understand that I must do everything I feel is right to protect mine. Now, I have told you about the threat that is my father, but let me tell you about the threat that is me."

"While I am, for all intents and purposes, disowned, I am still a Schnee. A Schnee with the full
power and reach of the Atlesian military behind her. Should I ever discover that this file misled me, that your intentions towards my sister are ill in anyway way whatsoever, you will find that where I can reach is much further than my father can. Be it in the black market of Mistral, or northern forest of Vacuo, you will never escape me.

Placing a long finger on the bullet, Winter raised and eyebrow pointedly and Yang understood her meaning with absolute clarity. Fortunately, while Winter wanted her to feel fear, Yang knew that that circumstance would never come to pass.

"Do I make myself clear, Miss Xiao Long?"

"Crystal."

"Good," then woman said in a low voice as she stood from her chair, picking up the bullet and placing it in back in the cupboard and walking towards the door. "Keep that file," she said and pulled open the door. "Use it to work out how you will explain each incident in there when your past is inevitably made public."

Without another word, Winter left the room, Weiss just coming into view at the end of the hallway before the door was closed. Letting out a sigh of relief that the meeting had not been as bad as she had expected, she leaned back on the couch and waited for Weiss to return. Fortunately, she didn't have to wait that long as a couple of minutes later, the door opened again and Weiss walked in. Giving the gorgeous woman a smile, Yang held out an arm and Weiss happily sat down on the couch to leaned into the hug, her feet coming up so that she could get more comfortable.

"Everything go okay?" Weiss asked, the curiosity in her voice evident.

"Yup," Yang replied, not wanted to tell Weiss that her sister had essentially just threatened her life. "Just the normal sisterly warning." Though the hum she returned was clearly a disbelieving one, the snowy-haired woman didn't press any further. "So, you got anything else to do today?"

"Nope," she replied and shook her head. "And Winter ordered the staff away from the house until tomorrow, so we can relax here for today if you want?"

Leaning down to place a kiss on the top of her girlfriend's head, Yang let out a light chuckle and tightened the hug a little.

"Sounds perfect to me, Snowflake."

Chapter End Notes

Hello again, so I hope you enjoyed this chapter, I actually had it done days ago but am trying to keep the schedule consistent. So before I start with the notes on this chapter, I want to say something regarding the last chapter uploaded as I was too rushed to put it in the notes last time. So that chapter had been in planning for months, so many months that I actually started planning the sections while writing chapter 2 so yeah, you can probably piece together how long ago that was lol. A big worry of mine was that the relationship wouldn't feel solid enough or that I couldn't pull it off, but so many of you said that you loved it when you didn't expect to and that you even wanted more, I cannot tell you how much that made everything worthwhile, so while I'm not the sappiest guy ever, thank you so much for even bothering to read it.
Now, onto this chapter. This chapter starts up a lot on things that are going to be occurring for the rest of the series, so I really hope it was enjoyable and that the conversation was good enough. I wanted to try and avoid the cliche of them pushing each other away and instead show the strength and how much they really do care about each other; that Yang will fight for the things she loves, and that Weiss is finished making sacrifices to have what she wants. I also hope Winter's private talk with Yang was okay too, I know it seems a little heavy but that is the point.

Anyway that is it for me, I hope you enjoyed and as a teaser for the next chapter, all I will say is that we are returning to Whitley.

IMPORTANT UPDATE

So as we are drawing close to the end of Weiss' family arc with only 2 chapters left, I feel I need to take a short break once it is done. This series isn't going away and I'm not burnt out or anything, but I have been struggling to write a little lately; and with 2 long series in the works, I don't want to suddenly hit that wall. It won't be for long, maybe from 2 weeks to a month, just to wind down, relax a little and catch up on some stuff that I really have fallen behind on. However when we get back, it will finally be time for the second to last arc which will be primarily Yang dealing with Raven and Weiss planning out how to get her company. So I hope that is enough to make you stay around.
A Necessary Risk

Chapter Summary

Despite knowing it may make things very difficult, Weiss takes a risk to fix something important to her.

Chapter Notes

Huge thank you to ToxicExotic for continuing to edit these for me.

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Weiss Schnee

A distinct sadness fell over Weiss as she hovered the mouse cursor over the option that shut down the computer. It felt insane to her to think that it had already been just over three months since she had started her position in the research and development department in the STC; but then again, those three months were also spent with Yang, who seemed to possess the uncanny ability to make time fly. However, while Winter had said during their meeting a couple of days ago that she had already done quite a lot, it hardly felt like she had done anything.

She had issued orders, fought with Arthur, and rearranged management at the dock factory after what she had discovered there; but everything Winter gave her credit for was hardly her work. The chip that was being researched was hardly her effort, sure she had ordered it and put Dr Polendina in charge of it, but it was still him and his team that were doing all the work. They were the one doing the research, Dr Polendina was the one who had successfully reached out to the RMRF. As for Mrs Jadis, the woman already held an interest in working at the STC, so much so that she had already previously applied for the job. All Weiss had done was correct a mistake that should never have been made.

It still felt like there was more she could do, more factories and warehouses she could sort out due to her direct dealings with them, more employees like Ciel who showed promise but just needed a small push to achieve it. The sad part came from the fact that she knew there would be none of that when the new year started and she returned to her place in the accounting department, even though she certainly did have some goals she wished to achieve there.

So it was with a deep sigh that she finally pressed the mouse button and watched the screen turn to black. Standing up, she slung her bag over her shoulder and slowly moved her was towards the door, taking one last look at the small little room she had made her own. It wasn't much, but the tiny office with its single desk and two chairs had been where she had first started to feel like she was actually doing some good, like she was finally living her dream. However, she knew it wasn't time for her dream to become a reality yet, so giving the office as warm a smile as she could to say thank you for serving her so well, she flicked the lightswitch and pulled open the door to leave.
"Are you sad to be leaving, Ma'm?"

"More than I can express, Ciel," Weiss replied softly to the girl who was also packing up the last of her things. "You?"

"More excited," Ciel chuckled, the smile on her face clearly not one she was controlling. "My time here has been very insightful and I will miss the friends I've made, but I finally get a chance at what I've wanted all that time."

"Well then," giving the girl a small nod of her head as she closed the door to the room she had just left, Weiss turned to face her ex-receptionist. "I am glad to have played some part in making your dreams come true. I also have a little something for you."

As a small confused crease pull at the Atlesian girl's eyebrows, Weiss put her hand into her bag and rummaged around for a couple of seconds. Eventually she found the small, wrapped present she had bought during her shopping trip with Winter when she had arrived and held it out to Ciel.

"A parting Christmas gift," Weiss smiled as Ciel cautiously reached out to take it. "And a thank you, for being such a help during my time here. You can open it now, or wait another couple of days."

Waiting patiently while the navy-haired girl decided what to do, Weiss watched thoughts rush past the girl's eyes. However, while Weiss had expected Ciel's natural desire for everything being done at the correct time to win out, she was pleasantly surprised to see her gently pull open one of the tabs that held the parcel closed. Once all the paper was removed, the only thing that remained was a plain black box that she quickly opened to reveal a watch, the light instantly catching the dark blue face and golden hands to make them shine.

"It's…" Ciel breathed with an awed look on her face, tenderly running a finger running over the silver strap as if she was scared of breaking it. "This is an incredibly expensive gift, Miss Schnee."

"Well your help really was invaluable," Weiss replied smoothly, letting a genuine smile pull at her lips. "So was your friendship, so it only seems fitting. And please, I'm no longer your boss, so Weiss is fine."

"I don't know if I can accept this," the girl said shakily, removing her finger and looking up.

"Well I refuse to take it back," Weiss chuckled stubbornly, replacing her bag back on her shoulder and crossing arms. "So what you do with it is up to you, though I do hope you keep it."

Again, Weiss saw thoughts rushed past the girl's eyes and let a grin pull at her lips. While she and Ciel were not the closest people ever, Weiss had learned enough about her over the last couple of months to know that the idea of accepting such a timepiece was going against all of the girl's hesitations. Thankfully, those suspicions turned out to be true and excitement replaced the doubt in the timekeepers eyes.

"Then I suppose I have no choice but to accept," Ciel smiled, her finger returning to touch the silver band before carefully shutting the box and placing it on her desk. "It has been a pleasure to work with you, Weiss."

"The pleasure is all mine, Ciel," she chuckled, returning the smile and holding out her hand, which the girl accepted and shook. "Though I expect your new position will make sure we still see each fairly regularly."

"Then I look forward to it."
Letting go of the girl's hand and giving her a small nod, Weiss turned and walked towards the door, turning back to give a short wave before pushing it open and walking down the hallway. As she passed Arthur's door, she contemplated knocking to say goodbye to the man who had challenged her so much, but wanting to end the experience on a good note, she chose not to and simply continued towards the elevator.

Letting out a deep sigh as she pulled out yet another file from her bedroom desk, she let herself hope that it was finally the right one. If she ever needed another reminder to actually sort out her research material after she was finished with it, then the past hour she had spent looking for the specific file she had written a paper on over a month ago certainly served as a stark one. Thankfully, as she opened the file and saw it titled *Flech Air-Tech*, she knew she had found the right one and placed it on her desk. As she quickly read through it to make sure it was the right one, which it was, the memory of being wrapped in Yang's arms on her bed came flooding back to her; and despite her extreme tiredness, a warm smile tugged at her lips.

With Winter's recent advice of reaching out and making connections to cement her importance, Weiss had spent the past couple of days trying to figure exactly how she could do that; but every thought she'd had felt too small. However, the idea had finally come to her in a dream, which was more of a wonderful memory of the night with Yang than a dream, and it had woken her at four in the morning. After a quick fifteen minute shower in which she had decided against washing her hair fully until later as it would take far too long to dry, Weiss had begun to search through her drawers.

The name of the company had seemed familiar even back then, and the entire time she was searching, she had racked her brain to figure out why. Fortunately, the memory had clicked and she remembered her first day back of her position in the R&D department that she read a project submittal that had been repeatedly blocked by an outside patent registered under the very same company name that was written on the file she had just dug out; more specifically to a man named Awebern Fletch as the company had since shut down.

While she would have to wait until the morning to request the actual files regarding the STC's apparent interest in such a project from the office, she could search up the patent on the public database. So sitting down at her desk, her slightly damp hair falling down her back, she zipped up the jacket she had borrowed from Yang so that she would stay warm and got down to work.

It wasn't until several hours later that Weiss finally leaned back in her chair to let out a wide yawn. While much of the file was already known to her, looking at it under a new light had revealed some things of interest to her. First was that with the patent at hand, the constant refusal of the project was understandable, as it was reliant on much of the same things that Mr Fletch had intended to use, even down to how it was physically designed. The Patent that Mr Fletch held was actually rather revolutionary, detailing plans for a commercial plane that would rely solely on solar power, except for a small fuel supply in case of emergency landings, and would almost completely cut off the heavy price that fuel cost airlines. That cost decrease would mean that the prices of building and maintaining would be a little higher, but it would ultimately mean that the travel expenses would be almost cut in half, so that everyone had much easier access to travel the world. However as the business had been in a complete decline by the time he had been awarded the patent, he had lacked the necessary funds to start manufacturing a prototype.

That was where the second new piece of interesting information came in. Having received the files regarding the attempted acquisitions over the years from Watts, it appeared that the STC had tried numerous times over the years to acquire said patent, but every time they tried, the man outright refused to accept their offer. Unfortunately the filings didn't say why, but as it was written in the
notes that both Merlot Industries and Marigold Innovations had also expressed an interest in the
project and were both also turned down, Weiss had to assume the man had his reasons.

However those reasons only made her more interested in the potential that lay unused. There was
no doubt in her mind that the development of such a project could do so much good, for both
consumers and for the cost of imports, so for it to have been so readily refused every time was
more than enough to make her determined to see what was going on there; because if she was able
to secure such an elusive patent, then it would definitely make an impression. So letting out a deep
sigh as she stretched out her shoulders, she reached down and pulled out a fresh notepad from her
desk, planning to note down everything she could, even if it seemed irrelevant.

An hour later, Weiss had managed to fill almost half off the notepad with whatever information felt
relevant. Admittedly, she doubted that half of what she had written down was going to actually be
useful, but to remedy that she was using some highlighters to make the important bits for easier
location in future. However, just as she was checking through the halfway point of her notes, a
small knock sounded from her door.

"Come in," She called straight away, knowing it was likely Klein with her morning coffee.

Much to her surprise however, as she looked up to greet the man, she saw her brother standing in
the doorway instead. Dressed in his usual blue vest which was unbuttoned, white shirt, and tie, the
boy looked better than he had over the last few days. For the last couple of days, the boy had
looked a little rougher than usual, choosing to let his hair simply hang down than having it swept
to the side; but he had clearly made the effort today as his hair was back in its neat position. As she
gave him a once over, she saw in his right hand was a small stack of books, the left still bandaged
and resting on top of them.

"Good morning," he said, his voice carrying some of its usual confidence, though having heard it
so often, Weiss could tell it was still lacking somewhat.

"Good morning, Brother," Weiss said with a smile, honouring her promise and placing her
highlighter down to give him her attention.

A small second passed, Whitley's icy-blue eyes boring into hers as he was clearly unsure how to
react to her warmer-than-usual greeting. Finally, he let out a small sigh and slightly held up the
books in his hand.

"I've come to return these."

"Oh, thank you," She smiled and stood from her chair to walk over and take them from him. "Did
they help at all?"

"A lo…" His words were cut off by a short his as Weiss accidently caught the bandaged hand.
Recovering before she could even apologise, Whitley gave her a short nod. "A lot."

"I'm glad," she said kindly, letting the moderately heavy stack fall into her arms so that she could
place them on the edge of her desk. Turning to face him again, she saw him watching her intently
and quickly tried to find something to comment on. "It's good to see you in your vest again," she
said meekly, unsure about the attempt at small talk. "It was strange seeing you in just your shirt
over the last couple of days."

"The buttons are a pain to do," he said bluntly, his eyes not dropping the intensity for a single
second.
"Oh," her eyes darted immediately to the boy's hand. "Is it feeling better now though?"

"A little," he replied, though the tone of voice he used made Weiss unsure as to whether it was the truth or not. "Why are you being so nice all of a sudden?"

Caught off guard by the question, Weiss' eyes shot up to meet her brother's. Though while she expecting to see anger or annoyance in them, she was instead met by genuine confusion.

"Whit…"

"Do you actually care, Sister?" he said, and though his voice turned slightly colder, she could easily tell that he was purposely making it that way. "Or are you simply trying to make yourself feel better about doing nothing but cast me aside over the years?"

Weiss felt her heart drop a little at that statement, because it was partially true. Ever since Winter had left, Weiss knew she had created a distance between herself and her family because it was easier to be self-absorbed than watching it break apart, but she no longer felt that way.

"I'm trying to make things right," she said softly and sat on her bed. "I know things have been difficult between us, and that I am to blame for a lot of that; but I meant what I said the other day, Whitley. I really do care about you and I want to close this gap that we had let widen."

"And if I don't want that?"

"Then I will have to live with the regret of my mistake," Weiss sighed sadly, hoping to convey that she really wished that wasn't what he wanted. Thankfully the boy didn't make a move towards the door, instead he simply stood there and stared into her eyes, obviously searching for a lie that didn't exist.

"Why now?" He asked, the coldness and restraint gone from his voice, making him sound much younger. "Did Winter tell yo…"

"No," Weiss interrupted him with a shake of her head. "Winter hasn't told me to do anything."

"Then why?"

"Because I don't like this distance any more, Whitley," Weiss said firmly, making sure he could see it in her eyes. "That night when you came to my room and asked me if I cared that you hurt your hand, it felt horrible to watch you walk away thinking such a thing. For you to believe that you meant so little to me."

"I don't…"

The voice was so quiet that Weiss almost didn't hear it, but even though she did, she was still left slightly confused by its meaning. Feeling it was safe, she gently pushed the boy a little. "Don't what?"

Looking away from her for the first time, the boy let out a small sigh and shook his head slightly.

"I don't believe that," he breathed, his face turning slightly downcast. "I was angry and wanted to hurt you is all."

"Well you certainly did that," Weiss sighed in return and stood to make her way over to the boy. Stopping in front of him, she reached out and took hold of each side of his vest and began to slowly button it up for him. "But I suppose that was a good thing you did, since it made me realise what
was important."

The boy looked down at his feet, a rare occurrence for him, the boy didn't reply. Instead he
allowed her to finish up the last button, she reached up and straighten out his lapels. With
everything sorted out, she gave him a small sigh and looked down at his hand.

"I supposed that is partially my fault too?" she said remorsefully and reached out to take it,
surprised that he allowed her. "Are you going to tell me what you did to it?"

"Trapped it in a door," he lied in a low mumble.

"Mhm," she hummed, making it obvious that she didn't believe him. "Must have been shut rather
hard." Again he didn't reply, but did wince as she gently lifted his middle finger. "You should
really get it looked at, Whitley."

"I can't go to a hospital," he said, shaking his head a little.

"Why?" She asked despite knowing that it was because the doctors would be able to tell instantly
that it was not an injury from being caught in a door, and would immediately tell their father.

"I just can't," he said firmly, sticking to his lie.

Letting out a deep sigh at the boy's stubbornness, Weiss let his hand go so he could gently lower it
back to his side. She knew the hand needed to be looked at, but if he refused to go to the hospital
then she knew there would be nothing she could do to make him go. However, wanting to do
something, Weiss thought through how she could get it looked at when a stupid idea formed in her
head. It was reckless and risky, but there was no other option. Any private or public doctor they
went to would recognise them immediately and reach out to their father, so what choice did she
have. The choice was tough, and she wasn't keen on the risks; but he was her brother and it was
more important to make sure his hand was okay.

So letting out a small sigh, she stepped away from Whitley and moved over to her desk to pick up
her Scroll. Scrolling through her contacts, she found the one she wanted and after a brief hesitation,
hit the call button. Giving the confused looking boy a small glance, the call tone only rang twice
before they picked up.

"Morning, Beautiful," her girlfriend said happily from the other side. "What's up with the early
call?"

"I need your help with something," Weiss replied, suppressing the smile that tried to force its way
onto her face as Whitley was watching her.

"Shoot?"

"How often have you injured your hand?"

"What?" Yang asked, the confusion in her voice clear as day.

"I just need to know."

"Well," the girl hummed thoughtfully. "I'm a boxer, so I'm surprised I can still use them. Why?"

"So you will know if something is really wrong?" She asked, hearing a shifting sound from the
other end of the call.
"Yes," the girl said shortly, the confusion immediately replaced with worrying. "Weiss, what…"

"I'm fine, but I can't explain right now," Weiss sigh in resignation. "I'm on my way over. If that's okay."

"It's always okay," the blonde replied, the worry in her voice abated a little. "I'm guessing I should get the first aid kit ready?"

"Probably for the best," Weiss agreed and looked at Whitley. "But I have to call Hazel, so I have to go. See you soon, Yang."

Hanging up the phone, Weiss searched through her phone for Hazel's number and addressed her brother.

"Go and get a coat, we are going out," She said, making her voice as authoritarian as she could while keeping it kind.

"I already said I can't go to the hos…"

"We are not going to a hospital," she interrupted firmly, finding Hazel's number and sending him a pickup request. "I am taking you to see a friend."

Looking at her with suspicious eyes, he didn't move and Weiss rolled her eyes at him a little and reached into her closet for a scarf that was on a peg just behind the door.

"Just trust me this once, please."

A couple more seconds of silence passed, but finally the boy gave a small nod of his head and left the room. Letting out a sigh of relief that some progress had finally been made with him, she also acknowledged how risky what she was about to do was.

"Thank you, Hazel," Weiss said gratefully as she leaned into the window, earning the usual tilt of his head in return. "I'm not sure how long we will be, so take the morning off."

"You sure?"

"Quite," she smiled with a nod of her own. "I shall message you when we are ready to leave."

"Alright," he replied gruffly, his eyes momentarily flicking over to Whitley who was stood slightly behind her before rolling up the window.

Stepping back and the car slowly pulled away, Weiss turned to look at her brother and the house that stood behind him to see the slight ruffling of the curtains, a clear indication that Yang had heard their arrival. The boy however was looking around, his pale-blue eyes scanning each and every house, something he had done ever since he was a child; but his stance was one of boredom, his hands clasped behind his back with his shoulders slightly hunched as he shivered. Not wanting to keep him out in the cold, nor wanting to stay out in it herself, Weiss walked over to him and indicated for him to follow her.

Though she knew there was no going back, Weiss still hesitated as they reached the door; but quickly pushed the thoughts out of her mind and reached out to tap the door, knowing Yang would be right behind it already. Just as she suspected, less than a second passed before the handle turned and the shining beauty that was Yang stood in the entryway with a cautious smile on her face.
"Morning," Yang grinned happily, though the girl clearly understood that she had to act restrained by the fact that the word beautiful didn't finish that greeting. With the same smile, the alluring lilac eyes moved over to Whitley as she held her hand out. "You must be Weiss' brother. Whitley, right?" Accepting the offered hand, Whitley gave her a curious look.

"I am," he replied, his voice inquisitive as always. "And you are?"

"This is Yang," Weiss answered, stepping into the house as Yang stepped aside. "And mind your manners."

"It's fine, no manners needed in this house," Yang laughed and closed the door behind them both before leaning into the living room. "Hey, Rubes…"

"She's in the toilet," interrupted a familiar male voice from behind the door. "What's up?"

"About time, thought she was gonna burst after chugging that bottle. Anyway, d'ya mind showing Whitley through to the kitchen for me?"

"Sure," the voice said, and a small boy around Whitley's ages walked into the hallway. had only seen him a couple of times since Ruby's party. She had seen Oscar a couple of times since, but it was usually in passing as him and Ruby rushed either to the girl's bedroom, or out of the house. "Follow me. Oh, I'm Oscar, by the way."

"Mhm," Whitley hummed in response, looking at Weiss and Yang with a raised eyebrow quickly and following the brown-haired boy.

"I'll be through in a minute," Weiss said as he entered the living room and moved out of sight. Turning to Yang, she saw that the blonde was watching the boys carefully, but finally she closed the living room door. "Sorry I didn't give you much warning."

"It's cool," the beaming blonde replied and placed her hands on Weiss' waist and pulled her close. "Can't say I'm not a little surprised though. I thought you weren't too keen on your brother finding out about us."

"And I'm still not," Weiss sighed and let her hand trail up the boxer's strong, exposed arms, enjoying the warmth that was pushing away the shivers that the wind had caused. "Not yet anyway, but he refused to get his hand seen at a hospital and you were the only person I could think of that could help."

"Well then," Yang shrugged as Weiss put her arms around the back of the woman's' neck and let her fingers tangle themselves in the mane of blonde hair. "Guess it can't be helped. I told Ruby and Oscar to keep us quiet when I saw you both outside."

"Oscar knows?"

"Yeah, sorry. I think Rubes slipped up a little, but he's like family so it won't be an issue."

"It's fine," Weiss sighed, leaning up on her toes to press her lips gently against her girlfriend's for a second, the action making her entire body warm up much quicker than the house heating had. Pulling away, she let out a small resigned sigh and gave her a smile. "It's not like it will matter soon anyway."

"Mhm, can't wait to show you off to all my friends properly," A small grin spread over Yang's face and she stuck out her tongue, causing Weiss to roll her eyes. Letting you a chuckle, she let go of her waist and took a step back toward the living room door. "But for now, we should go and see what
you brother has done to his hand."

Placing her hand on the door, Yang turned around to face her, the wide smile back on her face as she looked her up and down.

"By the way, nice jacket."

"Thanks," Looking down, Weiss remembered she was actually wearing the jacking he had taken from Yang and felt a small smirk cross her face. "Someone special gave it to me."


Rolling her eyes and blushing as she remembered the last time Yang said that name, she followed her girlfriend through the door and into the room. Unlike the last time she had been there, the room was no longer a just a soft, warm brown. While the warm comfort the room usually exuded was still present, multicoloured light glinted from every corner of the room giving it a more festive atmosphere. Green and silver tinsel draped the walls and ceiling, while pictures and merry Christmas banners hung from the shelves. In the corner stood a large tree, its branches decorated with red and gold tinsel while technicolor lights flashes softly; but instead of an angel topping it, a small figure of the family corgi stood watching proudly over the room.

"You finally decorated?" She said as they made their way through the room.

"Yup," Yang smiled and flicked one of the decorations. "Me and Ruby were up until two in the morning to get them finished the other day."

"They're very bright," Weiss hummed, not used to the shining decorations as they were never hung in her house. "I quite like them."

"Yeah, Dad found an extra box in the back of the attic and Rubes insisted on putting those up too," Yang laughed as she pushed open the door, the sight of Whitley sitting at the table drink a glass of water while Oscar poured himself one greeting them both. "I'll tell Ruby you approve."

As soon as the door opened, Whitley looked up at them both before glancing aside. Clearly Yang noticed too as she gave Weiss a small playful shrug and moved over to the sink, reaching into the cupboard below and pulling out a green box.

"Hey, Sapling," Yang said, ruffling Oscar's hair until he pulled away to straighten it. "Mind giving us the room?"

"Sure, I'm gunna play Stardew Valley."

"Alrighty, just stay off my save," Yang smiled and moved over to the table to place the box down. "Keep Rubes in there for me too, please."

"Got it."

With a small backwards wave, the boy left the room and shut the door behind him. Walking over to the sink, Weiss quickly pulled two glasses from a nearby cupboard and poured herself and Yang a glass of water before sitting down next to her brother and passing one to her girlfriend, who was fiddling with the contents of the box.

"Thanks ba…"

Weiss froze slightly at the words but thankfully caught her mistake before the sentence could be
finished. Looking to her side to see if her brother had caught it too, she saw glad Whitley still
staring rather boredly around the room oblivious to what had almost happened.

"Alright," Yang cleared her throat, and put her hands on the table. "Let Dr Yang take a look at you
then." A short silence followed as Weiss smiled and Whitley raised an eyebrow curiously, making
Yang backtrack a little. "I swear someone will laugh at that joke one day."

"I doubt it," Weiss replied teasingly and turned to her brother. "You can trust her."

It took another couple of seconds, but Whitley finally lifted his hand from his lap and placed it on
the table. Giving it a short look at the bandages, Yang pulled a small pair of scissors from the box
and cut away the knot that held them together before starting to gently unwind the fabric. Though
she was being rather gentle, Whitley still let out the occasional wince. However, the wrappings
were finally removed and Weiss had to suppress a small groan.

While Weiss had been expecting them to look pretty bad, the dark purple bruising that covered two
of Whitley's knuckles still made her stomach churn. They didn't look especially swollen, but the
discolouration stood out starkly against his pale skin and the scab that rested along the middle one
showed that the skin had clearly been torn slightly.

"You messed that up pretty well," Yang sighed and threw the scissors back into the box. "What did
you hit?"

"I trapped it in a door," Whitley replied and received a disbelieving hum from the blonde.

Knowing Whitley enough to understand he wouldn't confess himself, Weiss let out a small sigh
and told the woman herself. "He punched a vase. A rather strong one."

Almost immediately, Whitley looked at her with suspicious eyes, but was quickly forced to turn
back to Yang and let out a small grunt as she lifted the middle finger up.

"That hurts," he growled, his voice low and defensive.

"I'm not surprised," Yang said, raising her own eyebrow at him. "Judging by the lack of cuts I'm
guessing it was made of china?" A few seconds passed but eventually Whitley gave a small nod.
"Yeah that'll do it. So will not knowing how to angle your punch properly."

"I would rather he didn't know how to punch one properly next time, Yang," Weiss scolded her
girlfriend, only receiving a smirk in return.

"Yeah, yeah," Yang laughed gently and lifted then hand off the table. "I just wanna check how you
can use it, okay? Do what I say and if it hurts, tell me how much."

Giving Yang a short nod, he let Yan guide him through what she needed. Very slowly, she made
him move the affected fingers, both side to side and up and down; it caused him a little pain but he
was still able to do it. Afterwards, she held out a finger and asked him to squeeze as had as he
could, this one caused him a little more trouble and made him wince a lot more. Watching her
brother go through each order, she couldn't help but be amazed at how patient and gentle her
girlfriend was being, letting him take his time and not caring about the growls he would let out at
her when she pushed him to a point where it hurt too much. Finally though, the small examination
ended with Yang feeling his knuckles and the top of his fingers, but she eventually set the hand
back down with what looked to be a satisfied smile.

"How does it look?" Weiss asked as Yang dug back through the box quickly to pull out a few things.
"Well he can still move his fingers okay, his grip strength is decent, and there's no swelling so I'm guessing it hurts less now than when you did it?" Yang replied gently as she ripped open what looked to be a wet wipe, Whitley giving another small nod in return. "Then I really doubt anything's broken. Most likely just a bruised knuckle that's taking its sweet time to heal."

Breathing out a small sigh of relief at the news, Weiss watched Yang carefully clean the area around the scabbed middle knuckle, her nose wrinkling at the strong smell of the antiseptic wipe. Once she was done, the blonde quickly wrapped a bandage around the hand and stood up to walk over to the freezer. Leaning over she pulled out a bright blue ice pack and and pulled open a nearby drawer.

"Dammit," Yang sighed to herself, shoving stuff aside noisily. "Where did she… Never mind."

Pushing the draw closed, Yang let out another sigh and walked back over to the table to hand the ice pack to Whitley. "Ice it for fifteen minutes every three hours, okay?"

"Sure," he answered in his usual bored tone, though he quickly took the blue packet and pressed it against his hand with a groan.

"Good, I have something else that will help too, but I have to ask Ruby where she put it," she said, her words clearly meant for Weiss. "Might take a while to find."

Understanding that Yang was trying to give them some time alone, Weiss gave her girlfriend a soft smile and mouthed a thank you as the brawler left the room.

Once the door clicked shut, an awkward silence fell over them both as Whitley tended to his injury. While she wanted to ask him how it was, the small wince he gave as he touched the ice back to his knuckle was more than enough to answer her question. Watching him inspect the bandage, she let out a small sigh and took a sip of water; however, at that moment Whitley decided to speak and what he said almost made her choke on the cold liquid.

"Your girlfriend seems nice."

Spluttering as she cleared her airways, Weiss set her water down and looked at her brother. Now paying attention to him fully, she could see that he was watching her out of the corner of his eye with a curious look; and as there eyes met, she noticed the same curious glint that they always held.

"We're n-not…" Weiss tried to lie as if her reaction hadn't given away exactly how spot on he was with his assumption, only receiving a roll of the boy's eyes as he looked away. Knowing it was pointless, she took a stab in the dark. "How long have you known?"

"A couple of weeks," he shrugged, his demeanor still one of practiced boredom. "You two are not exactly subtle about it either."

"Oh!" Weiss exclaimed, a little worried that if he had noticed, that others might have too. "How did you find out?"

The boy didn't reply straight away, choosing instead to lean back in his chair so that it shifted onto its back legs. Waiting patiently as she knew rushing him never did anyone any good, Weiss took another sip of water to clear her tingling throat. After what felt like a couple of minutes, her brother let out a small sigh and let the chair legs fall back to the ground.

"Do you remember when we were children? Back in Atlas?" he asked, and while he wasn't looking at her, there was a hint of genuine curiosity in his voice. "When you and Winter would run off into the small forest behind our mansion?"
"I do," Weiss said easily, as those childhood memories were among her most treasured. "We would spend hours in there, but you would always come looking for us and we would take you back. But what does this have to do with how you found out?"

"Mmm," he hummed, ignoring the question while picking up his own drink and taking a small sip. "Did you ever figure out how I would always find you?"

Thinking back, she vaguely remembered questioning it, but had never actually asked him. "No."

"Our namesake would always guide me," he replied cryptically, making Weiss all the more confused. Receiving a small look from him, she saw a small smirk pull at his lips. "Snow, Sister. It holds footprints rather well."

Though she was still confused, Weiss knew her brother was trying to tell her something, albeit in his own frustrating way. Watching the boy as she thought of what he had said, her mind floated back to when Whitley could have potentially found out. It had apparently been wee…

It had first started snowing weeks ago, the very same day Yang had snuck into her room; she even remembered brushing snow off her girlfriend's shoulders, meaning she would have left footprints on her way to the tree that led to her balcony. How had she been so stupid to not think of that at the time? And how had Whitley come across the information? Thankfully, she didn't have to wait long as she looked at her brother and saw him watching her.

"The night guard saw them and went to report it," he elaborated, clearly knowing she had worked it out. "Luckily for you, he came to me first."

"He came to you?" Weiss asked, only getting more confused as any intrusion would normally be reported straight to their father.

"Yes," he replied blandly, drawing swirling lines in the condensation of his glass. "As do many of the other staff when they hear something that shouldn't be spread. Like the cleaner who was running late to Klein's meeting, who saw you and a blonde girl talking nearby the theatre room the day after I was informed about the footsteps in the garden. Or the cook, who informed me that Viola was saying you had not spent the night at the townhouse when you said you did."

Shocked by how much power Whitley had over the staff, Weiss remembered the conversation that she had overheard in the library, where Klein had implied Whitley had been doing things she didn't know about. Had he been making sure things were kept from her father? The mere thought caused a small smile to pull at her lips, but while she certainly felt grateful, she couldn't help but be suspicious of exactly how he had managed such control.

"And why do these people report to you?"

"Because they wish to keep their jobs," he replied simply, confirming her suspicions. Turning to look at him, she saw him roll his piercing blue eyes at her. "Do not attempt to lecture me, Sister. I do not care if it is not what you would do; it works, and that is all I care about."

Watching the boy take a sip from his drink, Weiss couldn't help but feel sad. That move was straight out of their father's play-book, blackmail and bribery were often his way of handling situations and for Whitley to be so okay with copying them at such a young age felt wrong to her. However, she also knew she couldn't change it, that didn't mean she was going to accept it.

"I am guessing you learned that from Father?" She asked cautiously due to no longer knowing where his opinion laid on the man. Previously she had thought he worshipped him, but if he was
"Yes," he said unapologetically but let out a small wince as he pressed the ice pack back against his hand.

"Whitley," Weiss sighed, turning in her chair to face him a little better. "Father's lessons should not be copied."

"Well they are the only lessons I have been taught, Sister," he replied without hesitation, a small amount of venom sneaking back into his voice. "He may not have been kind, or loving, but at least he was there. That's more than you, Winter, and Mother ever did for me."

Weiss had no reply to that retort as she knew it was true, but apparently after all day playing nice, or at least nicer than usual, the annoyance had finally returned and he stood up from the table causing the chair to scrape along the floor and walked over to the sink.

"Whitl…"

"Do you and Winter have any idea how lucky you both are?" He spat as he turned on the tap to fill his glass. "Because you have both spent the last few years whining about how life has been unfair to you, when you two have had everything."

Placing the glass aside without turning around, Weiss watched her brother's uninjured hand grip the edge of the counter with a white-knuckle grip and decided against correcting him. He clearly had something to get off his chest; and for once, Weiss was going to let him.

"Winter," he said with pure loathing in his voice. "Raised by Mother and Grandfather, shown nothing but love by the both of them yet still feels she was treated unfairly when she did they exact same thing she hated."

Finally, the boy turned around and Weiss saw that his eyes were narrowed to point from anger and his nose pulled into a sneer.

"Do you know the clearest memory I have of her?" The question was rhetorical, but Weiss still felt the need to shake her head. "Her screaming at me. I found her crying in her room and tried to comfort her and all she did was shout that she wanted nothing to do with me, with us. I remember her pushing me out of the room and slamming the door in my face. But you? The next day she took you shopping, because it was your birthday and you were her precious sister. Every day from that point she barely even looked at me, choosing instead to argue with Father and then take you out; leaving me alone to deal with the anger she caused. And then she left without even a goodbye and while you got letters and phone calls, not once did she ever bother contact me."

"And you?" he sneered, and while there wasn't anywhere near as much venom in his voice as when he had spoken of Winter, Weiss still felt shame pulse through her. "Same thing. But you didn't scream at me when she left, or simply forget about me. No, you were openly disgusted by me. You think I didn't see your sneers become more frequent as I grew up, that I didn't know that you hated me for looking like the man who made who made your sister leave. Yet it was you who was sat in your room, crying and spiteful while I was left alone with Father, again!"

"Grandfather, the man you both respect so much, gone before I knew him. Mother, too busy drowning herself in alcohol by the time I grew up. Winter, not caring whether I was around or not. And you, despising me for something I had no control over. The only person I had left to turn to was Father."
Watching the boy hang his head as he stopped talking, Weiss gently stood up from her seat and walked over to the sink to tip her water away. As she had listened to the boy talk, she had found herself feeling worse and worse as everything she had said about her was true. She had completely shut him out because he looked like their father, she had distanced herself and left the boy alone; and as time went on, the result of that had become clear is how the boy began to act. Placing the glass on the side to wash before she left, Weiss placed a hand on her brother's shoulder only for him to shrug it away.

"You are right," she sighed, picking the glass up since she wasn't able to comfort her brother and washing it. "About me at least. I have treated you poorly over the years, and for that I apologise. When Winter left, I felt like my world came crashing down around me. She was always there for me after Mother… well you know, but when she left I felt like I had nothing and I found it much easier to shut down and push people away. But you are wrong about us having it better. It may not seem like it to you, and the actual story isn't mine to tell, but Father took so much from our sister, he hurt her in ways that no father should even be capable of doing."

"You two still had mother and each other. All I had was beatings from the only person to even acknowledge I exist."

"We did, but that also meant we were aware of what was happening when Mother began to break down, we remember Grandfather, Winter especially for both. I'm not trying to diminish what you've been through, because right; I cannot imagine how awful it was being left alone with Father so much. Though suspect I will be incurring his wrath very soon, but I promise you that I will not leave you to deal with him alone anymore. We are a family, and it is about time we dealt with what has been tearing us apart."

"What do you mean?" He replied, the confusion and inquisitiveness in his voice pushing through the anger.

"Well, I am sure you know what will happen when I tell Father of my relationship with Yang," she sighed and put the glass on the drying rack.

"I can take a guess."

"He will attempt to take my position away from me," Weiss said, wanting to make sure they were both on the same page. "And I will not let him, nor am I giving up what I have with Yang. So I've decided to take the company from him."

"Why are you telling me this," Whitley replied, turning to look at her for the first time since he had left the table. "Are you not worried I will tell Father."

"A little," she said honestly, not wanting to tell a lie he would see straight through. "But you haven't told him about me and Yang; so I think I am right in saying you are not too fond of our father either."

"I hold no particular favour towards him," Whitley said blandly. "He may have been the only person I had and taught me many things, but I have never deluded myself into thinking he cares. Nor have I been blind to what he is capable of."

"Good," Weiss replied, picking up the towel that hung over a nearby drawer handle to dry her hands and turned around to lean back against the counter. "Because Father will be giving it to you; and while I am not going to ask for your help, I am going to ask you don't intervene. I don't want you caught in the crossfire."
"And if I want the company, Sister?" The stony-faced boy asked impassively, the truth of whether he did or not impossible to make out. "Will you take it from me too?"

Meeting his gaze, Weiss felt her stomach drop slightly. She knew it was likely that Whitley would want the company too, but that didn't change what she needed to do. While she wanted to mend things with her brother, the company was hers. She had spent her entire life working for it, and she alone could take it from their father. So knowing it would be best for her to be honest before complications arose, Weiss let out a small sigh and gave a short nod. "Yes."

A sharp sidelong glance was thrown her way as Whitley pushed himself off the counter and moved back to the table with his water in silence, and Weiss worried she had once again annoyed the boy. Thankfully, after a sip of water, the boy put the glass down and gave a small shrug of his shoulders.

"I have no interest in running that company, Sister," he replied firmly, not looking back at her but instead towards the door with a tilted head. "I do not want hand-me-downs, so I intend to take what I learn from there and forge my own. Father may think me his puppet, but he will soon learn that it was in fact him who was mine."

"Well then," Weiss sighed from relief and sat down next to him. "Until then, you know you'll have a place in the company when I reclaim it, right?"

"You sound so sure that you will win," he said slowly, head head turning away from the door to face Weiss and raising his voice a little. "Neither of you think he will let it go without a fight, do you?"

A moment of confusion fell upon her as to why he had said it so loud, but it quickly faded as the door to the living room was slowly pushed open and Yang stood their scratching her head sheepishly. Staring at her girlfriend, Weiss rolled her eyes with a smile and motioned that she could come in, which she did and quickly sat down.

"Sorry."

"It's fine," Weiss replied, turning back to her brother as Yang fiddled with a box. "And to answer your question, yes. Because we have no other choice."

Moments passed in silence after her answer as the young Schnee took his time to think. While he did, Yang pulled what seemed to be a bunch of gloves from the box and inspected each one, tutted as she dropping them to the side and pulling more out. After what Weiss counted to be the fifth glove, she noticed the confused look Weiss was giving her.

"Splints," she explained, holding up one of the gloves to show a small area where Weiss knew a metal rod should have been. "Or at least they were, until Ruby stole all the rods from them for her contraptions."

Weiss smiled at her girlfriend and watched her continue to sort through the gloves, finally after what had to have been more than ten, she found one that had not yet been gutted and pulled the metal rod from it. Picking up one of the fingerless white ones she had discarded, she slid it back into place in the new one and passed it to Whitley.

"Here you go," she grinned and waited for the boy to take it. "Should keep your fingers straight so that you can't move them and aggravate the knuckles even more." After a quick look over it, the boy slowly pushed his hand inside and attempted to flex his fingers, finding that his pointer, pinky, and thumb were the only ones capable of moving. "Should speed up the healing too, but I'm not a
doctor so if your hand hasn't started to feel better by the end of the week then you will need to actually get it checked out."

"Mhm," he hummed noncommittally and took a small sip of his water.

"Well, that's all I can do for it," Yang said politely and leaned back in the chair, unfazed by the lack of gratitude the boy showed. "You can go and sit in the front room if you want? Ruby stole the switch off Oscar for some Smash, and she's pretty bad at it so I'm sure she will give you a shot and you can whoop her butt; even with your busted hand."

Clearly understanding that it was a polite request to let them have the room, the boy stood from his chair and made his way towards the door. However, just as his uninjured hand closed over the metal handle, he stopped and looked over his shoulder at them both.

"I will not get in your way, Sister," he said, his tone making it clear that there was a caveat. "But I will not help either. I will not put my future or the perception I have worked so hard to have Father believe at risk should your plan fail."

"I understand," Weiss replied gently, giving her brother an appreciative before he pulled open the door and exited the room.

Silence filled the room once the boy left and Weiss stood up, mimicking her earlier action of cleaning her own glass with Whitley's own abandoned one. As she washed it, she thought she felt Yang's eyes boring into the back of her head, but was instead happy to feel a pair of hands snake around her waist from behind and a warm body press against her back. Letting the fragrant smell of lavender wash over her, Weiss melted backwards; trusting the woman to support her more relaxed position.

"He uhh… seems nice."

"He's an ass," Weiss admitted, earning a soft chuckle from the delectable blonde that breeze pleasant across her neck. "But I guess he has his reasons to be one."

"Mmm," Yang hummed, pressing her lips against her neck as she did so that Weiss let out a soft sigh. "So I guess you told him about us?"

"He figured it out on his own," she answered, finishing washing the glass but not moving from her comfortable position. "He acts bored so often that it's easy to forget to how attentive he is."

"Not when looking in his eyes," the boxer replied, her fingers linking over Weiss' stomach. "Damn things felt like he could see into my head whenever I caught them."

"Wouldn't surprise me," Weiss smiled, her head moving to the side as Yang nuzzled her neck.

"And I am guess from what I overheard…"

"You mean what you eavesdropped on?" Weiss corrected the woman.

"... Maybe," Yang replied, Weiss feeling the lips on her neck pull into a smile. "But I guessing that conversation means you are going ahead with that plan of yours."

"Yeah," the word was little more than a whisper as she was a little too busy enjoying the affections being laid upon her. "Have you talked to Ruby about it?"

"Mhm," she hummed again in reply, and this time Weiss let out a soft moan.
"I know what you are trying to do," she breathed, feeling butterflies fill her stomach as a kiss was placed just under her ear.

"And what is that?"

The voice was whispered in her ear and finally Weiss felt her resolve crumble. Twisting around in the wonderful woman's arms, she quickly found herself looking up onto a pair of mischievous lilac eyes and placed a loving kiss on the blondes lips. While it was still more chaste than many they had shared a few days ago at the town house, warmth still flooded her body as Yang's hands on her back pulled her in even deeper. Unfortunately, Weiss knew she wouldn't be able to stay at Yang's very long, and she really didn't want to get worked up and spend the day that way; so after a few seconds, she pulled away and opened her eyes to gaze into her girlfriend's.

"I appreciate it," She said genuinely, happy that Yang could tell when her mind needed to be taken off things. "But I'm fine."

"You sure?" Yang asked, seriousness slipping into her light tone. "Some of that sounded pretty heavy."

"We have some things to work out still," Weiss sighed and leaned into her girlfriend's chest, strong arms moving to wrap around her shoulders and embrace her. "But it's a first step."

"That's true," the brawler said softly, the words almost unheard as she enjoyed the sound of Yang's strong heartbeat. "So what are you gonna do now?"

"Right now?" Weiss replied and pulled back slightly. "Well, everyone in this house knows about us, so maybe hang out here for another hour with you?"

"I can get behind that," Yang grinned and placed a quick kiss on her. "Looks like we have enough for a small tournament."

"You are really going to make me play that blasted machine again?"

"Yup," Yang chuckled, gently poking her nose as she took a step back, her other arm sliding down Weiss' to take her hand and pulling her along. "But for a small price, I could be convinced to take it easy on you."

Despite knowing that she would likely still lose in the first round, Weiss still rolled her eyes at the small tease and leaned in to kiss her girlfriend. Pulling back, she watched Yang stick her tongue out teasingly and couldn't help but let out a small giggle as the girl turned and left the room, pulling her along with her.

"What the…" Oscar's surprised tone petered out as his eyes looked at the win screen of the video game, Whitley's character named Pit taking up most of the screen, while Yang's bulky male character that she had already forgotten the name of sat in the corner.

While Weiss had only intended to stay at the house for an hour at most, the time had practically flown since the start of the tournament. Just as she suspected she would, Weiss had immediately been eliminated by Yang, even though the blonde was clearly giving her more than enough of a chance, and spend the rest of the fights snuggled up close to her girlfriend; Whitley however, had taken to the game in a way Weiss hadn't seen him with anything in quite some time.

The boy had quickly understood the controls, to the point where he had managed to make it to the final round of the first tournament, and in the second he had pretty much wiped the floor with
everyone; even Yang, who Weiss could tell had thrown away all leniency and was genuinely trying
to win. During the tournaments however, Whitley had also been doing something that she had
expected even less than him excelling at a game he had never played before, and that was to
maintain a casual conversation with Oscar, who had been sat on the chair next to him.

"How the hell are you so good?" Oscar continued, catching the control that Yang gently threw to
him before returning her arm back around Weiss.

"Yeah…" Ruby added and layed back on the couch, her head landing on her sister's lap with her
shining silver eyes looking up at Weiss with a smile as her legs hung over the arm. "You said
you've never played before."

"It's not exactly hard," Whitley replied to them both rather blandly as he watched Oscar bring up a
training mode. "The button combinations are quite easy to figure out and all I have to do is get you
off the ledge and keep you off."

"You hear that, Rubes?" Yand said with a teasing tone and looked down at her sister. "You need to
keep people off the edge."

"Shut up," the small redhead replied and stuck out her tongue, only for Yang to reach down to grab
it and miss be a hair. "It's harder than it looks."

"I'm with Ruby on this one," Weiss admitted, earning a grin from the girl below.

"At least she can get them off the edge in the first place," Whitley chimed in, and Weiss thought
she saw a hint of a smirk on the boy as he placed his controller aside and watched Oscar play in the
practice area.

"Ooo," Yang chuckled and gave her a sideways look as she poked Ruby's nose. "You just got
roasted, Babe. No comeback?"

"I'll let him have this one," Weiss grinned, watching Ruby bat away the hand that began to lightly
pinching the tip of her nose.

"Yaaaaang," the girl whined, her voice slightly distorted from her sister's playful action. "Lemme
go."

Rolling her eyes with a smile as the two engaged in a small tussle, with Ruby trying to get free and
Yang refusing to leave her alone, Weiss looked over to the other pair in the room and caught her
brother watching them. She had noticed it a couple of times during the afternoon, but every time it
had happened he had quickly looked away. However this time, his attention lingered on them a
little longer and Weiss gave him a soft smile; and while it wasn't returned, the anger she had seen
in his eyes a few hours ago was completely absent. After a couple of seconds though, the young
boy turned back to the screen and pointed to something Oscar was doing wrong.

"Alrighty," Yang said happily to her side, Weiss turning back to see that she had finally released
Ruby's nose. "I need a drink, do you and Whitley want another or do you have to go?"

Glancing at the clock that was half buried beneath green tinsel, Weiss saw that it was almost three
in the afternoon and knew they unfortunately had to leave very soon. So with a small hint of
sadness, she gave her girlfriend a small shake of her head. "We have to go in a minute. I still have a
ton of research to get done."

"Got it," Yang replied, the tiny hint of disappointment in her tone obvious as she tapped Ruby's
head to get her to move and stood up. Taking the hand that the blonde offered to her, Weiss
allowed herself to be pulled off the couch, only to land in her grinning girlfriend's arms. "So I'm guessing I wont see you until after Christmas now?"

"Unfortunately," Weiss smiled at the beaming blonde. "But I already gave your present to Blake so she could give it to your dad."

"What?" Yang asked in mock offence, the grin ruining any believability her voice possessed. "Don't you trust me to save it until Christmas?"

"Not one bit," Weiss laughed in return and quickly pressed her lips against her girlfriend's before pulling back and looking into the lovely lilac eyes. "But I do have to go."

"Alright," Yang chuckled and Weiss felt the arms around her release. "I got you something too but you will have to wait until Christmas to get it."

"What?" she replied, slightly confused by how such a thing could happen when the woman had just admitted herself that they wouldn't be seeing each other until after the holiday. "How do…"

"Nuh uh," Yang interrupted with a smile. "Sorry, Snowflake. That's a surprise you'll have to wait for."

Shaking her head at the woman's playfulness, Weiss pressed another short kiss on Yang's lips before turning to her brother, who had already stood up and was putting his coat on. "Are you ready?" she asked, receiving a brief nod in response. Satisfied with the response, she turned back to Yang and gave her a warm smile. "Love you."

"Love you too, Princess."

Feeling a grin pull at her lips at the name she despised anyone but Yang calling her, Weiss motioned for Whitley to follow her as she made her way towards the door.

"Have a good Christmas, you two," She called back to Ruby and Oscar, both returning the sentiment and Oscar even giving Whitley a little wave that he, to her surprise, returned.

With one last wave to Yang, Weiss walked into the corridor and pulled open the door, the cold, winter wind hitting her neck and making her feel like she had been covered in ice. Letting Whitley go first, she pulled out her Scroll to ping Hazel who she knew would not be far away, and in preparation to face the cold outdoors, she pulled the collar on Yang's jacket tighter and stepped through the door.

"Sorry," she said in a slightly loud voice than usual to be heard over the roaring wind as she closed the door, hoping a little conversation would keep her mind off of the weather. "I didn't intend to stay that long."

"It's fine," Whitley replied, his hands in his coat pockets but still shivering slightly. "If I had anything better to do then I would have called my own driver anyway."

"Good," She breathed, regretting it immediately as cold air rushed into her mouth and stung her throat. "Did you at least enjoy yourself?"

"It was tolerable," he shrugged, his tone almost dismissive but carrying a hint of sincerity. "I suppose there are worse ways to spend and afternoon."

"There definitely is," Weiss replied, unable to keep the smile from her face as Whitley turned to face her with a raised eyebrow.
"So you two are saying you love each other already?"

The question had been as blunt as one could possibly be, and the tone one of slight doubt. She understood why of course, but she happily gave him another smile and a nod in return. "We have been together for months now and we don't intend to stop that, so yes."

"Hmm," he hummed, turning back to the road as a car she recognised as her own appeared at the end of the street. "Well, I suppose you could do worse."

"Thanks," she replied and walked up to his side as Hazel pulled up to the sidewalk.

Once the car came to a stop, Weiss quickly pulled the door open and stood aside for her brother to enter first; however, as he took a step forward to enter the car, the boy stopped and looked over his shoulder towards her.

"For what it is worth, Sister, I am glad you are happy," he sighed, and even Weiss heard the jealousy in his voice. "But do not plan your future with her just yet."

Understanding that it was meant as advice, Weiss gave Whitley a nod as he stepped into the car and took one last glance at Yang's house. As much as she appreciated the boy's words, Winter's too, she knew that there was nothing that would tear them apart. So with a small smile, she turned back to the car and stepped inside, the warmth immediately making her breathe out a sigh of relief.

Chapter End Notes

Soooo, just your average long Whitley based chapter outta nowhere xD But I really hope you enjoyed. This is another chapter that has been planned for some time and some of the things he mentions have been shown a little through the series, though you likely just passed it off as him being a dick. Speaking of Whitley being a dick, I want to keep him that way xD I certainly want to make him more relatable, but I also don't want to completely change him because I quite like the dynamic that will bring. But yeah, Yang only needs to meet the parents now :P

Another thing that was wrapped up in the chapter was Weiss' position in the R&D department. You can probably tell that it wont be the last time you see Ciel, but for now it will be; however, Weiss will now be moving on to other things and I certainly have plans for those too. There was also another future plot point seeded in this chapter; so if you can guess that, then that's awesome.

Anyway, that's it from me. I hope you all enjoyed and are looking forward to the next chapter. Just as a hint, it will be titled Christmas and there is a scene already referenced in one of the two-parters that you may be able to look forward too. It will also be the last chapter before my break, so yeah.
Yang Xiao Long

As usual, the Xiao Long-Rose house had been extremely loud for the entire day, the sound of laughter likely capable of being heard from miles away. A vast majority of the day had been spent watching the hilariously bad shows that the networks aired on the date, each one carrying a festive cheer that still managed to get the family in the spirit despite how terrible they were. The rest was spent unwrapping presents, each one spread out so that Ruby's excitement could grow little by little; however all of them were finally unwrapped, leaving both Ruby and Yang with a sizable pile of gifts, and Tai with a somewhat smaller pile that he seemed satisfied with regardless.

Fortunately, there was still one more thing to look forward to, something that was progressively filling the house more and more with a mouth-watering smell for a couple of hours. Yang had woken up at six in the morning to get dinner started, her father helping once he finally got out of bed; but as was the custom, he had taken over since he knew she would be busy for at least the next hour and a half.

"So," the man yawned and stretched his back as she leaned back in his recliner. "You guys heading up now?"

Continuing to place her present into the large, thick bag at her feet, Yang gave the comfortable man a short nod of confirmation. "Yeah, not sure how long we'll be so don't burn anything."

"Are you forgetting who taught you to cook?" he chuckled while taking a sip of orange juice, that she knew he would prefer to be eggnog.

"Nope," Yang replied as she carefully put Weiss' gift on top of the rest. "I'm also not forgetting that time you fell asleep and messed up the potatoes."

"They turned out fiine," he laughed dismissively with a wave of his hand.

"Mhm," Yang hummed sassily and turned to Ruby, who was already standing by the hallway door. "You wanna get things ready? I'm gonna put these in my room."
"Sure, bring up some soda too," Ruby said with a smile, shifting her own large bag that was full of much heavier items than Yang's, most of which being various random objects, from old DVD players to new tools.

"Got it."

Giving the girl a thumbs up as she disappeared around the corner, Yang stood up and quickly darted into the kitchen to grab the drinks, taking a glance at the food in the oven through the window to see how it was doing. With everything looking good, she moved back into the living room to grab her bag.

"Have fun," Tai smiled at her as she picked up the presents.

"You can come up and join us sometime, you know?" she offered kindly, just as she did every year despite knowing that he usually put on the wedding tape while they watched the others upstairs.

"Nah, I'm good down here," he replied with a shake of his head, Yang knowing that the usual excuse was going to come. "That's yours and Ruby's thing."

"Alright," She replied and carefully slung the bag over her shoulder. "Well, call us down when Blake gets here for dinner."

"Will do."

With another smile and a brief nod at the man, Yang turned and left the room, making her way up the stairs and into her room. Knowing that Ruby would be a couple of minutes deciding which tape she wanted to watch first, she placed the bag on her bed and lifted the gift she received from Weiss from it. The beautiful, yellow-leather moto jacket looked far more expensive than anything Yang owned, each strap, buckle, and zip purposely placed to give accentuate its badass look, yet also serving to loosen or tighten it slightly if needed. Along the forearms and upper arms were toughened ridges, and a zipper to fasten it was placed to the side to allow the wide collar to pop out wonderfully.

Running her hand over the cool leather, Yang felt a smile pull at her lips from just how well Weiss knew her style, and while she would have loved to try it on, she was determined to save it for the first ride on her bike.

"Ready!"

"Alright!" Yang called back to Ruby and gently placed the jacket on a coat hanger to put it inside her wardrobe. "Coming!"

Exiting her room and walking into Ruby's, she gently shut the door but left it unlocked, just incase their dad decided to join them. Turning around, she saw that her sister was fiddling with something in a drawer to pull out a controller and turned it around in her hands before throwing it back in and pulling another out. After the third remote, she clearly found one that she needed and jumped back onto the bed. Chuckling at the childish behavior of the younger girl, Yang tapped her on the shoulder with a can of soda and slipped in behind her as she accepted it.

"Which one d'ya pick?" she asked, genuinely curious as Ruby often never picked the same once twice in a row.

"The last summer one."

"Hmm," she hummed in reply, remembering not only the tape fondly, but some of the events that
lingered in her memory. "That's a fun one."

The comment earned her a soft smile from the redhead in her arms, the girl quickly pressing the power button on the remote so that the small television in the corner flickered to life. Yang had always considered her sister a little weird for her choice in televisions. While their dad had offered to buy her a flat screen for her birthday or Christmas multiple times, Ruby had always favoured the really old, bulky sets. When she had asked, the only thing Ruby told her was that she hated how the bigger screens made the tape quality horrible.

"Zwei!" Yang called as Ruby sorted out the video, watching the little corgi's head poke tiredly out from his cave. "Come on, Boy."

Very slowly, the dog stumbled over to the bed and, after two attempts, managed to gather enough power in his short legs to jump up. Almost immediately, the grey beast clambered onto Ruby's lap and quickly fell back to sleep.

"Aww," the girl cooed and ran her hand along his back as the television finally turned away from static and brought up video Ruby had put in, the image of their old backyard on Patch bringing a sense of nostalgia to Yang. "Who's the best doggie ever?"

"Keep letting him eat half his Christmas treats in one sitting and he'll be the world's best piggie before long."

"And he'll still be cuter than all of them," Ruby chuckled as she scratched behind the dog's ear. "You ready?"

"Whenever you are, Sis."

Leaning back against the post of Ruby's bed, she tightened her arms and watched the video began to move, showing a camera bobbing up and down as the holder walked across the lawn. After a couple of seconds, the view moved down to show a small version of herself kicking a ball against the shed that rested behind the house. Yang remembered the day well, or at least the tapes had helped, despite only being six at the time.

"Hey, Firecracker," said her dad's voice in a whisper, the angle shifting as he knelt down to her height. "Wanna help me cool your mom off a little?"

A wide, mischievous grin spread across the face of the younger girl, and a happy one across the face of the older Yang as a large super soaker came into view. The smaller version of herself giving him a fervent nod in response as she reached out to take the weapon that was slightly too big for her; the little blonde gave it a few pumps and held up as if ready for action. Leaving the ball forgotten, the two quickly made their way to the wall of the house, Tai standing behind his daughter who was looking over we edge.

"We good?" He asked, receiving a thumbs up from the small blonde. "Alright, get ready to attack."

As the man held up his hand that was holding his own water-gun and began to count down with his fingers, Yang feeling her's act on their own; the same finger her father put down tapping against her sister's shoulder. Once the countdown had finished, the smaller version of Yang and her father charged around the wall with a loud warcry. As water streamed from their weapon, a loud scream issued from a woman that was hanging up clothes to dry in the hot sun. Once she realised what was happening however, the woman with red tipped hair burst out into laughter and turned around to block as much of the water as she could.
"T-Tai," the woman laughed madly, her previously light-pink dress now so much darker from the water. "St-Stop!"

"HAHA!" A four year-old Ruby sat in a nearby lounge chair laughed almost as hysterically as her mother. "Mommy's wet!"

"Aww," Yang cooed to the older version of the girl that was in her arms. "You were so cute… What happened?"

"Shut up," Ruby giggled, just like her younger self who was squirted with a fresh stream of water. "I'm way cuter than you."

"Mmm, maybe in your dreams."

Chuckling at the small flick she felt on her arm, Yang tightened her hug and rested her chin on the girl's shoulder to continue watching. As young Yang and Tai's attention had turned to little Ruby, Summer had quickly snuck off and grabbed the hose that was attached to the house, quickly turning it on full and dousing their lower halves in water. Blushing slightly as she watched the younger her cover the mess with blonde hair flying, go running for cover, she still felt her smile widen at the sound of her mother and father laughing happily at the action. While the sound of it from watching the tapes always made her, she knew the sound was altered somewhat by the recording, that the actual sound had been so warm and full of life that to hear it meant your entire day would be better.

"I miss that sound," she admitted to her sister, her voice quiet so as to not disturb her too much. "The tapes don't do justice to how amazing it was."

"I know," Ruby said with a small nod as the younger Ruby accepted the much to large water-gun from her father and began to fire on the younger Yang, who had taken to hiding behind a garbage can. "I still hear it sometimes. It will just come to me."

"Me too."

"So Mrs Rose," Yang heard her father say teasing, pointing the camera directly at a smiling woman whose silver eyes, gentle face, and short, red-tipped hair could easily have her be mistaken for the girl in Yang's arms. "How was your visit to the Xiao Long cooling station?"

"Worthy of a four star review, I think," Summer replied effortlessly as she pushed the camera up, only for Tai to return it back to her beaming face. "If only for the dashing gentleman and adorable girl who gave me my service."

"Hmm," Tai hummed, the camera finally leaving and pointing to the floor, though slow enough that an arm could be seen wrapping around Summer's waist and pulling her closer as she laughed. "Such a glowing review. And would this dashing gentleman happen to hav…"

What her father had said to her mother, Yang would never know as the recording ended with the sentence left unfinished, instead switching to another recording of them in the kitchen. The scene was actually one she remembered very well as she was the one recording it while hidden behind the door, having snuck into their parent's room to take the camera. On the screen, her father was stood over the oven preparing a meal while Summer was sneaking pieces of cheese occasionally, Tai giving her hand a tap whenever she did.

"You'll ruin your appetite," he chuckled as she tried again, giving her hand another tap. In the exact same way Ruby did, the woman gave him a slight, playful pout and Tai rolled his eyes, lifting
the spoon he was using to stir whatever was in the pan towards her mouth. "Here, try this instead."

"Do you remember what he was cooking yet?" Ruby asked, her head having turned a little to look at her while Yang watched their mother taste test what their father offered her.

"Nope, and he doesn't remember either," she replied, a satisfied smirk spreading across her mother's face. "Looks like she enjoyed it though."

"Not bad, Honey," she said with a teasing grin as he tossed the spoon into the sink and pulled another one out. "Could be a little sweeter though."

"More sugar is your answer to everything," he said, bumping her with his hips but obliging and adding a little more sugar.

"Oh look, I could say the same to you," Yang joked and Ruby gave a small shrug.

"Sugar is amazing."

"What Mom said."

"Mhm, until your teeth fall out."

"What Dad said."

"But then I can finally achieve my life goal of being a gummy bear," Summer joked, sticking her tongue out at the man who shook his head at what Yang considered to be an amazing pun both then and now.

"I still need to write that one down," Yang chuckled as both Tai and Ruby groaned.

"I can't imagine what it would have been like to grow up with two of you telling puns," the redhead replied while making a shivering motion.

"Hey, puns are one thousand times better than dad jokes," Yang countered, receiving a shake of Ruby's head in return.

Taking a sip of her drink as she watched her parents happily conversing and joking around, Yang couldn't help but think back to her childhood, where such a sight was rather commonplace. While the two definitely had their issues, just as everyone does, it was clear to Yang even as a child that the two were meant for each other. From the way they clung to each other like glue, the way they balanced each other out, and even the way they joked around like teenagers when they thought they were alone; Summer telling awful, though Yang had always thought them brilliant, puns and Tai half-heartedly encouraging her. It had been what encouraged Yang to record one of the moments.

Unfortunately the recording was only a short one since Summer caught her out of the corner of her eye and threw a wink her way as she snuck more cheese, making child Yang giggle and run off.

The screen turned black with static for a couple of moments as the tape caught up to where the next recording was, and after only a couple of seconds, the picture of a young Ruby showed up; her wide, toothy grin taking up the entire screen before the camera was pulled back.

"Are you gonna tell daddy what they said?" Summer's voice said clearer from behind the camera that Yang knew Tai was holding.
"Perfech teeth!" The young brunette said loudly, her words still still a little hard to discern.

"That's right," Summer replied, picking the chuckling child up from the ground with more strength than one would assume the delicate-looking woman possessed and pressing a kiss into her cheek. "And do you know what perfect means?" Young Ruby gave a rapid shake of her head, but her eyes quickly widened with glee as a large double chocolate cookie almost the size of her head was presented. "It means you've been a very good girl who gets a treat."

"That makes me want some cookies," Ruby sighed, her hand lazily scratching Zwei behind the ear as the younger version of her eagerly reached for the baked good.

"After dinner," Yang replied firmly, knowing that if she show any cracks then Ruby would attempt to whine her way into treats and ruin the meal.

"Meanie."

"Mhm."

Watching the little girl on screen happily bite into her gooey treat, Yang took another sip of her drink as her mother passed the child off to her father, taking the camera and turning it on them both. The man looked far younger than the one sitting downstairs, his blonde hair shorter and combed to the side with no stubble covering his jaw. In his eye was a slight twinkle, one that, despite him still being rather happy most of the time, Yang had not seen in years.

"Well at least you don't try to bite them like your sister does," the man said with a smile, the girl giving him a wide grin.

"Yang bad."

"Mhm," Tai hummed with a laugh, that sound of giggling from behind the camera matching him. "When we take her to the dentist, she is."

"I still can't believe you tried to bite them until you were seven."

"Hey, they got revenge by giving me braces for nearly three years," Yang replied scornfully, not forgetting how she hated the infernal, wire contraption that had never felt anything but awkward in her mouth. "I should've bit them more."

Feeling her sister shake a little from silent giggles, she gave the girl a soft poke in the side. However as she watched her parents continue to laugh and dote on the laughing brunette, Yang felt her Scroll buzz in her back pocket and reached into her back pocket to pull it free. Bringing up the screen, she saw a message from Weiss and though she hated that they wouldn't see each other on their first Christmas as a couple, the text was still more than enough to make her smile.

'I hope you are having a good Christmas, and thank you so much for the gift. I love it more than I can possibly say. What I bought for you seems almost shallow in hindsight, but I hope you liked it nonetheless. Please tell Ruby and your father that I say hello too. x'

"Is that Weiss?" Ruby asked causing Yang to look up and see her father trying to steal a piece of the giant cookie from the little girl, the child face forming a pout as she moved it away.

"Mhm," she hummed in response, closing out of the message momentarily to pull up her camera. "Here we go, Christmas photocard time."

As was a usual tradition for them, Yang held out the camera at arms length and readied it the best
she could. Once it was in position, Ruby formed a heart shape with her fingers halfway between them and the camera, both of their faces visibly through the hole. As both of them gave the camera wide smile, she snapped the shot and pulled the device back to type out a message to Weiss.

"You still sad you can't see her today?" Ruby asked as she turned back to the television, the recording of Ruby after the dentist having already passed and instead replacing with their parents dancing in the back garden, the recording steady as the camera had been set down on a wall.

"A little," she admitted while the sounds of her father's laugh filled the room. "But I got you, so I'm still extremely happy."

"I know," Ruby replied as she watched their parents enjoy themselves, though Yang noticed her voice had dropped some of its earlier happiness; as it tended to do during their watchthrough of the tapes.

As she clicked through her contacts and added them to a mailing list, her thumb came to a stop at a certain contact that she had yet to call. As her finger hovered over Raven's name, she contemplated whether it was really appropriate for her to send such an image as their first message; but ultimately decided that it wouldn't be. Opening their whatever relationship they might have in the future with a picture of her happy with the child of her ex's relationship was probably not the best thing for a healthy start.

"Have you called her yet?" Ruby's question was soft as the girl clearly understood that Yang was deep in thought. Giving her a slight shake of her head, Yang hit the button to send the picture to every contact but Raven and slipped the device back into her pocket. "Why?"

"I don't know," Yang admitted, the true reason unknown even to her, though she guessed it had something to do with the fear of reaching out to someone who had already left her once. "Just haven't found the right time, I guess."

"What about today?"

"What?"

"I mean..." Ruby said hesitantly, twiddling her thumbs as she continued to watch the television. "You said she recently moved here, so I doubt she knows many people. She might be alone this Christmas."

Thinking it over for a second, Yang knew it would definitely be a good time to reach out; however, she was still unsure. She knew she wanted to meet Raven, and that to meet her she would eventually have to call, but that didn't stop the nerves from stopping her every time she had attempted in the past.

"I dunno, Rubes," Yang sighed, wrapping her arms back around the younger girl. "Maybe, but not right now. Right now I just want to watch this with you like always, okay?"

Receiving a nod from Ruby, Yang turned her attention back to the television where her father would still gracefully moving their mother around the garden; though the thought of calling Raven remained in the back of her mind.

"... eally need to go pick up the kids from Qrow's," Summer laughed over the soft music that was issuing from a boombox that lay on the ground, but made no attempt to create any distance.

"They're fine," Tai laughed in return, giving his wife a small spin and catching her back in his arms. "They love Qrow. Besides, how often do we get a moment like this?"
At the man's words, Summer gave a small shake of her head and rested her head on his shoulder, the two of them gently swaying with each other despite the music being rather upbeat. However, as Yang watched the happy couple enjoy a private moment, she felt her sister slump a little in her arms and looked down to see her sister watching them with unclear eyes. At first she thought it was the usual melancholy that would always overtake the girl while watching her mother, but was caught off guard by the soft voice that she suddenly spoke in.

"Yang?"

"Yeah?" she asked, keeping her voice just as soft as the one that the girl had spoken in.

Ruby took a moment to reply, instead simply watching her parents sway like the wind, but after a couple more seconds, Yang felt her sister deflate a little more.

"How do you know when you're in love? Or that you like someone?"

Completely shocked by the question, Yang took a sideways glance at her sister to see the silver orbs fixed inquisitively on the dancing couple. Feeling slightly happy that her sister was finally trying to talk to her about romance, something that had never happened before, she felt a small smile pulling at her lips.

"Aww," she breathed to her sister, squeezing her a little tighter. "Has someone captured my little sister's heart?"

"N-No," Ruby answered quietly, continuing to watch the couple and not meeting Yang's eye. "No-one has..." Ruby paused, briefly glancing down at her lap for a split second before returning her gaze to the television. "I... I just never really understood how you.. you know... know? That it's more than just friends, I mean."

"Oh," Yang hummed thoughtfully, relaxing her hug a little. "Well, I dunno. I guess I just really like being around them because they make me really happy. If I find myself unable to stop smiling because of them, and I want to be around them as much as I can."

"And you... You feel like that with Weiss?"

"Everyday," Yang replied without hesitation.

"What about Blake? And Arslan?"

"There was definitely a lot of that with Blake," Yang chuckled, looking back up to the television for a moment to see her mother fiddling with the boombox. "And a lot with Arslan too, I guess." Looking back at her Ruby to see thoughts rushing past her eyes, she couldn't help but feel something was off and gave the girl a slight jostle. "Hey, is everything okay?"

"Mmm," Ruby said with a short nod, her eyes not leaving the television as the recording started to come to an end. "Just curious is all."

"Well I am sure you will have someone steal your heart one day, Sis," Yang said certainly, earning another quiet hum from her sister as the television gave a small flicker, the picture changing to show the most of the family sat around a campfire.

Yang remembered the moment well, mainly due to the fact that they would frequently go camping in the small forest that laid on the west of Patch. It was a passion of her mom's and though Yang often hated being dragged along at first, she always ended up having fun. Normally they would chose a nice spot by the lake, but she thought she remembered something about it having raised a
little too high and forcing them up further on that particular day. With the three people on screen being herself, Tai, and Ruby, Yang knew her mother was filming her approach from the car.

"My little rosebud, what did you do?" The woman said with a soft chuckle as she reached the clearing, the camera landing on the grinning form of a younger Ruby who had melted marshmallow and chocolate smeared all around her mouth. "Honey, can you pass me the wet-wipes?"

"Sure," Tai laughed, his hand reaching into a bag behind him to pull out a pack of wipes that had gently threw towards the camera. "She looks like you when you break into the cookie stash in the middle of the night."

"Don't give her ideas at such a young age," Summer replied with a warm laugh of her own, wiping Ruby's face clean before turning the camera back to her husband and their blonde-haired daughter, who was roasting marshmallows over the fire. "How're the smores coming along?"

"Hey, you did buy marshmallows, right?" Yang asked Ruby as they watched the young blonde on screen turn the skewer around. "Kinda hungry for some smores now."

"Yeah," the redhead replied, her voice still a little quiet as she watched the scene. "They're in the cupboard."

"Good, I'll make some after dinner."

"... most done," Tai replied to the woman, reaching out to take the roasted marshmallows from her younger self. Even on the grainy camera, Yang could see the flame covered foam drooping slightly, but the man was clearly too busy smiling at his daughter to notice as he lifted them up to check the underside. "I think these shou..."

As he lifted the marshmallows, the flame-hardened shell came away from the gooey inside and landed straight on his head. For almost a second, everyone seemed stunned as the man winced, but a few seconds later, a large splash of water was thrown from behind the camera; the liquid quickly quelling the flame that had already threatened to set the man's blonde hair ablaze. Thankfully, as their father danced around patting his head and shaking his hair clear of the water his wife had doused him in, Yang felt Ruby giggle silently in her lap while the younger versions of them on screen burst into rapturous laughter.

Happy that the girl's sulky moment seemed to have passed, Yang tightened her grip around her little sister and rested her chin back on the girls shoulder, content to sit and watch the antics of their parents for as long at least another hour.

——

Weiss Schnee

Weiss let out a loud groan as she collapsed face first onto her bed and slipped her shoes off, her feet grateful for now longer having to support her weight on such spindly heels. The afternoon had been incredibly tiring, her father having held his annual Christmas gathering meaning that Weiss spent the entirety of lunch and the small gathering afterwards talking to business partners and shareholders while under her father's watchful gaze. It wasn't all bad though, as it had allowed her to get her name properly imprinted on their memory, and to also get an idea of who they were. While many had been just like her father, crude and only caring about making as much profit as they possibly could, more than she expected were rather pleasant people who recalled how influential her grandfather was.
"You looked tired, Sister," she heard from her door, Winter's voice hard but carrying a hint of amusement. "If you are incapable of handling this one day without collapsing, how do you expect to continue this for the rest of your life?"

"My future Christmas' will be spent with Yang and family, not with dullard business partners who would clearly rather not be in attendance," Weiss replied, her voice muffled slightly as she spoke into her pillow due to not having the energy to move, though she did give the older woman a raised eyebrow as she moved into her sightline. "And where were you this afternoon?"

While the whole family was supposed to be in attendance, Winter had been noticeably absent throughout the enter event. Even their mother had at least stayed for a couple of hours before ducking out, much to their father's annoyance, but Winter had refused to show up. The only thing Weiss had been able to say when the contacts she talked to asked for her whereabouts was that she had a terrible migraine and couldn't attend.

"Father told me I had to go," Winter replied dismissively, placing her jacket over the back of the chair and sitting down on the bed. "So I decided not to."

"You could have at least come for me," Weiss replied, finally lifting up from the pillow slightly and twisting her body to face her sister.

"I will not always be there to help you, Weiss," Winter sighed and laid back beside her, the pale blue eyes darkening slightly as she stared up at the ceiling. "Something I have clearly proven already. You must learn to handle these things yourself if your truly wish to take the company for your own."

"I meant as my sister, not my support," she sighed in return and rolled over onto her back. "It has been too long since we attended such an event together."

"That is true," Winter hummed thoughtfully, her hands linking over her stomach. "But the next one we attend together shall not be one of Father's. They carry too many expectations and I have had enough of those for this lifetime."

A few moments of silence passed from the older woman before she voiced a question that had seemed to occur to her, "Maybe you can attend an Atlas military gathering one day? I am sure General Ironwood would be excited to meet you."

"Maybe," she said with a nod and pulled the pin from her hair that kept it in place, the silky strands instantly flowing out of their neat position.

"I will never understand how you can deal with your hair that long," Winter chuckled, her eyes having moved to watch Weiss' action. "Have you secretly spent so much of your inheritance that you cannot afford a haircut?"

Rolling her eyes at her sister's playful assumption, Weiss sat up momentarily and shifted the trapped hair from beneath herself. Once it was all resting beside her, she turned onto her side to smile at her sister.

"Not everyone likes to cut it short and wrap it into a bun."

"Then that is clearly something else you and Yang have in common," Winter teased further, sitting up to take off her own boots and resting them neatly at the foot of Weiss' bed before laying back down. "Has she never heard of a hairbrush?"

"I like it," Weiss smiled instinctually as she remembered how it felt to run her hand through the
golden locks. "It is pretty much her personality given form. Bright, happy, but a little wild."

"Hmm," the older woman hummed playfully and brought her legs up onto the bed. "She didn't seem very wild when I met her; more timid, like a little golden retriever."

Giving her sister's arm a slight tap, the woman letting out a genuine laugh. It was something that Weiss rarely heard and often forgot how wonderful a sound it was. "Well you did wear your military jacket despite knowing she was nervous about meeting you."

"And it was very effective at letting her know I was serious," Winter smirked while pulling her Scroll and some keys from her pocket and placing them on the bedside table.

Rolling her eyes at the woman while giving a short tut, Weiss returned to her back and gazed at the ceiling, her eyes tracing the intricate swirling wind pattern that had been expertly painted across the whole of the room's ceiling. As they both laid there in silence, Weiss let out a small sigh of comfort.

Christmas was never been a big thing in the Schnee house, at least not since her grandfather passed, so Weiss had never really done much for the holiday. Every year she woke up and dressed herself to attend the dinner her father put on for his guests, every year she exchanged pleasantries before retiring to her room after everyone left. There was never any change, never anything to look forward to; but this year had been different. She had Yang, who she wished she had spent the day with, she had Winter, and she even had Whitley to an extent, who while still being his usual standoffish self, was being a little less antagonistic since their last conversation.

So as she sat there in silence, simply enjoying the fact that she could spend some time with her sister again, Weiss was surprised by a knock on the door. Sitting up in case it was her father, though he rarely knocked, she called for the person to enter. Watching the door open and a small portly man appear in the entryway, she let out a small relieved sigh and leaned back onto her bed.

"Good afternoon, Klein," she said as he approached, his hands clasped behind his back. "How are you today?"

"Very well thank you, Meine Schneeflocke," he replied jovially with a small bow and turned to Winter. "Mein Schneeengel."

"Hello, Klein," Winter smiled kindly to the man. "What can we do for you?"

"I am here to deliver a package," He said with a twinkle of happiness in his eyes. "A rather beautiful, blonde woman called me just over a week ago and asked me if I could pick up this parcel to deliver it today."

"Oh really?" Winter said humorously with a raised eyebrow as the man pulled a package from behind his back and handed it to Weiss, the bright yellow wrapping paper standing out against the room's white and blue colour scheme.

Reaching out for the parcel that was only just larger than a book but slightly thinner, Weiss turned it over in her hand in an attempt to guess what it was. Unsuccessful in her attempt, she gave the parcel a small shake, the only sound a small tapping that could have been anything.

"Well I shall leave you be," the man smiled and turned on his heel to leave the room, stopping at the door for a split second to wish them a happy christmas before leaving the room and shutting it behind him.

Turning the parcel over in her hand again, she pressed it lightly and felt it give slightly. Yang had
told her that she would receive a present on Christmas day, but the idea that Yang had gone out of her way to prepare it so much caused a smile to pull gently at her lips.

"You know you are allowed to open it, right?"

"Shut up," Weiss replied while sitting up, her smile growing a little as Winter gave her a small nudge.

Knowing her sister was right and that she was hesitating for a reason, Weiss turned the present over and gently began to pull at the folds. It only took her a couple of seconds, but the anticipation and excitement she felt was enough to make her breathing slow a little as she pulled away the final piece of tape that help in in place and carefully unwrapped it, not wanting to rip the paper. Once the packaging fell away, Weiss was left looking at the back on a piece of canvas that was stretched tightly over a piece of wood and stapled down.

Before she even turned it over, she knew what it was and her heart gave a small stutter that Yang had remembered something from so long ago. It had been one of the first things she had seen when entering the store, her favorite piece of art in the entire place; and now it was in her hands, in her room. But it shouldn't be, she knew that Yang had been trying to get Blake to take it down for years, and Yang had said someone had recently ripped it after tripping; so was it a new one?

Slowly turning it over, she was greeted by exactly what she expected. The beautifully drawn copse of Atlas pines, the shading of each branch and the gentle stroke used for each needle giving the look of the trees being blown gently by the wind. But was it the same one? Glancing over it, she saw the familiar coffee stain in the bottom right corner that indicated that it was indeed the same one.

"Is that her art?" Winter asked next to her, Weiss barely aware of the woman having sat up and reaching towards the discarded packaging. Giving a nod, she carefully reached out and carressed the edges of the canvas. "She's quite talented."

"She is," Weiss breathed, still not believing that she was holding it in her hands. While it was technically worthless to most, it meant more to Weiss than even her sister could know. It was proof of their relationship, not that she needed any more proof; but it showed that Yang really did care, that she paid attention to every tiny detail from the start. "She knew I loved this piece."

"There's a note too," Winter hummed, pulling a slip of folded paper from the yellow wrappings. "Do you want me to read it?"

Not wanting to tear her eyes away from the drawing for at least another couple of minutes, she gave a soft hum of confirmation as Winter unfolded the paper.

"Weiss," Winter said clearly, holding the note out slightly so that Weiss could look at it if she wanted. "I know I'm not the best with words, and I don't exactly have the money to get you anything expensive, but I hope this is enough to show you how much I care. I know that when Winter leaves, you will miss her a lot, so this is my attempt at making it so her leaving will be less painful, even if only a little. It took quite a lot of begging to get Blake to let me have it and I will spare you the nightmare I have had to suffer through as payment, but all of that is worthwhile as I know this is that only gift I can give that can possibly show how much I love you. Yours always, Yang."

Swiping a tear away so that it didn't on the gift and mar the lines, Weiss felt Winter's arm wrap around her shoulder and pull her into a tight hug. Looking to the side, her sister gave her a soft smile and hand her the note, which she happily took and re-read in its entirety. After a couple of
times reading Yang's words, which she noted were spelled correctly for once, she finally set both of the things down.

"Do you believe she isn't a White Fang plant now?" Weiss asked the older woman beside her in hopes that Winter was seeing that Yang could be trusted.

"She seems to really care," Winter sighed after a minute, her arm pulling back and reaching out to take up the gift. "But I am just being cautious, Sister."

"I know."

"For what it is worth though," Winter continued as she traced the trees with her finger while a nostalgic fondness glittered behind her eyes. "Should my concerns be misguided, which you are clearly certain they are, then she already has my approval."

"You know that your approval is worth a lot to me," Weiss replied with a sideways smile at her sister as she reached for her Scroll to send a thank you message to Yang. "So what of you, is there no-one you would rather be spending Christmas with? Maybe some guy back in Atlas?"

"The military hardly allows much time for dating, Sister," Winter replied humorously and placed the drawing down to lay back down on the bed. "Besides, I have yet to meet anyone who has made me feel that way."

"Except Roman?" Weiss asked, standing Yang's gift against a lamp on her bedside table and laying back next to her sister.

"Yes, well," the snowy-haired woman smiled in a way that told Weiss it was not a purposeful action, but a subconscious one. "He was something else entirely. Enough charm to make a statue swoon, yet always sincere in who he was. He was rough around the edges and didn't always make the best choices, but he was also a man who you couldn't help but find yourself drawn to."

"I had no idea you liked the bad boys," Weiss chuckled and received a shoulder bump from her sister. Turning over onto her side, she gave her the older woman a curious look and asked something she had been curious about since hearing the story. "It sounds like you still are drawn to him. Did you ever try to find him again?"

Winter remained quiet for almost a minute, and Weiss thought she may have asked a bad question; but when the woman finally gave a slight nod, the look in her eyes had turned to one that Weiss could only describe as sadness.

"Before I left for the military," she replied softly, her voice a little more breathy than it usually was. "I tried to find him, but he didn't tell me where the family friend lived. I finally tracked him down last year and found out he's living in Argus now, but I think contacting him would be a mistake."

"Why?" Weiss asked curiously as she heard her Scroll ping, but despite wanting to read the message, she wanted to give her sister her full attention. "You said he hoped you would meet again."

"Because as much freedom as the military had given me from Father, I still feel him trying to claw at me from the shadows," the woman sighed and shook her head. "I already caused enough problems for him all those years ago. Attempting to find him and possibly subjecting him to Father's wrath again when he has likely already moved on would be unfair to him."

"Maybe," Weiss hummed thoughtfully, knowing that Roman having moved on in the last six years was more than likely true. "But I think if he told you that he hopes you find him again, then he
likely isn't scared of our father."

"Perhaps," her sister responded, though her resilient tone had not faded. "But I still don't think it wise."

Hearing the finality in the woman's voice, Weiss gave an understanding nod and returned to her back, bringing open her Scroll to check her message. What greeted her had to be the cheesiest picture she had ever seen of Ruby and Yang both smiling at the camera as the younger girl held up her fingers in a heart shape to the camera. Below it was a short message that she read with just as much intrigue as the note that had come with her gift.

'my christmas has been rather good so far currently just chilling with ruby. id ask how yrs was but since u were likely stuck talking to people all day i can probably guess the answer xD im glad you liked the gift and yours was far from shallow i cant wait 2 wear it when i take bumblebee for her first ride. love you and cant wait to see you again :P'

"I didn't know you two had your own secret code," Winter smirked at her side, the woman's eyes skimming over the message. "At least no-one else will know what she says."

"It is rather bad," Weiss chuckled at the joke, putting the Scroll aside as she knew what Yang was doing with her sister and didn't want to disturb them. "But you get used to it."

"I will take your word on that one."

Smiling at Winter, Weiss shifted her hair again and thoughts over her day. While the beginning had been rather dry, her afternoon was probably the best Christmas she'd had in years. With the gift from Yang and her sister beside her, she couldn't help but smile while relaxing into her pillow, determined to enjoy the moment for as long as she could.

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**Yang Xiao Long**

"YANG!" Their father's loud shouting cut through the comfortable silence and made them both jump slightly, the television remote dropping out of Ruby's hand and onto the floor. "Blake is here!"

"Okay," Yang replied, barely raising her voice as she knew either Kali or Blake would relay it to him. "Be down in a minute."

As Ruby wiggled out of her arms to pick up the remote, Yang stretched her arms until she felt the stiffness subside a little; along with the slight popping of her elbows.

It had been almost two hours since they had sat down to watch the family tapes, a little longer than they usually spent watching them but Yang enjoyed the extra time. Once the summer tape had finished, Ruby had quickly replaced it with one of the Spring tape tapes, one filled with school plays and picnics, Yang being the victim of her sister's teasing for the former. However, as much fun as she had while watching them, a tiny bit of sadness washed over her when Ruby turned the television off, as she knew that she was unlikely to watch and enjoy the sound of her mother's voice until next Christmas. Even though Ruby was more than happy to lend her the tapes, Yang knew that she would never take her up on the offer as watching them alone was far too painful for her.

"I'm gonna take care of something before I go down," Yang said as she stood up from Ruby's bed and stretched her back.

"Alright," Ruby smiled as she sorted out the television. "I'll be headed down in a minute too."
Giving her sister a small nod, she turned and pulled open the door to be met with the strong smell of turkey that she knew would almost be done. Pulling her Scroll from her pocket as she made her way towards the room, she slowly brought up her contact list and found the name she wanted. Through the entire time she had been watching the tapes with Ruby, the girl's words had lingered in the back of her mind. With everything her father said, Yang knew it was true Raven was likely spending Christmas alone whether she wanted to or not, so surely calling her before the day was out would be a good idea. *Right?*

A small sigh escaped her as she sat on the edge of her bed, her thumb hovering over the call button but refusing to press it. She hated it. The feeling of anxiety that pulsed through her at such a simple action as lowering her thumb. She was Yang Xiao Long. A trained fighter who could step into a boxing ring without a shred of fear, an excellent cook who could move knives and hot pans around without hesitation, an artist who hands moved to her every whim; so why was this so terrifying to her? Was it the fear of Raven not caring anymore? Was it the fear that even getting to know Raven wouldn't give her the resolution she wanted? But wasn't resolution the point of it all anyway? Knowing why she left? And how else was she going to do that without calling the woman?

Letting out another shuddering sigh, she ran a hand through her hair and took a deep breath. She knew she was being stupid, and while that was what she was very good at, she knew she couldn't let it continue; so holding her breath and steeling herself for what may come, she jutted her thumb forward into the call button.

While normally there would be a brief moment where you could cancel the call and not have the other person know you had called at all, the force of her thumb hitting the screen caused her already shaky hand to lose its grip for a second; but that second was more than enough for her to hear the ringing to the fact that there was no turning back as Raven could potentially recognise her number the next time she tried to call, Yang raised the device to her ear and nervously waited for Raven to answer.

Unfortunately, she didn't have much time to prepare as it only took a couple of rings for the call to be picked up and a woman's voice to sound from the other end.

"Hello?"

The answer was simple, if not a little short, but Yang still found herself unable to respond. The sensation of her tongue being too big for her mouth, like she had taken a bad punch without a mouthguard, filled her; and despite opening her lips, not a single words left them.

"Hello?" The voice said again, this time a little more annoyance seeping into the woman's tone, but still Yang couldn't reply as her body began to shake and radiate heat. "Stupid kids, do you have nothing better to do on Christmas than to prank call someone with the new phone your parents got you? Grow…"

"R-Raven?"

The dismissive tone of the woman's voice that made it clear she was about to hang up was what finally broke through Yang's nerves and made her speak; because she knew that if the call ended before her words were said, it would take weeks to work up the courage to call again. At her interruption, the woman's voice stopped and silence filled the line for a moment.

"Yang?"

"H-Hi," Yang answered timidly, already worried about sounding stupid. "Sorry if I'm disturbing you."
"You're not," Raven replied quickly, her voice hard but clearly uncertain of how to continue the conversation.

"Good," she hummed while tapping her free hand against her knee, also unclear of how to continue. "Sorry, it's taken me so long to call."

"I honestly didn't think you would at all," Raven said with a hint of honesty in her voice. "But that would be my own fault, I guess." Not knowing what she could possibly say to that without confirming it, Yang remained silent. "So what finally made you call?"

Not replying straight away, Yang sat back on her bed and pulled her knees up to her chest. However, after a couple of seconds, she knew the silence had gone on too long. "It's Christmas. I guess it just felt like a better time than any."

"It's certainly a decent place to start," the woman replied, and Yang heard her take a small sip of a drink, the telltale sound of ice clinking against glass. "So how's your Christmas been?"

"Good," she said again, unable to find better words as she picked at a small hole in her jeans. "We're about to have dinner, so I can't talk for long. But I… I would like to make some time to talk more… If you still want that?"

Yang was more nervous than she had ever been as she asked her question, and in the seconds it took Raven to answer, almost every single bad one she could give rushed through her head. Thankfully, none of those were correct when the woman finally replied.

"I do," Raven said clearly. "I don't work on weekends, so they're free if that works for you?"

"It does," Yang said with a nod, that she quickly stopped as she realised she was alone in her room. "I was thinking maybe in the new year?"

"That works, one minute," Raven replied, a small amount of shifting being heard from the other side before her voice came through a little more echoey than before. "How is the fifth?"

"That's…" Yang paused, unsure of whether that was too soon or not. The fifth was a little over a week away, but she knew she had to take that leap if she was going to get anywhere. "… That's fine. Do you know where the Black Cat Café is?"

"Your friend's store? Yes," she answered with a thoughtful hum. "I can be there around twelve."

"So can I," Yang replied, knowing that she would likely be there much earlier than twelve. "But I need to go before dad burns the turkey."

"I remem…" Raven's voice trailed off, but Yang thought she heard a hint of fondness in it. "I mean… I'm glad you called, Yang. I know I probably don't deserve another chance, but thank you for giving me it."

"I'm glad I called too," Yang breathed, a little relief rushing through her as everything had actually gone well. "Bye."

"Goodbye, Yang."

Hanging up the call, Yang rested her head back against the wall and let out a loud sigh of relief. She had expected the call to go much worse than it had, but then again she generally expected that so I wasn't anything new. However while it was rather close, she at least now had an opening, a meeting where things could finally progress and she could get some answers. And though she
would have loved to have sat on her bed and mull it over a little longer, she knew she was needed downstairs to get dinner ready; so she quickly pushed herself off her bed. Walking over to her door, she pulled it open and was for some reason completely unsurprised to find Blake leaning against the wall opposite her, the girl's amber eyes looking at her softly with a gentle smile on her lips.

"I'm guessing you'll be staying at mine?" she asked and pushed her way off the wall to take a couple of steps forward.

Grateful that Blake had been aware enough of her needs to wait for her and know what would be asked with needing to be, Yang gave a quick nod and threw her arms around the Faunus' shoulders to pull her into a hug as she breathed a single word.

"Thanks."

Chapter End Notes

A/N

So hello again, I hope this chapter was fluffy enough. But through all the feel good things that are hopefully in this chapter, there are actually quite a few big points here too. The biggest being that last scene. Yes, this does mean I am finally getting to Raven, but I want to explain myself a little before then without giving too much away. V1-5 Raven are extremely hard to make fit into the kinda story I want to tell with her and still make it feel like Raven, so I will be going off of the V5 ending Raven. I feel that can be a nice starting point for her in this story and she is already planned out so yeah. For those who knew the scene, this doesn't mean she will be easy for Yang xD She is still Raven after all. As Tai warned her in chapter 24, relationships with Raven are difficult to maintain.

I guess that's all I have to say, this chapter was rather lighthearted and relaxing to write after the last couple so I hope you enjoyed. Any comments you have are greatly appreciated; but in honestly, just silently reading and enjoying is more than enough for me. I am going on break for a bit, but when I return I will be cutting the chapters back down to around 4-5k words. these long ones are nice but with another series going they put a little too much stress on me to get them out and keep up the "quality" xD

Important Notice

So as I stated above, I am going on break for roughly a month. I have been uploading roughly every 10 days for over a year now, and that doesn't include all the smaller/newer series that I have put up between and the stuff I have written but never put up. This break is not due to anything personal so don't worry, but just to relax and catch up on some stuff. In the meantime, if you ever wanna reach out and talk, maybe ask me stuff regarding what I do when I write or just assure yourself the story hasn't been abandoned, then you can reach me on twitter at Raalm_Neeth. My DM's are always open so slip in whenever you want xD So yeah, that's all, thank you for the support and reading whatever you have read of mine in the last year, and I can't wait to see you all again.
A Spar-se Conversation

Chapter Summary

Fretting over the upcoming sit down with her mother, Yang receives support from someone she wouldn't expect.

Chapter Notes

Some notes at the end regarding upcoming stuff, so perhaps read if you are interested.

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Edits by ToxicExotic

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Yang Xiao Long

Thud! Thud! Smack! Thud!

The sound of leather hitting leather and shaking chains echoed around the empty gymnasium in a way that would give most people a headache, but to Yang it sounded like music. Every thud of her gloved fist striking the hanging bag sang her praise, the sound telling of whether her punches were hitting their mark correctly. Rotating her shoulder as she lashed out with another jab, she heard the loud rattling of chains fill the room and tell her that the strike was a good one. Due to her not having spent any time on a bag in over a week, she felt the fatigue in her arms begin to build up a little more than it usually would have.

It had been forty minutes since she arrived at the gym, and while the room was still very cold due to the snow outside, and the heating not currently being on, Yang had already worked up enough of a sweat that the temperature didn't matter at all to her. Taking a short break, she wiped an arm along her forehead and let out a deep breath.

Though she would prefer having a sparring partner, the heavy bag in front of her would have to make do as the gym was yet to actually open. Thankfully she was on a first name basis with the owner, so the janitor was always willing to let her in early; however, that also meant her first opponent wouldn't arrive for at least an hour. Training had always helped clear her mind, the exercise and the eventual burning of her muscles was incredibly cathartic to her and she relished every minute of it. It was a distraction she felt she needed a little more than usual.

The day for her meeting with Raven was rushing closer faster than she thought it would. She was aware that less than two weeks was barely any time when they made the arrangement, but with only a couple of days left until their meeting, never had time seemed to act so weird. Occasionally time would slow to a crawl when she was doing things such as drawing or watching television, but seemed to speed up whenever she was just relaxing; the exact opposite of how time usually felt. Because of that, she had been trying to do as much as she could throughout the day in order to get
just a little more time.

Unfortunately she was mostly alone in her attempts to put off the inevitable.

While she normally would have talked to Blake or Weiss about her worries, both had been rather busy. Blake and Ghira had left for Menagerie the day after Christmas to visit a relative for a few days, and reception on the island was always rather spotty; that alongside the time difference made communication with her best friend exceptionally limited. As for Weiss, her girlfriend was extremely busy at the STC. Though they still kept in contact at night, it was clear that Weiss was trying to find time for them, and make sure she was okay; the sheer workload had left her with very little time to give. As usual, she was hesitant in turning to Ruby as she liked to try and keep the strong face she had always shown intact.

With the acceptance that there was no-one that she could turn to at present, she let out a deep sigh and picked up her water bottle, taking a long swig to cool herself off. Feeling her throat thank her for the refresher, she tossed the drink back onto her bag and prepared to continue her exercise. However, as she threw out her first punch, she heard a loud cough behind her and turned to see why the janitor would interrupt her when he never had before, only to be met with a familiar pair of piercing blue eyes.

"Your form is rather good," the older Schnee sibling said as she stepped out of the shadow of the doorway. She looked far less intimidating without her military jacket than when Yang had first met the woman, but there was still an undeniable strength in the way she carried herself. "Your hips could use a little more movement though."

"Thanks," Yang replied slowly, the confidence built up by her sparring with the punching bag quickly fading as the blue eyes bore into hers; though they were noticeably softer than the last time they had met. "Should I be concerned that you seem to have followed me?"

It was the only reason she could think of that Winter could possibly know where she was when she'd left the house before Ruby and her father had even awoke.

"Have you done anything to cause such a worry?" Winter asked in a telling tone, the cold of her voice enough to make Yang question the answer. Fortunately, Winter removed her hands from her jacket and pulled open the zipper to begin removing it. "Relax Miss Xiao Long. Should you have done something of concern, you would never have even known of my presence."

The older woman peeled off what looked to be a rather thin thermal jacket and threw it over the ropes of the nearby boxing ring to reveal a white tank top beneath, the powerful looking arms reaching out to grab the focus pads from the corner and quickly slipping them on. As she turned around and adjusted the gloves, Yang noticed a large, jagged scar that trailed down from the woman's shoulder and disappeared under the tank top, only to emerge from the bottom on her lower back. The mark was ghastly, the pink of the damaged tissue pink enough to stand out against the woman's pale skin, and from the consistency and raised nature of it Yang knew that whatever had caused it had not been an accident. However, before she could contemplate what it had caused such a mark, the stern woman turned around and smacked the pads to create a small cloud of dust.

"Punching bags are never a good opponent," She said and made her way over, holding up the paddles. "My sister says you are a proficient boxer, so show me what has impressed her so."

Taking a second to comply as she was still unsure why Winter was there, and highly doubted that she had followed her simply to spar with her, Yang watched the woman suspiciously until she received a raised eyebrow; the gesture clearly an impatient one. Figuring she would eventually find out what the reason was, Yang raised her fists and parted her legs, bending her knees to balance
herself properly before throwing out her first punch. However, since she clearly had more weight on her than Winter did and she didn't want to potentially injure her girlfriend's sister, she held back on the power a little and focused more on accuracy.

The impact was a good one, her fist crashing into the middle of the cushioned pad and causing Winter's arm to jut backwards a little. Slightly emboldened at her first strike in front of Winter being a good one, she continued her actions and followed up quickly whenever Winter moved the pads; but with each hit, Winter eyebrows furrowed a little more. After less than a minute, the woman dropped her arms to her side and gave Yang a glare that made her feel like her body have been dipped into a bath full of ice.

"I may not have inherited my grandfather's brawn, but I am far from frail."

The impatient tone matched her earlier look and Yang reached back to scratch her head, though the gloves somewhat hampering her nervous tick. "Sorry."

"It's fine," she replied shortly and raised her hands again. "Continue."

Giving the woman a small nod, Yang returned to her stance again and continued, this time leaning into her strikes properly. True to her word, Winter barely flinched from the hits, her arms only jutting back slightly further than then did before. Glad to finally have a moving target as the older Schnee adjusted her arms for Yang to practise not only her jabs, but also her uppercuts and hooks, Yang quickly felt the exercise warm her body.

"So..." Winter said as she took a step back to simulate an opponent being on the back foot, Yang following but listening intently to the woman's words. "My sister has been a little worried about you of late?"

Not letting up as she knew Winter would likely scold her for doing so, Yang took a measured breath and eased up on the power a little so that she could concentrate on both the conversation and hitting her mark.

"She asked you to check up on me?"

"No," the woman replied as she moved the hand Yang was targeting aside and sidestepped, forcing Yang to preposition a little. "She has likely only just woken up. I have simply noticed her stress and, as her sister, felt I should try to ease it."

"Oh," Yang sighed and swung her right arm around for a hook. Though she knew Weiss considered Winter a great source of advice, Yang was a little hesitant due to the only time they had talked had essentially been a one-sided conversation that involved a death threat. "It's nothing really, just missing my friend, is all."

"That's odd," Winter hummed after a well placed jab and shook her arm. "And here I was under the assumption that you had yet to properly meet your mother, let alone know her enough to consider her as a friend you miss."

Taken aback by the blunt statement of her sparring partner, Yang missed her strike and stumbled a little. As she stumbled, she felt the pad hit the back of her head. Looking up into the sharp blue eyes, she saw no remorse or care for having just said something so personal, and Yang's mind flashed back to when Weiss had first talked about her older sister. She had described Winter as harsh but well meaning, and that showed clearer than ever as she stood there expectantly. The woman was blunt and clearly not going to accept a lie, but she was doing it for Weiss; so that her sister might stop worrying.
It was exactly what Yang would do for Ruby.

"She told you about that?" Yang sighed, waiting for Winter to put her hands up so that she could continue the punching.

"Somewhat," the snow-haired woman replied, flicking her head slightly to get her fringe out of her eye. "She was rather vague; but when I looked into your record, I also looked into your parents and discovered that your birth mother had recently moved back into town. The link wasn't a difficult one to see."

"Fair enough," Yang groaned and shook her head, knowing it may have sounded a little childish. Thankfully Winter didn't comment and raised her hands again for Yang to attack. "I don't suppose you found anything out that I should know?"

"I did, but those are not my stories to tell."

"Figured as much," Yang replied, letting out a short breath as she struck out at the focus pad to increase her striking power.

Clearly sensing that Yang wanted to speed things up a little, Winter started to move her hands around a little more, occasionally dodging the strikes and tapping her back to show where her defence was falling short. Before long Yang began to feel a small bead of sweat build on her forehead and her mouth dry up from the exhaling. After a couple of minutes though, Winter's hand dodged the punch yet again and slammed into her chest, sending her stumbling backwards.

"You forgot your footing," she said blandly and shook her arm as she pulled off one of the gloves to stretch her fingers. "Take a break."

Giving the woman a small nod, Yang pulled off her gloves and walked over to the bottle of water she had discarded earlier. Picking up her phone to check the time to discover that nearly twenty minutes had passed since Winter had arrived, she saw that she had the usual good morning message from Weiss and quickly returned it as she squirted a large amount of room temperature liquid into her mouth. Turning back around, she saw Winter sat on the side of the ring rotating her shoulder.

"You have some good power," The woman said, her pale blue eyes locking onto the bottle in Yang's hand and motioning for it. Taking the hint, she gently capped the bottle and tossed it over to her. "But you burn yourself out too quickly."

"You told me not to hold back," Yang said and walked towards the older woman.

"I told you I wasn't frail," Winter countered after taking a long swig. "There is a difference between pulling your punches and measuring them."

Yang knew Winter was right. It had always been a fault of hers that she tried to overpower the opponents early, but her current distracted state was only exacerbating that habit. So giving the woman a nod, she sat down on a bench opposite her and let herself breath for a minute. After a couple of seconds though, Winter let out a deep sigh of her own and tossed the bottle back.

"You are unlikely to find someone with more family problems then I, Yang," she said, her voice softening notably to a point where Yang actually looked up at her to see her eyes were a little less cold. "But you don't know me. So if you do not wish to talk, then I will not force you."

"It's not that I don't want to," Yang sighed and looked back down at her knees with a small shake of her head as she decided to be honest. "If Weiss was free or Blake, the friend I mentioned earlier,
was here then I would in a heartbeat. Just not sure how I feel spilling my insecurities to someone who doesn't really like me that much."

Moments passed in silence after her admission and Yang didn't dare look up. Though Winter had been kind to her moments ago, Yang had technically just thrown it right back at her. However, the woman finally gave another more frustrated sigh and tapped her fist against the floor of the ring.

"You and my sister are so alike that it is frustrating," the woman said with a slight sigh. "You both assume that just because I am cautious, that I do not like you; when in fact, I don't think Weiss could have introduced me to anyone more deserving."

Taken aback by the words she had just heard and half convinced she had imagined them, Yang looked up to see Winter staring at her with a firm look in her eyes.

"Yes, I would prefer she had chosen someone who was not former White Fang, but that is the only thing about you that makes me wary and will remain so for some time. And that is because of my past. Excluding that however, you are quite a remarkable young woman. Not the best student, but you are kind and compassionate, your willingness to face me and my father despite your fears and the gift to Weiss on Christmas were more than enough to show me how much you care. So if I have ever given the impression that I do not like you, I apologise; because that it not the case."

"Y-You do like me?" Yang stuttered after almost a minute, wanting to make sure as the news still taking a while to sink in.

"I do," she confirmed and stood up from her seat. "But my wariness remains."

"Because of your scar?"

Yang had no idea what made her ask the question, but it was the only thing she could think for why Winter was so nervous about the trusting she wasn't a threat. If she really did like her, then there had to be a personal reason why she was hanging on to her doubts so tightly. Fortunately, while Winter did stop, she didn't get angry or offended; instead she gave a slight nod of her head.

"Yes," she said simply and began to pull on the focus pads again. "It was my squad that responded to the burning of Lithos academy three years ago, and after successfully chasing away the terrorists we began to extract everyone we could from the area. Little did we know that they had planted agents among the civilians. By the time we found out, a blade had already been dragged across my back. It was only because of my squad that I made it out of there. This scar reminds me that even the inconspicuous can be dangerous."

After listening to the story, Yang let her head hang back down. She didn't know much about what had happened in Atlas with the White Fang, except that tensions there had always been much higher than everywhere else before they'd been expunged; but to burn down a school and plant assassins in the building was far worse than anything Yang could have imagined. Hearing that alongside know what Weiss went through, it was finally easy for Yang to see why Winter was so hesitant.

"You shouldn't have had to go through that," was all she could say.

"No, I shouldn't have," Winter agreed as she finally wiggled her hand back into the gloves. "But I did, and that can't be changed now." Smacking the pads together again, Winter pulled her shoulders back and let out a deep groan of relief. "So, now that I have told you my past, and even admitted that I do not hate you, perhaps you may feel more comfortable divulging your… Insecurities."
Looking up at Winter as her voice had once again become much more gentle, Yang let out a small sigh and stood up to join her while slipping the gloves back on. Walking back to the woman and getting ready to start the exercise again, she questioned whether or not it was worth accepting the offer. After all, she was going to be attending the meeting no matter what, that had already been decided; but what if Winter thought her fears were childish, and caused her to reconsider her opinion on whether or not she was worthy to be with Weiss. On the other hand however, Winter could help abate some of her fears. Weiss has always spoken highly of her sister for being there whenever she needed her, so would that courtesy be extended to her?

A resigned groan left her as she raised her arms and struck out with a small, precise punch. What did she really have to lose? It wasn't like Weiss or Blake were available and there was really anything that could make her more nervous, so taking another deep breath, she slowly exhaled and confessed her worries.

"It's stupid," she breathed and struck the pad again, careful to keep her punches firm and measure. "But I guess I'm just worried that I won't get what I want out of meeting her."

"And what is it that you want out of it?"

"I dunno," Yang exhaled and landed a well placed hook. "Answers. Why she left, why she never bothered to return, why she wants to see me now… Some other things too, I guess."

"Well it would be illogical to assume she doesn't think those will come up," Winter said matter-of-factly and hopped out of the way of what Yang considered to be a perfect strike. "So since she is still following through means it would be safe to assume that at least some answers will the gained."

"I dunno, my dad says that she isn't exactly the most open person."

"That is his experience, not yours. How long has it been since he last saw her?"

"Probably only a couple of times, since she left shortly after I was born," Yang breathed, now struggling to land a real hit on the focus pads as Winter began to move around in earnest. "But I doubt they were for very long."

"Then he is unlikely to know the changes that may have happened in her life."

The tone in Winter's voice was too sure of itself for Yang to ignore; and realising she was beginning to wear herself out again chasing the woman, Yang slowed down and surveyed the white-haired soldier who's eyebrow was raised in intrigue. Winter had mentioned earlier that she knew things from looking into Raven's file, but had also made it clear she wouldn't say what they were. However the confidence in her voice was enough to make Yang believe something big had happened to Raven. Was it recent? Or was it years ago? Was it the things that caused her to show up on my thirteenth, or her reason for showing up now?

"I guess," Yang said noncommittally, feigning a jab with her left and sending out a real one with her right. "But what if that is still the case?"

"Then you will have lost nothing," the reply was blunt, blunt enough that it caused Yang to slow down a little. "You will however have the peace of mind that you tried."

It was Winter's turn to lower her arms and take a break this time; however, unlike Yang, the woman had barely broken a sweat. Taking it as a cue that the session was over, Yang also dropped her arms and let her body relax a little.
"Family is different for everyone," Winter sighed and stretched her arm before taking off the focus pads. "While my relationship with Weiss and my mother is fine, I am in a similar situation with my brother as you are with your birth mother… Though admittedly the roles are reversed."

"Yeah, uhh… Weiss mentioned that."

"He believes I do not care for him, that I have never cared for him," Winter said, and despite her clearly trying to keep her voice firm and informative, Yang could hear the very slight hint of sadness it held. "What he does not remember is me holding him when he would cry as a baby, all the times that I would put him to bed when he fell asleep playing with his toys. He does not know that I would let him follow me and Weiss into the forest to encourage his curiosities, purposely digging in my heels into the snow to make it easier for him. Yet he does remember the times I ignored him and focused more on Weiss. His perception of me is influenced by only having half the facts."

"And you're saying mine is too?"

"Tell me, Yang," Winter replied quickly and walked over to the ring where her jacket was. "From the sounds of it, you have asked your father a lot about your birth mother; but in all your questions, have you ever asked about have she treated you before she left?"

Despite knowing the answer, Yang didn't reply. She had indeed asked her father many questions, but they had all been in an attempt to find out why Raven left. Did they have a fight? Was she unhappy? Was there someone else? And to his credit, her father answered most of them, though not as many as she would like, but she had never asked anything like Winter had just asked her; and it was clear her sparring partner could tell that was the case.

"It's human nature to ask only questions that will confirm our beliefs," Winter said while pulling the jacket back on. "But to search for the answers that disprove them is how we grow and evolve."

"So I should ask him that?" Yang asked as she watched the woman walk over to the discarded water bottle and squirt a little into her mouth.

"No, you should ask her that."

"Oh."

Taking in Winter's words, Yang thought over every possible answer Raven could give. Had she really been distant like Yang always believed? Or had she been like Winter? Loving in a way that had been unseen or forgotten? But if it was the latter, did that really change anything? She still left. If she had loved her and been more compassionate than Yang believed was the case, how could she have left her behind without looking back?

"Anyway," Winter's voice rang in her head, pulling her out of her thoughts. "I must be going, I leave in two days and there are still some things I must take care of before then. But think over what I said."

"I will," Yang nodded and pulled her gloves off to shake the offered hand. "Thank you. It's actually rather nice talking with you when you're not trying to scare the shit out of me."

"Really?" Winter replied with an amused smirk. "Then it may distress you to know that had I been inclined, not a single one of your punches would have landed. Food for thought."

While the statement was clearly Winter letting her know that she could easily take her in a fight, Yang couldn't help but grin at the playful tone it was said in. After a couple of seconds however,
their hands finally parted and Winter made her way towards the door, moving aside to let someone through it. Turning back as she reached it, she gave Yang a firm look that said she meant business.

"I believe the next time I'm in town that certain things here may be much more... open," she said subtly as they were no longer alone. "So you will have no choice but to join us for dinner."

"Understood," Yang agreed, knowing that Winter's choice or words regarding the request were precise.

With that understanding taken care of, Winter left the room with little more than a wave of her hand, leaving Yang alone with the new arrival. Recognising him, she gave him a small smile and moved back over to her punching bag until the man was done with him warm-ups and ready to spar. Pulling her gloves back on, she began to gently punch the bag, thanking god that her first actual conversation with Winter had been a good one; though still a little nervous regarding both dinners that were to happen in her future.

Chapter End Notes

Hello everyone, I am back from my break... but now I'm a little ill :/

So first things first, this was going to come out last Friday, but I wanted a little extra time to get ahead on some works and also got a little caught up playing Monster Hunter World Iceborne, which is amazing. I wont harp on much about my break but it was very nice to take some time off and I thank you all for being so patient.

So as for this story, we are now moving into another big Yang arc so I hope you are excited for that, but she won't be the only one dealing with stuff. There will be someone showing up soon that may give Weiss a bit of a hard time, but I won't spoil who that is. I will say however that I will be altering something about this person because certain things just don't fit with my story, but I will let you know about those things when she (:P) is introduced. As for other stuff, there is a mini arc coming up that I am excited about, so pay attention to this arc and you may be able to figure out what that is.

Lastly, and this one is kinda important, but from now on expect some shorter chapters to be thrown into the mix. Writing 6000-8000 word chapters for this and How it feels in 1 week is rather stressful so there will be a return of the smaller 2000-3000 word chapters from now on while the bigger ones are saved for big events. This should also help me put in more 'fluff n stuff' xD

But that is it from me. I'm happy to be back uploading and a huge thank you to everyone who stuck with me during the break, the people who reviewed and checked out my other works. it all means more to me than I can say <3
Saying Goodbye

Chapter Notes

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Edited by ToxicExotic

Weiss Schnee

The silence that filled the back seat of the car was not a happy one, though it wasn't a completely sad one either. Sure, Weiss wished she didn't have to be accompanying Winter back to the military base where she wouldn't be able to see her again for what she knew would be too long. Unfortunately though, she had also gone through it so many times in the past four years that she had grown a certain acceptance to it. However, that didn't mean she enjoyed the silence.

It had been amazing having Winter back for the past few weeks. Normally her visits were only for a couple of days, sometimes a week at most, but to have her back for so long so that they could actually relax and simply enjoy catching up for once. So to have those weeks end with nothing more than a silent car ride would be incredibly unsatisfying to Weiss. Thankfully, it appeared Winter had the same idea as her voice sounded in her ear, the boredom evident in her voice.

"You're rather quiet, Sister," she sighed and absentmindedly pressed a button on the car, the heating turning on a little. "Was my stay so long that you have run out of things to say to me?"

"What? No," Weiss replied quickly, turning to look at her sister. "I just… I wish you didn't have to go."

"It's unfortunate that I do have to go," Winter replied and leaned back in her seat.

"Do you regret joining the military?" Weiss asked cautiously. The question had been on her mind for a while, especially lately as she'd gradually seen a more free-spirited side of her sister than normal over the weeks.

"I regret leaving you all behind," Winter said sadly and turned to face her, her blue eyes full of genuine remorse that quickly turned to steely resolve. "But if you mean do I wish to leave now, then no. The military has given me a purpose that I didn't have before."

"I thought you liked studying law?"

"I did, but it was more something that would allow me to escape the business. The military started off as that too, but now I can't imagine not being in service."

"Even though it still hasn't given you the freedom you wanted from Father?" Weiss asked cautiously. "You're still not able to do what you want."

"And you presume to know what that is, Sister?"

While the tone of Winter's voice wasn't angry, there was a distinct chill there that made Weiss
question whether continuing was a good idea. Was she really helping by bringing up old memories again? Was anything she said really going to make her sister stop putting her life on hold? She knew what Winter wanted, that much had been obvious whenever the topic had come up; but for all the things Winter had already fought, the woman still seemed to scared to fight for the one thing she wanted most.

"You want to see Roman," She said slowly as Winter's eyes sharpened onto her own. "I know you do."

"I want my sister to stop trying to use my past to talk me out of something she doesn't like so that I stick around longer," Winter scolded firmly, her posture stiffening. "You may not see why, but I like being in the military, Weiss. It gives me a purpose, and my actions help people."

"But what about Roman?"

"Roman and I are over," Winter replied without missing a beat; though Weiss suspected that had her voice not been so measured, there would have been far more pain present from those words. "We have been separated for over six years. I have changed a lot and I would not be surprised if he has too. Father is not the only reason I have not reached out to him. To throw away the life I am building by choice to chase the remnants of my teenage dream would be foolish."

"I'm sorry," Weiss replied and hung her head in shame. "You're right. It wasn't right for me to do that."

"No, it wasn't," the older woman said sharply, though her voice was nowhere near as stern as it had been seconds ago. Thankfully, the elder Schnee let out a sigh and rested a hand on her shoulder. "But I know you are just worried about me, so let us not have our final conversation of my visit be an argument."

Looking up from her lap, she saw that the softness had returned to her sister's eyes. Giving a brief nod, she received a small smile and the hand was removed from her shoulder.

"Good," Winter breathed and sat back in her seat, her body turned slightly to face her direction. "So what are your plans after you see me off?"

"Work," Weiss replied dully, slumping in her own seat a little at the prospect.

Ever since Christmas, that was all her life had been. Just like when she'd been reassigned to the research and development department, Weiss had spent the last couple of days pouring over everything she missed during her reappointment. In addition to that, she had decided to go back further and review things she previously gave to real attention to. With all of that work and trying to make headway with her newest project of interest, Awebern Fletch and his patent, it was incredibly difficult for her to find time to do anything else.

The worst thing about it however was that her contact with Yang had become rather limited due to all the work. If there was ever a time where Weiss wanted to be there for her girlfriend, it was when the blonde brawler's first official meeting with the woman who abandoned her was just around the corner. Weiss really wanted to be there for her, not just over the Scroll but actually be there; but with adjusting to everything in her new position, she really needed to work hard to ensure her place in the company.

"Sound rather dull; but then again, I never really did like finance side of business," Winter said with a raised brow while eyeing her carefully. "You know you can take a break to pay a certain blonde a visit, right?"
"I would love too," Weiss groaned, doubting that any words she'd ever spoken were truer. "But I need to get ahead on this before college starts and everything happens with Father."

"And you will," Winter said with certainty. "But those are the reasons to take a break and see her, so that you do not forget why you are pushing yourself. Besides, I believe she could use your company at least once before the coming day."

Feeling her eyes widen at the woman's words, Weiss looked directly at her sister with concern. Though she had talked to her a couple of times regarding her worries, she had not mentioned anything specific as it was Yang's business; but the way Winter spoke showed knowledge that she shouldn't have gleaned from those moments.

"What do y…" A firm stare cut her off and gave her the answer to the unfinished question. "You went to see her?"

"I did," She replied without remorse, though her eyes were still watching her with intrigue. "You expressed your worry, so I thought I would attempt to abate it a little since you were unable to."

"And how did it go?" Weiss asked cautiously, knowing that some kind of warning was likely given back at the town house despite Yang's assurance that nothing of the sort had happened.

"If you are asking whether I was overprotective big sister, then no," Winter smirked mischievously before letting he face fall to a more solemn one, not helping her worries a single bit. "But she is clearly a little worried, something that a visit from you may help lessen."

"But the bu…" Weiss tried to argue weakly, though she had no idea why.

"Can wait," Winter interrupted her again, this time her voice firm enough to cause a shiver to run up her back. "Trust me, Sister, not being there at such an important moment will be something you regret."

Feeling a hand on her knee, Weiss let out a deep sigh. She knew Winter was right, and she had even done what Winter was suggesting in the past; but Weiss couldn't do that much this time. While it was tempting to throw caution to the wind again at continue her work at the much warmer house and in the warm arms of her girlfriend, she was due in the office at seven in the morning so it wasn't really feasible to do so. There was also plenty of work to be done before then; so even if she did go, it could only be for thirty minutes tops. And there was a big issue with that which was only getting worse.

"I don't like the short visits," Weiss admitted while shaking her head, feeling the car begin to slow and eventually stop. "Every time I see her, I just want to stay with her. I still hate having to leave and keep us hidden from everyone. And I know that if I visit her today with what is happening tomorrow, she will want me to stay and I know I can't."

"I remember that feeling," Winter sighed fondly, placing her hand on the door handle to push it open. "And that time will come, but she needs you right now. So be there for her, like you know she would be for you."

Weiss knew Winter was right. If it was her in need, Yang would rush to her side no matter what, barring anything serious with her family, so for her to not be doing the same made her feel like she was doing something wrong. Remembering that, she realised that there was no longer a choice in what she had to do and stepped out of the car to join her sister.

Cold winds instantly greeted her, though thankfully the weather had improved a little over the last
couple of days, and stopped next to Winter as Hazel removed her luggage from the trunk of the car. From the military base that sat a small distance up the road from them, Weiss would already see to tall men walking towards them in what seemed like more rigorous form then even the military would enforce. Clearly Winter saw them too as she let out a very clear groan of disgust.

"Why is she here?" She said more to herself than to Weiss.

Confused by the words as she didn't see a woman with the two men, Weiss took a step back as they marched up to the car and spoke it what she instantly recognized as an Atlesian accent, albeit far more pompous than was believable.

"Specialist Schnee!" One man said, his eyes barely visible beneath his hat.

"Miss Schnee!" The other said with his own hat is the same position, his voice so similar to the man beside him that Weiss guessed they had to be twins.

"Tweedle, Tweedle. May I ask why you two are here in Vale and not protecting the Argus relay base?"

The weird inflection Winter put on the word *protecting* was something that definitely caught Weiss' attention. It was halfway between derision and aggrandizing, however the two men apparently didn't seem to notice anything and continued like normal.

"Special Operative Cordovin requested we bring you to her!"

"The moment you arrive!"

"Please!" both mean chorused together. "Follow us!"

Unfazed by the men, Winter simply raised an eyebrow and placed her hands behind her back. Straightening her back, her face turned to stone and she gave them a withering glance.

"I will follow you shortly," she said in a voice that would make their father second guess his actions. "Now why don't you two march back to the gate and I will go with you after I say goodbye to my sister."

There was no mistaking the inflection this time. It was a warning, plain and simple enough that even the two Tweedles in front of her clearly heard it too.

"Very well!" They both said, with a small bow before turning on their heels and marching their way back to the gate.

"Idiots," she groaned again to herself. "I really wish General Ironwood could just let that woman and her ridiculous guards go. More trouble than she is worth."

"Why can't he?" Weiss asked, curious as to why Winter would badmouth someone of higher rank than herself.

"Confidential," Winter sighed, though she did give Hazel a smile as she accepted the luggage. "Anyway, I'm afraid it is time for me to go."

"I know," She replied sadly and turned to her sister as she felt a pair of arms wrap around her. "I really wish you could stay though."

"I'm sorry, Weiss," the older woman replied and pulled away, too soon for Weiss' liking. "But
hopeful it won't be as long until my next visit. I do have another sibling that I need to start repairing my relationship with."

"That might be tough," Weiss said, knowing Winter would appreciate the honesty on the matter.

"I'm aware," She said with a nod, and leaned down to pick up her duffel bag. "But it is about time I started to make amends there. I at least hope he remembers that I said goodbye this time."

"I'm sure he will," Weiss hummed, knowing exactly how good their brothers memory was.

"I will take your word," Winter smiled and gave her one last quick hug. "But I really must go or Caroline will give me a headache for being late, though I suspect that will be the case regardless."

Even through her sadness, Weiss couldn't help but smile at Winter complaining about a higher up. Unfortunately, the smile quickly faded as her sister too a step towards the gate and turned around.

"It was good to see you again, Winter," She said sadly and resisted the urge to run over and hug the woman again to stop her from leaving.

"Likewise," the woman replied and slung the bad over her shoulder and took a step backwards. "Until next time, Sister."

"Goodbye."

Giving Winter a small wave before the woman turned and walked towards the gate of the base, Weiss watched her older sister walk through and disappear from sight. The feeling of loss immediately washed over her and it was with no small amount of sadness that she returned to her seat in the car. Feeling the tears start to fall down her cheek, she quickly wiped them away and let herself shrink into the soft leather.

"Where too, Miss Schnee?" Hazel said as he got into the front seat, his voice notably softer than usual.

Having been asked the question in her current saddened state, there was only one real answer than she wanted; an answer that would at the very least make both her and Yang happy for a little while. So wiping away another tears that fell down her cheek, she coughed to clear her throat.

"To her, please Hazel."

Chapter End Notes

Hello. So as I said last chapter, there will be a few smaller ones coming out every now and again. And this is one of them. I really would like to keep up the 5k word chapters, but writing both this and How It Feels on a 10 day schedule for each leads to a lot of stress and worry that I wont get them done; especially when it comes to big deal chapters that need to be longer than 5k words. And I am actually writing two big chapter now (Chapter 14 for How It Feels, and chapter 40 for this story)

That being said, whenever there is a small chapter like this, I will at least try and give you a hint for the next chapter to make up for it a little. So the next chapter is done already and is just over 4k words which is where I try to normally keep them. The title is 'An Old Friend Returns' so make of that what you will :P
Anyways, onto the notes for this actual chapter, of which there are few. I mainly just wanted to end the Winter arc out properly and have her seen off while helping Weiss overcome something one last time. She will likely not return for the story properly, but like others, she may make an appearance here and there.

But that's it from me. I know it was short, but I hope you enjoyed nonetheless.
An Old Friend Returns

Chapter Summary

Yang deals with the last minute jitters before her meeting with Raven

Chapter Notes

Semi-Important notes at the end

Disclaimer: All characters belong to Rooster Teeth Productions

Edited by ToxicExotic

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Yang Xiao Long

"Still looking at that Bella-Booty, huh?"

Wrapping her arm around Ilia's shoulder as the girl's freckles turn a blazing red, Yang chuckled and looked over to where the small chameleon Faunus kept glancing out of the corner of her eye. Though they were the same age, Ilia had always been rather short. In fact, the girl was almost as short as Weiss. The girl had also always been infatuated with Blake, more so than Yang was back in the day. Blake was aware of it of course just like she apparently was about Yang's crush, though the attempted kiss by Ilia years ago was a bigger giveaway, but had never done anything to turn Ilia away or tease her. That didn't mean Ilia didn't steal the same glances Yang once did. And though Yang was very happy with Weiss, even she had to admit that Blake bent over the table talking to Sun was still a sight to beholding.

"And I see you haven't changed one bit?"

"Excuse me," Yang laughed, unable to even pretend to be insulted. "I have changed a lot. I no longer even look at the Bella-Booty."

"Idiot," Ilia scoffed and knocked her arm away as she busied herself with cleaning a table in an attempt to hide her continually reddening freckles.

"I'm messing with you," Yang chuckled, sitting down in one of the chairs and shrugging her jacket off. "It's good to see you again though. How's Menagerie, and your Grandma?"

"Gran is doing better now that her leg has healed," Ilia replied while stacking cups together. "I miss the heat of Menagerie already though."

"Not to mention you were on the beach every day," Yang sighed longingly, wishing for a beach visit in her near future. Maybe with Weiss. "I'm jealous already. Sun, sand, Bikinis..."

"Since when have you ever needed a beach to wear a bikini?" Ilia interrupted with a smirk.
"Excuses to show off this body are always nice," Yang countered with a shrug, causing the smaller girl to shake her head.

"Told you that you haven't changed," Ilia chuckled and slung the cloth over her shoulder.

Standing up and helping Ilia by picking up the large tray of empty cups, Yang followed her friend into the backroom where she placed the tray on the side to wash when she officially started her shift. Turning around, she saw Ilia dragging a large pack of coffee from the bottom drawer.

"So how you finding being back in Vale so far?" She asked with a smile, hooking her foot around her chair and dragging it out to sit back down. "You feeling at home? Or are you an Island Girl now?"

"It's louder than I remember," Ilia laughed as she picked up the bag, her strength surprising considering the girl's size. "But I'm looking forward to catching up with the groups again."

"I bet the ones in Menagerie are much different," Yang replied, shifting a little as she blocked out what Ilia continuing her group work meant.

"Not really," Ilia shrugged, letting out a sigh as she shifted the heavy bag to her shoulder. "Only real difference is that the people there had to move away to escape it."

"I guess that's true," Yang said mumbled.

"Anyway, I'm gunna get these to Blake and then head upstairs for my break since I'm still kinda jetlagged," the girl groaned and made her way towards the door. "We'll catch up properly when I get back."

"No problem, Rainbow," she grinned as Ilia left the room.

However, once the girl left the room, Yang's smile dropped and she let out a loud sigh. It wasn't that she didn't like Ilia, in fact the girl was one of her closest friends and she loved her like a sister; but her being in Menagerie helping her grandmother recover had certainly helped avoid certain situations. With her return though, future things would become a little more difficult and there was a conversation she would certainly need to have the next time she saw her girlfriend. Though that wasn't the only conversation in her near future, and was much less of a concern than the other.

In less than twenty-four hours, she was due to meet Raven.

The mere thought made Yang shiver. In less than twenty-four hours she would be face to face with the woman who gave birth to her, the woman that had stolen her away from her father only to later return and leave her on the doorstep. A woman who had returned only once since that day and barely said a word to her.

I am being an idiot for giving her another chance? Yang asked herself, not for the first time that day; nor even that week. Letting out a deep groan as she stood up and began to fill the sink, she gripped the side and bent over. She was tired of feeling like she did. Scared, like she would find out the woman had only arrived to tell her she wasn't worth it… If she even showed up. Despite the talk with Winter days earlier, the thoughts had been growing increasingly persistent, invading her mind during every free moment she had. For every reasonable counter she tried to give the thoughts, her demons always had the perfect retort.

Why would she take me with her if she hadn't cared?

She brought you back.
Maybe she had too?

**You were her daughter.**

I was a baby, what could I have done wrong?

**Some people are just born unlovable.**

Why am I tormenting myself with this?

**Because you are too weak to accept she just didn't want you.**

Every question she asked to calm her mind was turned on her and she hated it. She hated herself for it being her mind that gave the answers. Her doubts. Her fears. *Hers.*

Hearing the thin metal sink groan under her tightening fingers, Yang felt her breath shudder and let go. She was done crying. Too many nights had ended in doubtful tears lately. She hated crying in general, having felt she should have outgrown such actions long ago. So with a begrudging sniffle, she pulled her phone from her pocket and put on her playlist to listen to, hoping that the loud strums of guitars and beating of drums that immediately flooded her mind as she put in her headphones would be enough to keep her mind clear in the lonely back room.

Blake had offered her the day off of course, but she'd turned it down as she wanted to stay busy. Thankfully though, the breakfast rush had just ended so there were likely to be very few food orders, which meant Blake would actually come into the back and tell her if anything was needed instead of tapping on the door. So with one final sigh, she turned off the tap and went about her business sorting out her area.

Letting herself get lost in her music, Yang slowly went about her usual start of shift routine. After washing up the cups and trays she had brought in earlier, she moved over to rearranging everything in the fridge to how she liked it. While Blake and Ghira usually understood that Yang liked her work space a certain way, Kali often had a tendency to move things around. Yang recognised it of course, the clear sign of someone who tended to be the housekeeper keeping their things straight; but with Ilia back at the shop, the fridge was a mess.

After thirty minutes of pulling everything out and returning it to the proper spot, Yang was back sitting on her stool with her head in her arms. Though the small amount of distraction had been nice, she had made quick work of it and wished she'd taken a little longer as since she had finished with the task her mind had once again began worrying. And just like always, the effect of the loud music was fading and she was struggling to push the thoughts away. However, as she once again began to asked herself the same questions, she felt something move on either side of her waist and a warm body press against her back. While Yang tensed for a brief second, silky white hair that appeared in the corner of her eye immediately put her at ease, a sense of relief rushing through her as the pair of headphones were gently tugged from her ears by the cord.

"I missed you," said the comfortingly familiar voice of her girlfriend, though Yang picked up a little strain in it.

"I missed you too," Yang replied gently, know what would have caused Weiss' voice to be a little rough. "Did you see Winter off?"

A slight nod of the woman's head was the reply as Weiss' arms wrapped a little tighter around Yang's waist. Reaching down, Yang took one of Weiss' hands in her own and leaned her head back a little, her ponytail pushing against the sullen heiress' shoulder.
"I hate seeing her go."

"I know."

A blissful silence fell upon them, and unlike the lonely silence before, Yang found her mind free of doubts. Weiss was there. The woman she loved, the woman who loved her. The walking contradiction of every doubt her brain had been throwing at her over the past few days had her arms wrapped around her waist. After a minute or two though, a small breath escaped the woman.

"I can't stay long," She said quietly and despite knowing that was likely the case, Yang felt a little sad nonetheless. "How are you doing?"

"Coping," Yang replied softly and fiddled with Weiss' fingers. "Sort of."

"Hey."

Yang felt the arms around her loosen, and while the urge to grab then and not let Weiss leave arose, it quickly died down as Weiss slipped between her and the desk to sit on her lap; an arm raising up to slide behind Yang's neck and slowly play with her hair.

"What's on your mind?"

"I just…" Swallowing the lump in her throat, Yang gazed into the shining blue eyes of her girlfriend and found a source of courage that helped her continue. "I hate that I need to know, that I can't just be strong enough to ignore this. I hate that I can't shake this feeling of being unlovable when I know plenty of people do love me. Meeting Raven tomorrow is just making them worse and I can't get rid of the thoughts."

"Hmm," The hum was gentle and understanding. "I'm sorry, consoling is more your thing so I don't know how to stop those thoughts. But I can say you are absolutely loved. Me, Ruby, Blake, Tai. Summer. You have a family who loves you more than you could ever know. Just keep remembering that, okay."

"And if you ever need reminding, you call me immediately."

Weiss was right, she wasn't the best at consoling people. Everything she'd said were things Yang had been trying to tell herself the whole week. But for some reason it helped a little. Whether it was someone else confirming it or the fact it was Weiss, Yang didn't know; but she felt a faint smile pull at her lips. To show how much it meant to her, she leaned in to press her lips against Weiss' and as met by what she knew had to be the softest, most caring kiss they had shared. There was no heat that went rushing through her, no exhilaration or desire, simply reassurance. It was that feeling that also made it the hardest to pull away from, reassurance being exactly what she craved above all things at that moment. But unfortunately, as much as she would love to spend the afternoon kissing Weiss under normal circumstances, the woman's presence was more than enough for her.

"Thank you," Yang breathed as their lips finally parted. "For being here for my mini freak out… Again."

"You are the woman I love," Weiss replied simply, resting her forehead against hers. "You never have to thank me. I know I can't always rush to your side like you can for me, or stay the night, and believe me when I say there is nothing more that I want than to do that tonight, but I will always be here for you if you need to talk."

Weiss' free hand motioned to Yang's Scroll that still rested on her lap between them. Getting the
hint, Yang gave her an understanding nod and captured the pointing hand with her own. Another silence settled over them, just as blissful as the last, and Yang spent the time peacefully running her thumb over the back of the pale woman's hand. There was always something peaceful about the silences with Weiss, the same thing that she loved about the young Schnee in general. She never had to be energetic or excitable as Weiss enjoyed silences, so every now and then Yang was able to simply let go and let the peaceful atmosphere envelop her.

"So how was it saying goodbye to Winter?" She asked after a couple of minutes, keeping her voice low as she knew Winter leaving was something just as painful for Weiss.

"It sucked," Weiss sighed, her head falling to rest on the shoulder of the arm slung around Yang's neck. "I just wish she could stay."

"She probably does too," Yang replied, receiving a small look from her girlfriend. "Call it a sister's intuition."

"Mhm," Weiss hummed, her head dropping again as she nuzzled in a little closer. "Don't suppose you picked up that intuition from her visit the other day?"

"She told you about that, huh?" Yang breathed and wrapping her free arm around Weiss, who gave a nod in reply. "A little, I guess. Didn't really need that to know how much she cares for you though."

"I know, still just sucks to see her go," Despite the sadness in Weiss' words, a small smile stretched across her face as her head turn upwards a little to look her in the eye. "But at least I have your Christmas gift."

A small smile tugged at her own lips as she stared down at her girlfriend.

"Yeah, well," She replied, unable to keep the pride from her voice. "I'm glad you like it. Especially since you have no idea what I did to get it."

"I read that in your note," Weiss chuckled, the melodic song doing wonders for Yang's spirit. "Do I dare to ask what that was?"

"I'll spare you the nightmares," Yang said facetiously, as the actual drawing Blake had her do wasn't as bad as she'd feared. "If she hadn't let me have it though, no idea what I would have done."

"A text would have been enough."

"But I do that every morning."

"And waking up to a text from you is the highlight of my morning," Weiss countered, the honesty evident in her voice as the girl stuck her tongue out.

Yang wasn't dumb. She knew Weiss was trying to get her mind off of Raven and though it was working for the most part, the meeting with the woman was still there. However, even if it was only a little, it was still working; so letting a wider smile take over her face, she leaned down and lightly kissed her girlfriend.

The minutes passed with pleasant conversation and scattered kisses, each minute soothing Yang's mind more and more. Weiss told her of the work she was doing now that she had returned to her old department, and while in truth Yang found most of it boring, Weiss seemed to be proud of what she was doing, so Yang was easily able to find some interest. Blake popped her head in at some point to relay a food order, so Weiss had reluctantly removed herself from what had been a rather
comfortable position for the two. Yang had tried to hold on to her a little longer, but the lithe woman had easily wiggled out of her grasp with a joyous laugh.

Placing the lid back on the butter and putting it back into the fridge, Yang turned around to see Weiss leaning against the far counter, her eyes watching her every move with intrigue. Squinting with a slight smile, she shut the fridge and cocked her head to silently ask what was so interesting. The answer she received however was much more simple than she expected.

"I love watching you work," she said quietly, like her words could break the moment if said too loud.

"It's not exactly the most glamorous thing," Yang chuckled back and wiped down her counter.

"I don't care," Weiss replied with a smile of her own. "You seem more con…"

Before Weiss could finish her sentence, the door to the stairway opened. And much to her dismay, Ilia stood in the archway. Weiss fell silent immediately in the presence of the unknown person and Yang felt herself tense, for good reason. Though Ilia seemed to be unaware she had been walking in on anything at first, she clearly recognized that there were more people in the room than she expected. Her eyes flicked immediately to Weiss and Yang held her breath, hoping to gods that had never aided her before that Ilia wouldn't recognize her. For a few seconds, Yang thought that maybe they were on her side for once, but then exactly what she expected happened.

It was gradual at first, but as Ilia's eyes flickered between the faint smile on Weiss' face and what Yang knew was her own obviously nervous expression, the telltale signs quickly sped up. In seconds, Ilia's eyes, freckles and hair had changed to a pale yellow and a quivering sneer pulled at her face. While Yang's wasn't afraid Ilia would do anything, she still found it important to pull herself together and take a step forward.

"Ilia, she…"

BANG!

The sound of the door Ilia had came through echoed around the kitchen as it was slammed shut, quickly followed by the loud stamping of feet up the stairs. Closing her eyes and letting out a deep breath, Yang swore inwardly and turned back to Weiss. Opening her eyes, she saw that the heiress' smile was completely gone, replaced with a look of confusion. Knowing she would have to answer, she shook her head and sat down on her chair.

"Sorry about that."

"Okay?" Weiss replied, her voice making it even more obvious that she had no idea what had just happened. "And that was?"


"I know she is a friend of yours," Weiss replied, straightening herself to show she had recognised the difference in atmosphere. "There is a picture of you, her, and Blake on your bedroom wall. I was more curious about that reaction? I know Schnees are not loved by the Faunus, but that is more anger than I have experienced in some time."

"Ilia is… Complicated," Yang replied honestly, leaning forward on her arm. "She's… When she was young, her parents died."

"I'm still confused? What does that have to do..."
"They died in a Schnee mine," Yang interrupted quickly, daring only to look up once. Though once was enough to see Weiss' face fall. "They were from Mantle. One day the mine shaft they were working in collapsed, and they didn't make it out. She moved to Vale to live with her grandma after that."

Weiss was silent for a couple of minutes, but eventually Yang saw the woman's arms fold and an aura of power exuded from her. Clearly Weiss could tell there was something more.

"What else?" Weiss asked firmly, no anger in her voice, but unwavering nonetheless. Yang didn't reply straight away, nervous as to how Weiss would take the news, but Weiss quickly put an end to that. "Yang! We promised no more hiding things."

Letting out a deep sigh and leaning back to face her, Yang looked into her girlfriend's eyes.

"She was in the White Fang with me and Blake. And she didn't exactly, completely leave."

Weiss' eyebrow raised the moment the final words had left Yang's mouth, and wanting to explain the situation fully, she rose from her chair and took a step towards the small woman; who somehow seemed a hundred feet tall.

"But I swear, it's nothing like that. She left that part behind with us, but stayed to help people."

"Help people?"

"Yes," Yang replied quickly to what she thought was a disbelieving tone. "She helps run support groups to give back for every one she went to growing up. They don't promote violence or anything, they're just places for people who are feeling distressed can go and talk. They even set up interviews and stuff for those struggling to find jobs."

"Do you not see how this complicates things?"

"I do," replied quickly and reached for Weiss' hand, thankful that it wasn't pulled away. "Trust me I do. Affiliation with the White Fang makes things harder for us to come out to your father, but she is as far from that part of it as you can be without leaving. She isn't exactly fond of your family, but I promise she is a good person. Just like me and Blake."

Weiss' eyes bored into hers and for the first time that day, Yang was unable to make out what she was thinking. While there wasn't anger there, doubt was definitely present. To show she was being honest, Yang maintained her eye contact for as long as would be needed. Finally though, Weiss moved her eyes away and let out a sigh of her own.

"Today is not the day for this discussion," She said firmly with a shake of her head.

"Are you mad at me?"

"No," Weiss replied quickly, the thin fingers clasping her tighter. "But I wish you hadn't kept this from me. You being a former member is complicated enough, but being friends with someone who still calls themselves a member makes things tougher. I need to think on how to deal with this."

"Oh... O-Okay."

Hearing Weiss let out a sigh, she felt the snowy-haired girl's hand press against her cheek and instinctively leaned into it. Glancing back into the pale blue eyes, she saw they had dropped their ice and regained some of their heat.
"I just said I'm not mad," she said comfortingy. "Your meeting with Raven is tomorrow and you need to relax before it. I need to think about how we'll handle this when the media finds out. And then we'll discuss this, okay?"

"Okay."

"Good," Weiss whispered quietly and pulled her down to place a short lived kiss on her lips. "But I do have to go now. I have work."

"You leaving after this feel wrong," Yang voiced, knowing Weiss likely shared her thoughts. "Your visit was almost perfect."

"It still was. I got to see you again, after all." Biting her lips, Weiss' fingers fiddled with a lock of her hair as thoughts clearly rushing through her mind. After a couple of seconds though, the fog of though faded and Weiss gave her a decisive stare. "But to make up for this part, I will do my best to make sure that the next time you see me, you will see me till morning."

Taken aback by what Yang knew was a promise, she gave a very quick nod in response and pressed her lips against her girlfriend's.

"Deal."

"Good. I love you, nothing is going to change that."

"I love you too."

After one last kiss, they pulled away from each other and Weiss made her way to the door. With a small wave and a promise to call later, she left and Yang was once again alone. While it was not the full conversation and had happened much sooner than she liked, telling her about Ilia had gone much smoother than she would have put money on. Though that was unfortunately only for Weiss.

She couldn't tell Ilia the truth about her relationship with Weiss, but she would have to at the very least explain their friendship. Given Ilia's past, Yang knew that was going to be difficult; but the girl wasn't unreasonable. Stubborn, but still able to see sense. So letting out a groan knowing she should get it done as soon as possible, she placed her towel on the counter and made her way to the front of the store to inform Blake of her impromptu break.

Chapter End Notes

Hello everyone, like I said a little longer this week. You also finally get to see one of the new characters added this month who I am looking forward to writing. I won't spoil anything that is upcoming, but I will say she is going to be a challenge for Weiss. I also need to explain something about Ilia in this series. In the show, Ilia can change the color of her whole body, but I don't feel that fits in my world. Blake does have cat hearing and night vision, but full body color change just feels off. So for this story, her trait will be limited to her freckles/arm scale, her eyes, and her hair.

I also wanted a little more Weiss and Yang before Raven since they haven't actually been in the same room since before Chapter 35. The main focus of this chapter however is Yang's fears. Abandonment is tough to write so hopefully I did it rather well here. That being said, I do want to touch upon the next chapter, which is the
Raven chapter.

Raven is also a character who had certain themes that don't fit in a non-RWBY world. So because of that, I am pulling from a certain scene and certain issues Raven has and building the character around that. I'm trying not to stray too far from who she is in the show and she is still going to be a tough thing for Yang, but she won't be completely 1-to-1 with the show.

Anyway, that's it from me. I just wanted to explain a few things regarding some changes I felt were necessary to lay out. Hopefully they don't make you feel differently as I personally don't feel they are that big. But I hope you enjoyed this chapter. The next chapter will be over 10k words so there is plenty of Raven coming for you.
Blake Belladonna

Sat on her stool behind the counter, Blake watched the door intently out of the corner of her eye while pretending to read a book. She rarely worked on Saturdays, the rare free day usually spent with Sun, but this Saturday was different. She was expecting someone, somehow a person she loathed more than most. Someone who shouldn't even have bothered coming back to town in her opinion. But that was her opinion, and one she wouldn't speak out loud unless specifically asked.

Blake loved Yang. No, that wasn't quite right. It was a connection that went deeper than love. Yang was like her sister, so deeply ingrained in her life that should she be gone, Blake would never be the same. So to see the girl in pain over the days since her return from Menagerie, a trip she couldn't put off, hurt her more than she could have thought. She had seen first hand how hard it had been for Yang after her thirteenth, how the doubts that had already been there grew and grew to the point where Yang occasionally broke down when they were alone. She'd seen the anger it gave birth to, the desire to push everyone away and stay as she thought she should be. Unloved.

But none of that had worked on her.

No matter what Yang did or said, she never stopped loving her. The girl had been her rock when she had first moved to Vale, treated her like family from the very first moment and it was a family Blake was honored to be a part of. She still regretted getting Yang involved in her own anger, the dark days of the White Fang and the troubles it was now causing her with Weiss. And no matter how much Yang assured her that it wasn't her fault, the guilt remained.

So as she heard the door open and looked properly, she felt the hairs on the back of her neck stand up at the sight of a woman standing in the doorway. Tall and leather clad, her hair wild like Yang's, but black as night. The woman was Yang's spitting image in almost every way that mattered. Yet she was nothing like the girl she'd given birth too. And to Blake, she would never be.

Blake had made mistakes and caused a dark spot on Yang's life, but she had never left. This woman had. Twice. She'd returned once only to leave again and caused Yang far more pain than if she had simply stayed away. So as she walked towards the counter, Blake returned her gaze to her book and tried to keep the sneer from her face.
"Hello."

The voice was bland. Dry. None of her daughters charm or joy, a joy that had taken years to return. It was a voice Blake was happy to pretend she had not heard.

"Hello?" The woman tried again, this time more firmly.

"What do you want?" She replied, not bothering to keep the annoyance from her voice as she looked up from her book, her gaze meeting the harsh red eyes of Raven Branwen.

Raven didn't reply immediately, but Blake held the gaze nonetheless as the pools of scarlet surveyed her carefully. After a couple of seconds, recognition passed across them.

"I know yo…"

"I asked what you wanted?" Blake cut her off, not wanting to indulge the woman in conversation for even a second.

"Tea," Raven replied, her voice perking up slightly as if something had interested her.

Not wasting a second so that the woman would leave her sight as fast as possible, Blake threw a tea bag into a pot and held it under the tap that spewed boiling water. Unfortunately, as she was pouring the milk, the woman chose to speak again.

"You're a friend of my daughter's?"

"She is not your daughter," Blake spat, unable to control herself as her glare returned to Raven who simply raised her head a little higher. "You haven't earned the right to call her that."

"Maybe."

That was her last word. Once the tea was done, she took the tray and took a seat at a far table; though still a couple of countries too close for Blake's liking. Finally letting the sneer form on her face, she turned on her heel and made her way into the back room.

"Blake?" Ilia asked immediately, clearly noticing something was wrong. "Are you…"

Stopping in front of the smaller Faunus, Blake gave her a measured look and spoke very clearly.

"Twenty-four hours," She said in an unwavering voice, earning a confused look from her friend. "For the next twenty-four hours, the issue you and Yang were arguing about last night does not exist. Understood?"

Obviously Ilia saw how serious she was as her freckles tinted blue, a brief nod showing her compliance. Blake hated to see that, hated to cause such a reaction. She knew how Ilia felt for her and had promised to never use it against her. But this was for Yang, and for her she would give anything; even adding one more thing to beat herself up over later to the already long list.

With little more than a short nod, Blake strode past Ilia and wrestled open the door to the stairway and sprinted up them, only to stop at the top. She couldn't walk in to see Yang like this, an angry, shaking mess. No, Yang was already far too nervous as it was. So taking a deep breath to calm herself, even if only a little, Blake waited a minute before she reached out a shivering hand and pushed the door open.
"She's here."

Two words. Two words were all it took for a large crack to appear in the resolve she had spent three hours building up. Three hours of telling herself it would be fine, of Weiss' messages telling her it would be fine, yet two words were still enough to threaten to crumble everything. She had practised, spent the morning practicing what she would say and ask, but suddenly they all felt wrong. The questions felt hollow and childish, the statements selfish. All the things that had caused Raven to leave without a word before.

Will that happen again? Yang asked herself, still not looking up as she found the darkness that the palms of her hands offered was rather comforting in the way that she could pretend nothing existed, and that no-one could see her in such a state. But just as every time she tried to let herself get lost in that swirling void of nothingness, she felt a hand rest lovingly on her shoulder.

"Yang," Blake's voice said gently, the slight dip of the couch to her right indicating her best friend had sat beside her. "If you don't want to do this, I can get rid of her?"

Despite her doubts, Yang instantly shook her head. That wasn't what she wanted at all. She wanted to see her, wanted it over with. She wanted to know the answers to the questions she'd had for so long and she couldn't do that if she kept putting it off.

"I-I need this," she stammered, finally removing her hands from her face and looking at her best friend. "I know I should be fine without it, but…"

"I get it," Blake smiled and removed her hand. "But she's not worth you tearing yourself up."

"I know," she sighed, giving Blake a small nod. Sniffling slightly, she urged herself to her feet and straightened her jacket. "I guess there's only one way to put an end to that then."

Blake hesitated slightly before standing to join her with a soft smile, but before Yang could even move towards the door, the Faunus stepped forward and gave her a firm hug. Completely unsurprised, Yang returned it happily and wrapped her arms around Blake's shoulder.

No words were spoken, but there didn't need to be; instead she allowed herself to enjoy the moment. She held her there for almost a minute, enjoying the feeling of love that was radiating from the girl, the unspoken confirmation that she would be there no matter what happened. But after a while, she knew she had to end the hug and confront her birth mother. So pulling away from her sister, she placed a hang on her cheek and stroked a thumb along her cheekbone.

"Thank you," breathed and dropped her hand after receiving a smile and a nod from Blake. "I guess I should go see her now."

"I'll come down with you, I'm still on the clock anyway."

As she walked to the door and pulled it open, Yang took a deep breath and slowly let it out. Her pre-fight preparation technique had been offering her some reprieve from the doubts, not much but something was better than nothing. At the very least, it was stopping the stairs from wobbling all over the place as they had earlier that morning. Pushing her way into the kitchen, she saw Ilia preparing something on the side and was instantly drawn to the slight blue tint of her hair and freckles.

Yang knew all of the chameleon Faunus' colours. Yellow for anger, black for shyness, and pink for embarrassment were all among the most common; but blue was sadness, a colour that was very...
hard to bring out in her. In fact, there were only a few reasons Ilia would ever feel like that. One of which had just walked through the door behind her. From the way Ilia pointedly looked away and the blue deepened, Yang quickly put together that Blake had likely said something regarding the previous night's argument about Weiss and let out a deep sigh. She hated what Blake did for her sometimes, not because she didn't appreciate it, but because the sullen Faunus often spent days beating herself up for it. So as she came to the door that lead out into the store, she stopped and turned to look at Blake.

"Whatever you said to Ilia, please apologise," she whispered, her words little more than a breath so that only Blake could hear, the girl's face falling instantly.

"I will."

Giving a slight nod of thanks, Yang took another breath and placed her hand on the door to the store. She'd walked through it thousands of times. Most of the time it had been work, meaningless calls to make food or serve a customer, other times it had been for moments she now cherished, such as walking out to see Weiss for the first time. But never had she struggled to open the door like she was.

With every bit of pressure she applied to make the door move, nothing happened except her heart rate picking up slightly. She knew what was on the other side, who was there and her body seemed unwilling to make that final push. Thankfully, Blake was there to help, just as she always was. The girl's long fingers wrapped around her own on the handle, and feeling a burst of confidence, she tried again to open the door and was happy to find that it was no longer heavier than a block of iron.

As it opened and the sounds of the patrons drifted through, Yang found herself trying to pick out her voice among them, knowing it was foolish as she'd only ever heard a couple of words and there was likely no-one for her to talk to in the store anyway. But she listened nonetheless. She listened all the way until the door opened and the store came into view. From her current position, she couldn't see Raven, so before her doubt could cripple her again, she took a deep breath and stepped out.

That was all she needed. The second she stepped out of the backroom and into the soft yellow light, and glanced around the room, a woman in black and red leather stood out like a sore thumb among the other diners. Her black hair was almost identical to her own, even down to those couple of strands at the very top that refused to stay down. The woman's face was even more like her own than Yang remembered, and even with the few wrinkles around the eyes, eye that had already locked onto hers, Yang knew that no-one would ever doubt that they were related.

A weird energy pulsed through her as she stared into the deep, scarlet eyes of the woman who had abandoned her. It wasn't like the earlier nerves and doubts, though those were definitely still there, but something more akin to what she felt before a fight. Adrenaline. The same thing that tore through her when Adam had cornered her and Blake years ago. Clearly her body had finally caught up to her brain on understanding that before was something she couldn't run from, and had begun to respond in kind. As usual, she felt herself shake a little, but thankfully it was much easier to walk.

With small steps, she slowly made her way around the counter towards the woman, her heart racing faster as she approached. When she got close, Raven stood up and removed a white motorcycle helmet from the table. She rides a motorbike? She couldn't help but think to herself, wondering if their mutual interest was just a coincidence.

"You actually came."
It was one of the many thoughts she'd had over the weeks, the idea that she could wait in the shop all day for nothing, that Raven would simply decide against meeting and not show up. Therefore Yang wasn't so surprised that the words fell from her before she could stop them, but she was surprised to hear the relief in her voice. Did she really care that much that Raven had shown up for once? Either way, clearly Raven heard it too as her face fell into a frown for a fraction of a second.

"I deserve that," the woman said, her voice higher than Yang expected. Or remembered.

It wasn't an apology, but at least it was an admission that she'd done something to earn some doubt. Yang swore she could see some regret as she looked into the woman's eyes, but she was sure that was just her imagination.

"Should we s…"

"Wait!" Yang interrupted, knowing she needed to clear something up before they sat down. Even if it was for her own sake. "I-I need… I need to say something first."

Raven replied with a simple nod as she sat down herself, an intrigued look in her harsh, red eyes. Taking a deep breath, Yang release it and began what she had practiced in the mirror for hours the night before.

"I… I'm glad you came, I want to hear you out and see what happens, but I need you to understand something. No matter what happens here, or in the future, Summer will always be my mom. Nothing can change that."

Raven kept eye contact with her as she spoke, the scarlet so deep the someone could be forgiven for thinking they were bleeding. The woman's brow furrowed a little more with each word but thankfully she didn't interrupt, obviously aware that Yang was serious. In fact, once Yang finished her statement, Raven closed her eyes for a second before opening them with a nod.

"I expected as much," She said, a slight undertone to her voice that Yang didn't recognise. "But you should understand that I am not going to attempt to be Summer. That isn't who I am."

The second line was said differently than the first and Yang clearly recognised the undertone this time. Resentment. For what? Yang had no idea. But maybe it had something to do with the betrayal her dad had talked about when she'd asked why Raven left. Nonetheless, she would hopefully find out the rest of that story soon.

"I don't expect you to be," Yang replied, pulling out the spare chair and sitting down while Raven placed the helmet on the floor.

"Good," Raven replied as she sat back up and poured herself some tea, offering the pot out to Yang who refused. "Then we are on the same page."

It wasn't said with any force or inflection, but Yang could tell the acknowledgements they had just shared were important ones for them both to remember. Tai had said that getting to know Raven would be tough, that everything with her was difficult, and with just their few shared words alone she could tell that was the truth. Fortunately, as she had no idea how to continue, she was saved having to by Blake, who wordlessly handed her a drink with a smile.

"Thanks," Yang said, neither her or Raven missing the filthy look that was thrown towards the older woman and Blake left.

"I see your friend doesn't like me," Raven said simply, taking a sip of her tea.
"That's an understatement," Yang thought to herself as she took a sip of the lovely strawberry hot chocolate that Blake only bought for her. While Blake had never told Yang her true feelings toward Raven over the years, Yang knew. The thinly-veiled contempt at the mention of her name and how she would always say Raven didn't deserve her anyway were enough to show her true feelings. Still, Yang appreciated Blake's refusal to straight up admit it as it indicated she understood that a part of Yang did care about the woman before her.

"No, she doesn't," Yang replied honestly, taking another sip of her drink and placing it on the table. "She has her reasons."

"Mhm," Raven hummed, again not denying those reasons, but quickly moving on from them with a sigh. "I'm sure you have many questions for me, Yang…"

"I do…"

"And I will answer them in time," Raven finished firmly, taking another sip of her drink. "But I think you deserved the answer to what is likely your biggest one right now."

Raven didn't speak straight away, the silence making it clear that she was waiting for Yang to confirm her suspicion of what that question was. Fortunately, it was an easy one to confirm.

"Why you left?"

"Yes," Raven said simply and leaned forward a little. "I feel it important to tell you this first as it will likely decide whether this sit down continues or not." Raven paused again, though this time it was different from the last and Yang knew she should stay quiet for it. Finally resolve took hold of Raven's gaze and she let out a deep breath. "And as much as I want it to continue this lunch, you may not feel the same after hearing my side of the story. I won't deny that you may find it selfish, or that you may think I am lying, but I promise your father will corroborate everything I say."

"So if you are ready, I am ready to tell you what caused me to leave all those years ago and let your decide where we go from there. I am intruding on your life, after all."

Yang looked at the woman in shock. She had expected it to take time to get to that question, small talk and bonding and whatever else it took; but here she was offering the answer freely. And she didn't know if she wanted it. By Raven's own admission the tale was a selfish one, maybe one that she wouldn't even like if Raven was saying she should confirm it with Tai. Did she really want that? Would it really make her fee… NO! She shouted in her own head. This was what she wanted. The reason, the truth, no matter how hard it was to hear. She was tired of the not knowing, of the illusions her mind conjured to tease her. And this was her only way out of that. So with a deep breath of her own, she gave a small nod of her head.

"Okay."

"Okay then," Raven said and leaned back in her chair. "I guess I should start from the beginning."

With one last sip of her drink, Raven set the cup down and let out a deep sigh.

"I'm not sure how much your father has told you about me, nor how much my brother has spoken about our childhood, but my guess would be not at all."

"Dad said your father was abusive," Yang said slowly, remembering her father has hinted at there being more than that.

"An understatement," Raven said, the pain behind her voice clear. "Mine and my brother's father
was a vile man. His ideal afternoon consisted of beating me and Qrow while drinking whiskey, depending on the day he replaced his beatings with... other things."

Yang swallowed deeply. From the way her father had phrased it, she had already figured out what Raven's father had done, but that didn't stop hearing it again making her feel any less sick. No matter her feelings towards Raven and Qrow, no-one should ever have such an upbringing.

"He made a point to remind us that we were nothing. That everyone but him only wanted to hurt use us, that they didn't care and would turn on us the second they didn't want us anymore. And for years we believed him. We kept quiet about how things were at home, stayed away from social workers and counselors, covered our skin to hide the bruises. We barely interacted with anyone through grade school and middle school, and were determined to do the same with high school. But that didn't happen."

"The first few weeks of high school were normal. We avoided everyone and stuck to ourselves. But while I was content with that, Qrow had begun to develop an interest in journalism. He started to spend more time studying it and eventually went to look at the school's journalism club. That's where he met Summer. It was love at first sight for him."

Yang's eyes widened a little at that news as Raven picked up her drink to take another sip. She knew Qrow had been close with her parents before Summer's death and that he frequently argued with Tai afterwards; but she'd never thought that Qrow ever had feelings for Summer.

"I told him he was stupid, that he didn't know her and reminded him of our father's lessons. But he didn't listen, he joined and even dragged me to the meetings. It was through Summer that we eventually met your father. He was already rather popular, being the newest member of the basketball team and having the skater boy charm that was so popular back then. Despite my own hesitancy, he interested me. He had a way of being free and not caring about what people thought that I couldn't resist. But even though we all began to hang out at school and even the few times we could sneak ways from home, I still couldn't bring myself to trust him fully. That changed in our junior year though."

"Despite being friends with your father and Summer, me and Qrow were still the outcasts of the school. The poor kids who always wore over-sized, torn clothes. We were frequent targets to those who wanted to have fun at the expense of others, but one day they went too far. Some members of the basketball team were tormenting Qrow and he finally snapped and attempted to fight back. Your father had stepped in to stop them plenty of times before, but when he saw three of his team members beating my brother, he flew into a rage and jumped in. He didn't win, but he succeeded in breaking two of their noses and almost had the other on the ground."

"It was me who nursed the injuries he got from that fight. I still remember he laughed the whole time and when I asked what was so funny, he said that he should get into more fights if that was the only thing that made me show concern for people. It was that which caused me to finally let my walls down. He was a bloody mess and the only thing he cared about was that I was calling him stupid for getting involved."

"Once my walls came down, I finally talked to him about what it was like at home, about how much I hated my father and the things he did to us. He was horrified at first, but he finally calmed down. Eventually he convinced me to tell everything to Summer too. I don't know when it happened, but at some point she had become my best friend. She was much like Tai in the sense that she was free spirited, but she was also much quieter and cared about people. Once they both knew, they managed to convince us to go to the school counselor."

Raven paused to take another sip of her tea and Yang saw it shake slightly as she lifted it.
"We were so scared. We knew what our father was doing to us was wrong as that point, but if we told them we would be taken away. It was the first time I ever cared about losing a friend. But it never came to that. When we finally talked to the school, our father was quickly arrested and Summer’s parents took us in. But things were still tough. We may have been returning to a decent home every day, but I still couldn't settle. I trusted Tai and Summer as much as I could anyone, but I was still quick to question everything they did."

"Things continued like that for over a year, there were a lot of arguments but we stayed close. Tai always made sure we stayed together and eventually I realised I like him as more than a friend. By the time we entered our final year, we had begun to date but things were always tense. Your dad tried to reassure me that he liked me but I could never shake the feeling that he was just settling. Then came one of the bigger falling outs we ever had. It was almost graduation and we all attended a party together, while me and your father had been dating for nearly a year, nothing had really progressed because of my past. But that night we finally took that step. Little did I know that the very same night, Summer and Qrow got drunk and also took that step."

"For Qrow it was a dream come true, four years and he finally thought Summer was interested. But for Summer is was a mistake. She had been upset about something and sought comfort from Qrow because she knew it would be easy."

"Wh-What?" Yang asked at Raven's revelation.

"Qrow was heartbroken after she told him it meant nothing. I was furious when I found out. My best friend had used Qrow's love for her as a meaningless distraction and for once, instead of trying to keep us together, your father was just as furious and sided with me. Qrow didn't know what to do and tried to take Tai's place of keeping us together, but we fell apart anyway. Me and Qrow moved out soon after and it wasn't until our second year of college that we finally mended that bridge. Qrow had forgiven her and Tai was no longer angry, so I let her back in too. For a while things were back to normal. I remembered what she did, but put it aside as a mistake. I had my best friend back and our group was whole again. She was the first person I told that I was pregnant."

"She helped consol me. She knew I never wanted kids, never wanted to pass along my baggage, but I also couldn't get rid of you; that wasn't me either. Tai was so happy when I told him though. Kids had always been a tough subject since I knew he wanted them. He even made me feel better about it and while I still wasn't too keen on the idea, I slowly came around. After nine months of torture, I gave birth to you."

Raven had closed her eyes during the story, but she finally opened them at that point and let a smile overtake her face. It was a smile that confused Yang beyond belief, as it jarred so much with every image she had in her head that the woman in front of her almost seemed like she'd been switched with another.

"You were so perfect. The moment the doctors handed you to me, I couldn't believe I'd made something so radiant," She said fondly, looking down at her tea. "I remember spending hours looking at you in wonder, spending the days with your father just watching you in your cot. But I also remember that our group once again became fractured from somewhere I didn't expect. Tai and Summer had begun to argue, I didn't know why at first but it wasn't long until I found out. She was in love with him, and the feelings weren't one sided."

The smile vanished and Raven's eyes visibly darkened in less than a second.

"They'd been sleeping together for months. They stopped after they found out I was pregnant, but not for long. They stopped again when you were born and it sounded like Tai seemed serious that time. I was crushed, my best friend and the man who had got me to open up to the world had done
exactly as my father said people would do. Summer for the second time. When I finally confronted them, they told the truth about what had happened in our final year. The same thing had been happening then too, it was why Summer was so upset that me and Tai were moving forward, why Tai was so angry she had slept with Qrow."

"For the first time in years I felt truly alone again. They had been repeatedly betraying me for so long, everything I ever feared about Tai settling was true and Summer, she wasn't sorry. She may not have liked that she was doing it behind my back, but she still loved Tai too much to let him go. So she gave him an ultimatum. Me or her."

"He ch-chose her?" Yang asked. She didn't want to ask, she didn't want to know that her father may have chosen Summer and not Raven as that meant he had not chosen her. But she couldn't help it, she had already heard a lot she hated. She had to know everything.

"He may as well have," Raven replied in a hollow voice. "He chose me after some hesitation, but I knew he wanted her. It was all over his face. So I left that night. I wasn't going to give him the chance to humiliate me further. I packed a bag, ordered a taxi and left for Haven. Qrow heard and tried to stop me, tried to say that Tai had chosen me and that I didn't need to leave. He'd found out before me and hadn't even bothered to tell me, hoping it would go away and we could all still stay together. It was the final straw I needed. I boarded the train and left. With you."

"But as I said, I never wanted to be a mother. I could do it with help, with friends I trusted, but they were gone. I had no-one in a city I'd never been to before and was barely getting by, but I tried. For two months I tried to make it work, but I was still so angry. With that and how tired I was from working and staying up all night, I found myself shouting at you to shut up every time you cried. I would plug my ears and try to ignore you. Then one day I was trying to feed you and you refused to take it, I tried for almost an hour with so little sleep, and I got so angry that I… I raised a hand to you. A baby."

Raven's voice cracked and Yang felt sick. It was clear from Raven's face that the memory was something she regretted. And Yang couldn't imagine how hard it was to relive such a moment. She herself wanted kids one day, though she had never raised the subject with Weiss as they were far from that, so to imagine getting to a point where you would be willing to strike a baby was enough to make her want to throw up the very little she'd eaten that morning.

"It was that moment I realised that it wasn't just that I didn't want to be a parent, it was then that I realized I wasn't fit to be a mother. So just like I did when I left Vale, I packed a bag with all your things and took you back the next day. I wasn't going to keep you just to mess you up like my father had with me, but I still couldn't bring myself to face your father. Leaving you on that step was the hardest thing I've ever done, Yang. Despite everything, I loved you more than I had ever loved anything; and to ring that doorbell and walk away hurt more than I can even say. But I knew I couldn't keep you, I couldn't give you a good life and I didn't want you to have one like mine."

"That's why I left you," She said after a second, looking up to show that she had tears in her eyes. "You may not believe me, but I wanted you to have the best life you could. And I couldn't be a part of that."

Yang stared at the woman before her, attempting to find some dishonesty; but she saw none. From the look on her face, the tears in her eyes, every word she'd just spoken was true, or at least true to her. But it was still a lot of information to process for Yang. She'd always thought of Summer as someone who was always there for people, someone who would never betray a friend; but if what Raven was saying was true then she really didn't know her at all. The woman she knew would never have acted in such a way as Raven said.
The woman was cut off as Yang stood up. She didn't know what to think anymore. She never thought Summer to be a saint but this was just too much. So stepping away from the table, she looked Raven in the eyes.

"I… I need a m-minute."

Before Raven could even reply, Yang took off towards the back.

Resting her hands against the cold metal of the dumpster, Yang took in a deep breath of cold air and leaned over. It had been almost ten minutes since she'd left the table, left Raven sitting there without waiting for any acknowledgement. She had no idea if the woman would still be there or not when she went back, but if she was honest with herself, she had no idea about anything at that moment. What did someone do when they found out the person they idolized was actually capable of such things? That the person you believed to be without flaw turned out to have just as many flaws as everyone else? What did you do when you found out your father had lied to you for years? That was what Tai had done. He'd lied. Not just about Summer and who she was, but about knowing why Raven left. She'd asked him less than a month ago, she'd asked him years ago, and the only reply he'd ever given was that he'd screwed up. Sure, that wasn't a lie in itself, but he'd never mentioned Summer. Never mentioned the role she had played, never mentioned that they were both the reason, never mentioned anything but vagueness about betrayal. But he'd known exactly why she left. And he'd never told her despite knowing how much she wanted to the truth.

Why? Yang growled inwardly, pushing her arms hard against the dumpster. Why! Her fist came down on the lid, the sound of rattling metal ringing through the alleyway. He'd promised. Promised no more lies mere minutes before he'd lied again. But Raven had told her the truth, she knew it was the truth because it filled in every hole that her father's story left. She also had no reason to lie as Yang could ask Tai everything so getting caught out wouldn't be hard.

Why was it the person who had left her for nearly nineteen years who was the only one to tell her the truth? Why wasn't it her father? Why wasn't it Qrow? Just like Raven had eighteen years to come back, they'd had eighteen years to tell her the truth. Surely she had made it clear that she'd earned that much. And Summer. Would Summer have been honest? Had the accident not happened, would the woman have come forth about her own mistakes? Yang didn't know. She would never know.

"Yang?" The voice was soft and clearly a little nervous. Swiping a tear away from her face, she turned to see Kali stood in the doorway that led to both the kitchen and the stairs with a worried look on her face. "Are you okay dear?"

"I'm f-fine thanks, Kali," she answered, not bothering to mention the slight pain on the side of the hand that had connected with the dumpster.

"I'm f-fine thanks, Kali," she answered, not bothering to mention the slight pain on the side of the hand that had connected with the dumpster.

"You don't look it," Kali replied, her smile faltering as she let out a small sigh. "Though I guess it would be wrong of me to expect you to be all smiles today."

Yang shook her head at the comment and wiped the rest of moisture from her eyes. She hated angry tears as they were so often confused with sad ones.

"Well, I didn't want to disturb you, but your mo…"
"She's not my mother."

"Right… Sorry," Raven backtracked immediately. "Raven has asked me to tell you she just received a call from work saying she has to go in today. She said she has an hour before she has to go."

_Dammit_, Yang thought to herself as she straightened up. A time limit was all she needed. "Thanks, Kali. I'll just be a minute."

Though Kali gave a nod, she didn't leave as Yang expected. Instead she remained in the doorway with a look on her face that indicated she wanted to say something. Having always valued Kali's advise, Yang cocked her head to let her know it was okay.

"Yang, as a mother, I can't stand those who abandon their kids," Kali said firmly, her amber eyes, so like Blake's, locking onto her own. "But as a mother, I can also see how much regret that woman holds. I've seen it in you and Blake more times than I can count."

"Thanks," she smiled to a woman who had, for all intents and purposes, been a mother figure to her over the years. "Please tell her I will be back in a minute."

This time Kali did disappear, though not without a kindly smile first. Alone in the alleyway again, Yang let out a sigh and leaned back against the dumpster, pulling her Scroll from her pocket and quickly seeking her father's number to hit call. Before the meeting continued, she had to know if the woman was telling the truth. Thankfully, her father didn't take long to answer.

"I'm guessing this is the call to tell me we need to talk," He said, his voice gravelly.

"Yes," Yang replied honestly. "But we will talk properly when I get home. I only need to know one thing right now and I don't want a lie or a half-truth. I want you to be straight with me. Raven told me why she left, is she telling the truth?"

Silence filled the line for a couple of seconds, and though that was enough confirmation to Yang, she needed to hear it from him.

"It's a little more complic…"

"Yes or no, Dad?" she interrupted, not willing to put up with the vague answers anymore.

"Yang," Tai sighed, and she could hear the defeat in his voice. "There is a little more to it from our side… But yes, what Raven has likely told you is true."

"Thank you," Yang breathed, pushing herself off the dumpster and preparing to go back in. "I'll be home tonight, we can talk then."

"Sounds good, Fireball. I love you."

"Love you too, Dad," Yang replied and closed the Scroll, pulling the door open and returning to the store.

As she walked through the back room, Blake handed her another hot chocolate as the last had been left on the counter to go cold and Yang mouthed a thank you to her. With her main question answered, it was much easier to progress into the store this time, the door easily responding and allowing her entrance. Raven was still sat in her seat, though her leather jacket had been removed to reveal a red blouse with a black vine pattern. Clearly the woman had a favourite colour scheme.
Approaching the table, she sat back down and took a sip of her drink while Raven looked at her carefully. Now that her nerves had all but gone and she wasn't listening intently to every word, Yang took a moment to survey the woman. Despite only being in her early forties, she already had wrinkles around her eyes and upon closer inspection, her hair was not exactly like her own, instead the back was jagged and spiky, like a wild coat of ruffled feathers. Around her neck was a set of black beads and the hint on a tattoo peaked out from her top. As Yang was looking at her, she heard the woman say something that brought her back.

"I never thought you would look so much like me," It was a simple admission, but one that Yang could tell held great intrigue to the woman. "When you were born, you had short, blonde hair that refused to grow. The doctors said it was normal, but I took it as a sign that you took after your father more than me."

"It still takes forever," Yang admitted slowly, the slow growth of her hair part of the reason she hated getting it cut at all.

A short silence followed, one that Yang didn't like as the only thing it did was remind her that they didn't have long anymore. Taking another sip of her drink, she placed it on the table and gently tapped its sides.

"So… You said you moved to Haven?"

"I did," Raven nodded, pouring more tea into her cup. "It was far enough away for a fresh start."

"So why are you back now?" Yang asked, not trying to sound rude but unable to keep the accusation from her voice. "In Vale?"

"I got into a little trouble a couple of years ago," Raven sighed and took a drink. "There was an accident, some idiot knocked me off my bike and I lashed out. I didn't realise that one of the people I punched was a cop until I was in cuffs."

"You were arrested?" Yang said, not expecting that one bit.

"Well it wasn't exactly my first run in with the law, but that time I ended up spending three years in jail."

"Oh."

"I was supposed to serve five years, but my sentence was reduced for good behaviour," Raven explained further. "But while I was there, I realised that nothing had changed about my life. I may have been behind bars, but there wasn't any difference to when I wasn't. I was still alone, I still had no-one. Meanwhile, most of the women around me were talking about the things they regretted, the things they missed."

"I'm guessing one of those things were their kids?"

"Yeah," Raven said with a nod. "They had us do group sessions, to work on anger and stuff, and there was one woman there during my first year. Vernal. She was barely older than you, but she'd got into some serious trouble and her baby was taken. She was a rough one, but she was strong-willed, and I watched her fight tooth and nail to see her child, but she never got too. There was a falling out between her and another inmate, and the other inmate killed her."

"I'm sorry," Yang said as Raven paused to take a drink. From the woman's strained voice, it was clear Raven was close to Vernal. "You were friends?"
"Sort of," Raven confirmed. "We talked a lot, she talked about her kid, and I talked about you. She always told me I should get over myself and try to fix it. The week before it happened, she'd just received good news from the social services. She was so happy, she told me that if she could get a second chance, then I could too."

"So when my review came around and I found out I was eligible for probation, I asked my lawyer to request permission for me to serve it here in Vale. It took some convincing, but the judge agreed… so long as I continue to meet certain conditions."

"So you're still on probation?" Yang asked carefully, receiving a nod of confirmation. "What are the conditions?"

"That I have a job. I also have to attend therapy and check in with my parole officer."

"And you're doing that? I mean… I know you have a job, but the other things?"

Yang didn't know why, but she actually cared.

"I am," Raven replied firmly. "I'm serious about this, Yang. I asked to come here so that I could try to fix this. I know that the last time I tried this, I did it all wrong and ended up hurting you more; but I want to do it right this time."

Yang looked into the woman's eyes and saw nothing but honesty. The fact she had waited months for Tai to pass on her message was enough proof for Yang. But that didn't mean Yang was willing to forgive. Raven may have come back, but she'd left more times than she returned.

"And how did I know you won't just leave again?" she asked, feeling the need to voice her concern. "You may be serious now, but you were serious when you took me, you were serious enough to come back five years ago, but you still left."

Apparently Raven seemed to have been expecting that question as she closed her eyes contemplatively. After a short silence, she let out a long sigh and leaned forward to look at her properly.

"I know I've never given you a reason to trust me, Yang," Raven said cautiously, like she was trying her best to pick the right words. "I would even say I'm somewhat an expert on not trusting people. But I'm not going anywhere this time. I'm not saying I don't have my issues and I certainly don't deserve what I'm asking for, so if you say no then I will respect it; but please, all I'm asking for is one more chance."

Yang stared into the woman's eyes, eyes so intense that it almost felt like they were begging. As she looked into them, she asked herself if she really was thinking about it. She had received the answers she wanted, the main ones at least, and Raven was right, Yang had no reason to trust her. Except that wasn't true anymore. Was it not Raven who had been the first to tell her the whole truth, had Raven not been forthright about her past. While it wasn't exactly trust, there was something to be said that the woman was treated her how she wanted to be treated. As an adult.

But was that enough? Was that enough of a reason to put aside the years of torment and potentially risk years more should the decision not pay off? Yang didn't know. She had no idea if the risk was worth it or not, but she knew she had more questions. She had spent five years wondering and she wasn't ready to stop now. So giving a short nod, she heard Raven let out a relieved sigh.

"I want to know you," Yang admitted, tapping her cup nervously against the table. "And you were honest with me, so I'm willing to try. But this is your last chance, Raven. If you leave again, you
won't get another."

"Thank you, Yang," Raven breathed, the relief clear in her voice as she sat back in her chair. Leaning back in her own and taking a sip of her strawberry hot chocolate, Yang watched Raven take a sip of her tea. As the cup was raised to her lips, Yang swore she saw a smile tugging at the woman's face and took that as a good sign.

"So…" She breathed, figuring if she was going to get to know the woman she should probably try asking some questions. "Kali said you were called in to work? What do you do?"

"Courier work," Raven shrugged, clearly not enthused by her job. "It's not much, but my place isn't that big and the pay is decent. But I don't have to go in for another thirty minutes. I'm guessing you work here?"

"Yeah," she replied with a nod. "I pretty much spent every day here after school and it helps Blake, my friend, out; also gives me a little spending money."

"That's good of you," Raven hummed. "I saw you also do boxing too?"

"You saw?"

"Qrow told me you had a fight so I watched from the tunnel," she explained cautiously, as if she was worried she may have overstepped a boundary by secretly watching from the shadows. "You fought really well."

"Thanks," Yang said, despite her brain immediately remembering everything she did wrong during that fight. "Coco was too good for me though."

"She was," Raven said honestly. "But not by much. She was exhausted by the end. Out-boxers tend to struggle against Counterpunchers but you might have won if your last hook had landed."

"Y-You know boxing?" Yang asked, completely taken aback by the ease of which Raven used the terminology.

"It's what your gran… My dad did," Raven said, the correction not going unnoticed by Yang. "Before he got injured."

"Oh," Yang replied, taken aback. She had expected there to be very few similarities between the two of them, so to find out three in less than an hour only made her more curious. "So I guess got my love of boxing and motorcycles from you then. I don't suppose you or any of your family do art at all?"

"No," the woman chuckled, and despite it clearly stemming from amusement, there was something about it that felt uneasy. "My family tree never had the patience for such things. I'm guessing you do though?"

"Yeah, it helps relax me after training. And I'm apparently pretty good, so…"

"Well if you are as good at art as you are at boxing then I'm sure it's very good," Raven smiled. "Are either of them something you want to do in the future?"

"A little," Yang admitted with a nod and took a sip of her drink. "Maybe on the side. Cooking is where I want to end up though. I enjoy working here with Blake, but I would love the get into an actual kitchen when I finish college."
"Well at least you have goals," Raven said and placed her cup aside after noticing the pot was empty. "That's more than I had at your age."

"Yeah, dad always tried to drive me towards something after Mom died and he re..."

Yang cut herself off. Tai and Summer were clearly a very touchy subject to Raven and she didn't want to spill her father's private life to the woman. To her surprise however, Raven leaned forward with a sad sigh and shook her head. What was obviously pain passed across her eyes.

"That accident was a terrible thing," she said sadly. "Whatever issues I had with your parents, Summer certainly didn't deserve that."

"No, she didn't," Yang agreed and placed her nearly empty cup aside too as a question popped into her head. "Did... Did you go to her funeral?"

Raven took a couple of seconds, but eventually gave a short nod.

"I said I wasn't going too, but she was my best friend for years. I stayed in the trees until everyone left though. Qrow tells me Tai took it rather hard afterwards?"

"He's still taking it hard, he's just better at not showing it," Yang said easily, knowing it was the truth. "But yeah, it was just me and Ruby for a while."

A short silence followed, Raven looking down at the table and Yang watching her curiously. With the issue between her, Summer, and Tai, Yang couldn't help but be curious how the woman would react to Ruby. The young girl was pretty much the culmination of everything that had hurt Raven, but to Yang she was everything. Nothing, not even Blake or Weiss, was more important to her, so she knew that would eventually be the biggest test. But that wasn't a test that had to happen just yet.

"From what Qrow told me, it sounds like it was tough on you too."

"It was," Yang nodded. "But I did what I had to do to keep my family together. How much has Qrow been telling you anyway?"

"We've stayed in contact for the most part," Raven admitted. "But even that relationship took a while to fix. It was him who told me your father was throwing a party last time I was in Vale."

"You were already in town?"

"My father passed," Raven said with a bitter undertone. "I took my chance to spit on his grave one last time. Though I may have brought some of that anger to the party with me, and for that I am sorry."

"I know," Yang admitted. While regret didn't mean it wouldn't happen again, Yang was willing to believe the woman before her was indeed regretful.

"Good," Raven smiled and leaned back again, taking a moment to think before speaking. "So what else have I missed? Are you seeing anyone?"

"Mhm," Yang nodded, a smile spreading across her face at the thought of Weiss. "Her name's We... White."

It wasn't technically a lie as Weiss' name did mean white in Atlesian, but Yang hated it nonetheless. Raven had been nothing but honest with her, so to even tell a half truth didn't feel
right. But what else could she do? Though she was giving Raven a second chance, the trust wasn't there yet and even many of her friends didn't know about her relationship with Weiss.

"I'm guessing from that smile you two are happy?"

"Yeah, I'm lucky to have her," Yang smiled. "What about you? Did you ever find someone else?"

"No," Raven replied simply. "I realised years ago that I'm better out of relationships than in them."

"Ahh," she hummed, turning to look at the clock to see there was only ten minutes left. Something that Raven clearly noticed too. "Doesn't that get lonely?"

"Not really," Raven shook her head and pulled her leather jacket back over her arms. "But while I really would like to continue our talk, I really should get going."

"I can walk you to your bike."

The words spilled from Yang's mouth before she could stop them, but as they slipped out she realised it was because she also didn't want the talk to end. She was finally making headway, finally getting answers to questions she'd had for years and she didn't want that to stop. So despite herself, she felt a small wave of happiness wash over her when Raven gave her a slight smile and stood up.

As she stood, Raven picked up her helmet and now that she was much closer Yang managed to get a proper look at it. While most of it was white, a rather stark colour contrast to the rest of her attire, it did have thin red lines that accented every curve. The helmet itself was shaped somewhere between an animal skull and a knight's helmet, and Yang was sure it would look rather intimidating when the woman put it on.

"Let me just take this back," She said, picking up the tray.

"I'll be outside."

Returning the earlier smile, Yang made her way back to the counter where Blake had apparently been watching them as her eyes followed the older woman out of the store. Seeing the scowl on her brow, Yang placed the tray on counter and reached out to poke her best friend on the forehead. As the grumpy Faunus turned to her, Yang gave her a wide smile and leaned on the counter.

"You're gonna replace the grumpy cat meme with that face."

"She doesn't deserve this chance you're giving her," Blake said bluntly, taking the tray and passing it to Kali.

Letting her face fall at Blake's words, Yang let out a sigh and poked her friend again. She loved how much Blake cared for her, loved the bond they shared, but she really was a little too slow to trust sometimes. Fortunately, no matter how much Blake hated Raven, Yang knew the girl wouldn't try to talk her out of the decision.

"I know," Yang said softly. "But I want to know her."

"I hope you don't expect me to like her?"

"Don't worry," Yang chuckled and lifted up a glass lid from a nearby jar to pull a cookie from underneath. "You can scowl at her all you want."
"Good," Blake smiled smugly, reaching out to snap half the cookie off.

"Anyway, I should go out and see her off," she said and pushed herself off the counter. "Ninjas of Love when I get back in?"

"Sure."

Grinning as Blake rolled her eyes, Yang turned and made her way outside where Raven was waiting. Pushing the door open, a blast of chilled air forced her hair back, though thankfully it was no longer as cold as it had been weeks ago. Vale had always been rather strange around Winter, with the chill rarely lasting more than a month before starting to heat back up again. Not that is bothered Raven who leaning against a gorgeous red and black motorcycle, her helmet resting on the seat.

"That's yours?"

"Yeah," Raven said, and for the first time Yang heard pride in her voice. " Took a while to save, but she's worth it. Don't you think?"

"Absolutely," Yang said and reached a hand out to stroke the seat, half expecting Raven to stop her. Thankfully she didn't and Yang let herself feel the soft Vinyl. "She's beautiful."

"Are you thinking of getting one?"

"I have one," Yang replied, pushing her fingers into what felt like memory foam. "Sort of. It's roadworthy but still needs some love until she's ready. I have my license though."

"Well I hope you get it done soon," Raven said sincerely and threw her leg over the bike. "There's nothing quite like riding one of these to clear your mind."

Giving the woman the first genuine smile of the day after having found something easy for them to talk about, Yang removed her hand as Raven sat down. Before she reached out and turned the key however, she turned to look in her direction with a more serious look on her face.

"I'm far from perfect, Yang," Raven said slowly, picking up the helmet and holding it against her chest. "And I can't promise I will be the most reliable person in the world; but I really want to make this work. So thank you for giving me another chance to get to know you."

"Just don't make me regret it," Yang replied, keeping her voice just as serious as Raven's was. "Because there won't be another."

"I won't," Raven smiled with a nod and twisted the key, causing the motorcycle to roar to life. "And who knows. Maybe when you get your bike sorted, we can take a ride?"

"Maybe," Yang said noncommittally and took a step back as Raven put her helmet on, confirming Yang's suspicion that it would make the leather-clad woman incredibly intimidating. "But I have your number until then. I'll call you when I next have some free time."

"I have your number set to priority," Raven nodded, her voice slightly muffled behind the thick plastic. "I'll always pick up if I can."

"Good to know," She and took a step back as Raven revved the engine to make the bike purr. "See you."

"Goodbye, Yang."
Though she knew the words were used as a simple farewell, a rush of worry still ran through her that it actually meant something else. Pushing it down to ignore it, she raised a hand as Raven flicked up the kickstand and returned the wave before taking off, the roar of the engine ringing through the relatively quiet area. Now alone with no-one she knew to see her, she let herself fall back against the wall and slide down until she was seated on the ground.

Not only had the meeting gone far better than she expected, but Raven herself was not what she was expecting. Whenever her father talked about her, he mentioned how tough she was to deal with, how much of a struggle she made things. But what Yang had experienced was someone who was very forthcoming. Sure she had noticed parts about her that certainly hinted at what her father said, like her reason for coming back to Vale and why she had visited her father's grave, but she couldn't help but feel what Winter said was right. Maybe her father didn't really know Raven as he once had, maybe the woman had changed in the years since leaving.

There was one thing she was certain of, something Winter had commented on. Raven had definitely loved her as a child, enough to want what was best for her. Her decision to stay away was misguided, but it really did seem like she had made it out of love and fear. So letting out a deep breath, she let the knowledge of what was going to happen stew over in her head.

She was going ahead with it. She was going to try and have a relationship with Raven. Whether that would work out or not, she didn't know; but she was at least going to try.

But first, she needed to take her mind off it for a little. And while she would love to see Weiss, the woman was busy at work. However, for as much as she made fun of it, *Ninjas of Love* with Blake was always an exceptionally fun afternoon; so standing up, she brushed off her jeans and made her way inside to seek comfort from her sister.

Chapter End Notes

Hello everyone. So this chapter has been a long time coming and I know a few of you have been looking forward to it, so I really hope it turned out well. There are couple of things I wanna say, but I feel its important to share where I am pulling my Raven from first. The Raven I always wanted to go with is where I believe Raven is headed after her final scene with Yang in V5. A scene that shows Raven really does care about Yang, but is unable to put aside her own issues. The Raven I really want to write is where she would go from that scene with her realising the issues in her life and slowly working to fix them. This doesn't mean she will be easy in the story as she still has a ways to go, but she isn't going to be the complete hardass the show has her be.

The second thing I really want to talk about is how I originally had this scene planned as it does pertain to how I changed a few other chapters. So originally it was planned for her get tired of waiting for Tai following their conversation in chapter 18, leading to her simply walking into the store while Yang was talking to Weiss. Yang would have stormed away and been missing for a few chapters before showing up at Weiss' house. That was also the original plan for them spending the first night together at Weiss' house. I ultimately decided against this however, as by taking it slow I realised I could show more of Yang's inner turmoil and it really didn't fit with the Raven I want to write.

But anyway, that's it for me. This chapter didn't take too long to write but it was
probably the most difficult for me to get feeling right. I'm not a very familial person and it's been a personal choice that I'm not in contact with my own, but I did the best I could with those feelings. I hope you all enjoyed and I hope to see you all next time.

Note from Toxic - Bet you didn't see that coming!
Weiss Schnee

The sounds of typing filled the room as a number of workers input data on their computers. Having spent months away from the department, Weiss could safely say she had forgotten just how much she hated the sound. The constant *click clack* of the surrounding keyboards was already beginning to drive her insane, but unfortunately she had no office to retreat to in the accounting department, just a cubicle alongside a dozen others. The worst however, was that she didn't actually feel like she was doing anything.

Unlike her time in the Research and Development department, where she had been in charge of organizing everything and had a say on what projects happened, her current position had her simply entering numbers for an upcoming meeting the Human Resources Department was having. In all honesty, while she knew it was important work, she was having trouble adjusting to feeling like she wasn't actually doing anything to prove herself.

Her current position did however mean she had access to all sorts of information. While she was considered a low ranking employee in the department, she was still the heiress of the company and therefore had much deeper access to the files than most in the department simply by way of her account. She'd had the same access before she'd been transferred, but without knowing what to look for it had barely meant anything. However, this time she did.

Over the last week, she'd been pulling up every file she could from six years ago. It was taking a while to sift through all of it, even with narrowing the search down to *Bronzewing Motors*, but she wasn't giving up hope. From the sound of Winter's take, everything had happened exceedingly fast with the acquisition of Roman's estate, so fast that even Winter had called her father on it and was met with blackmail in return. Weiss was convinced that there was no way he could have done such a thing without cutting corners, and that if she could just find the files regarding that acquisition, she was certain she would be able to use it to find more instances.

Unfortunately, with only having her breaks and that year having been a rather busy one for *Bronzewing Motors*, Weiss had no idea what Roman's old address was so the progress was pretty slow. Nevertheless, a shortcut was now sitting on her computer. Another thing she'd been looking into was Aweburn Fletch's patent; though that too was just as slow, if not more so, than
Bronzewing. Unlike the latter, Weiss had hit a complete dead end mere days after starting to pursue that avenue as the only way forward was to wait for a reply to the email she'd sent over a week ago. However, though she wasn't expecting a reply, she refused to give up on what she knew would give her exactly what she needed.

Sighing as she input the final figures, Weiss glanced over to her Scroll to see that she still had fifteen minutes until her break and reached out to press the unlock button to be greeted by the smiling face of her girlfriend. She knew it was risky having Yang as her screen saver, but the picture was inconspicuous enough that she could easily pass it off as a friendly photo; especially considering that the picture contained Blake and Ruby were in the photograph with her and Yang. She was also getting exceptionally tired of hiding their relationship.

She hated that she'd only seen Yang once in nearly two weeks, hated that she couldn't have been there after the blonde's meeting with Raven, and especially hated that she was now avoiding her due to a promise she'd made to stay the night the next time they saw each other. It was a promise she really wanted to keep, but she hated that it had to be a promise. Why couldn't it just be? Why couldn't she just do it whenever she wanted to?

"That time will come."

Winter's words rang in Weiss' head, and though she knew they were right, she still hated that the time wasn't now. Thankfully despite not actually being there, she made a point to try and stay in contact with the beautiful brawler. She had spent almost two hours on the phone with her last night listening to everything that had happened with the meeting with Raven. That conversation had been one she wanted to have while at Yang's side, not over the phone and with thoughts and feeling like that becoming more frequent, she was beginning to hate her father all the more.

It was his fault she couldn't share her happiness with the world. It was because of his inevitable meltdown that they had to be cautious, and she hated it. Every time she was home and had to see him, she wanted nothing more than to just scream everything at him, how she was happy with Yang, how she was taking her company; anything to swipe the annoying smirks from his face. But that would give away her plan, and make everything harder. Fortunately, though she wanted that satisfaction now, she was certainly willing to wait for the day when she would see him ousted from the company. Willing to wait for the day when that smirk would be gone forever.

But much like many things in her life, that day was still a ways off. In the meantime, she would have to satisfy herself with typing out a quick message to Yang as she gathered her stuff to leave. With the day having been a long one, she was in desperate need of a coffee and there was only one place that would satisfy her needs.

An involuntary groan of pleasure left Weiss' body as she walked into the Black Cat Cafe and the smell of fresh coffee filled her senses. The smell was possible one of her favourite smells in the world, beaten out only by smells of approaching Winter and lavender, as it was more than enough to give her energy even without the drink itself. As she walked further into the shop, she was greeted by the kind smile of Kali from behind the counter and happily walked up to meet the woman. Looking around one of her favourite places as she walked up, she noticed the small girl she had met two days before.

Ilia was yet another problem that she still needed to figure out. Though she had Yang's reassurance that the girl was not involved in anything sketchy, Weiss had still yet to figure why she needed to be in the White Fang to do what Yang said she did. Surely her actions would be much more validated should she drop the affiliation with a terrorist organisation, especially in a city where almost all White Fang activities were punished with jail time. There was also the complication that
her father was absolutely find out about it and attempt to use it against them. The whole thing added on top of everything else gave her a headache when she thought about it; so pushing it aside for now, she looked away from the girl who was clearly making a point of avoiding her gaze and greeted Kali.

"Hello, Mrs Belladonna," She said with a smile to the older woman. She liked Kali, though the woman was definitely very nosey, as she always had a strong motherly presence that put her at ease.

"Hello, Dear," the black-haired woman smiled in return as she leaned on the counter. "You just missed Yang, she left half an hour ago."

"I know, unfortunately I couldn't take my break sooner," Weiss lied, hating herself for it. She had purposely delayed her break after hearing that Yang had to go pick up Ruby.

"A girl your age shouldn't be working so hard," Kali said softly and lifted up to prepare Weiss' order without having to be told. "You should be enjoying yourself before you get as old as I am."

"You are far from old, Mrs Belladonna," she chuckled honestly as the woman before her waved away the compliment with a smile. "But work is important to me. If I get everything sorted now, I can enjoy my later years as much as you and Mr Belladonna do now."

"There is far more to it than that I'm afraid, Dear," the Faunus laughed before leaning in with a knowing grin. "Though I suspect a certain blonde could get behind that idea."

Unable to stop the blush and smile from taking over her face at Kali's hushed words, Weiss shook her head and took a sandwich from the nearby fridge, pulling out her card to pay for the lunch. As she placed the sandwich on the counter however, Kali shook her head and pushed it away.

"Not that, Dear, Yang already prepared one for you before she left."

A rush of guilt pulsed through Weiss at those words. There she was avoiding her girlfriend because of the stupid idea of making things perfect the next time they saw each other, and yet Yang was still thoughtful enough to prepare food for her. It felt like yet more proof that she really didn't deserve someone as wonderful as Yang.

Once the coffee was done, Kali tapped on the door behind her and Blake stuck her head out, the stark similarity between the two still incredibly jarring. Clearly Blake had been listening because the aforementioned sandwich was already in her hand.

"Hey, Weiss," The girl said and shut the door behind her before turning to her mother. "I'm taking a quick break, Mom."

"No problem, Kitten," Kali said with a nod and handed Weiss her coffee. "The lunch rush has ended so we aren't too busy anyway."

Watching Blake walk out from behind the counter, Weiss reached out for the plate she was carrying. At first Blake gave a simple nod toward Weiss' usual table, but unwilling to let her friend carry her food when she was perfectly capable, Weiss stayed put and held out her hand to take the plate of food. It took a couple of seconds and an exasperated eye roll, but Blake finally handed it over and they both made their way to the section of the store that held the comfy chairs and numerous books.

"Why are you avoiding Yang?" Blake asked bluntly, though not entirely unexpectedly as Weiss had become very familiar with Blake's tendency to speak her mind.
"I made her a promise, and I want to keep it," she replied with a sigh, not bothering to lie to the Faunus as she knew it would be called out immediately.

"That whole sleeping over next time thing?" Blake asked and Weiss gave her a short nod. "You realise she isn't going to be upset if you choose to break that promise just to see her, right?"

"I know," Weiss admitted with a groan as she sat down and placed her stuff on the table. "And I know it's stupid, but I just want to keep this one promise. I'm almost done with catching up, so it won't be much longer."

"Yang won't want you burning yourself out just for her," Blake said seriously and sat down opposite her.

"I'm fine, Blake," Weiss said reassuringly and took a sip of her drink, the warm coffee immediately warming her body. "So, how did the meeting with Raven go?"

"Depends who you ask."

"I'm asking you."

"Badly."

The exchange was barely a second, but the look they shared was enough to make it clear what the other thought.

"Yang believes it went well," Weiss said after a couple of seconds, taking a bite of her delicious sandwich. "You think Raven will disappoint her again?"

"You don't?" Blake scoffed bitterly and sat back in her chair.

"Parents are not exactly something I put much faith in," Weiss shrugged as she chewed her small bite of food. "But I honestly don't know. We've known about her being in town for months and she is still around. Clearly she is making an attempt."

"Attempts that have been made before and have each ended the same way," Blake reasoned. "I just don't want Yang hurt again."

"Nor do I, but this is Yang's decision and we can't talk her out of it. And I don't intend to try to."

Letting out a sigh, Weiss sat back in her own chair. In truth, she wasn't sure what to make of Raven. While everything she had just said about the woman clearly trying to mend bridges was the truth, Weiss couldn't help but agree with Blake about history showing where that usually led. But she also knew people could change.

"I don't either," Blake said with a sigh of her own. "But that doesn't stop me wishing Raven had stayed away."

"I understand that," Weiss said with a nod, offering half of her sandwich to Blake who quickly accepted. "So, on the subject of not wanting people around. Your friend keeps giving me the side eye."

At her words, Blake turned to look at Ilia who Weiss had noticed giving them dirty looks from the moment they sat down. Being spotted by Blake in the middle of such an action had an unexpected result however, as the girl's freckles turned a bright pink and she hurried off behind the counter.
"Ilia is... complicated," Blake said, mirroring exactly what Yang had said two days prior.

"Yang said her parents died in one of my family's mines?"

"Yeah," Blake nodded and took another bite of her half of the sandwich. "She doesn't talk about it much and her story isn't mine to tell, but I know she was very close with them."

"I don't suppose you know what happened?" Weiss asked curiously. "Their names? Which mine? Maybe I could look into it."

"It was a collapse, Weiss," Blake sighed and brushed some crumbs from her lap. "There's no point digging up a painful past over an accident."

"Maybe," Weiss hummed thoughtfully. "But many mines were shut down nearly a decade ago due to repeated accidents and suspected instability. It cost quite a lot to renovate the ones left over and implement new procedures going forward. My father doesn't spend money like that without trying to work around it first."

"Weiss, lea..."

"Blake, please," Weiss said, letting her tone adopt the same serious cadence she used for business. "To oust my father, I need everything I can on him. Maybe nothing will come of it, but her name might shed some light on things that might have happened with the mines."

Blake gave her a studious glance, the hard amber eyes searching for any reason to mistrust. Thankfully, Blake quickly gave her head a resigned shake.

"Amitola," she sighed. "Her parents were Arrch and Sowla Amitola."

"Thank you," Weiss smiled, letting her tone drop to her more friendly one.

"Yeah, yeah," Blake said dismissively and took another bite of her food. "Just don't tell Ilia you are looking into it. Unless you find something of course."

"I doubt you have to worry about me and Ilia talking."

"She's one of mine and Yang's closest friends," Blake replied quickly with a firm look. "You may never be the best of friends, but you will certainly need to be able to be in the same room."

"She's the one who clearly hates me."

"I hated you," Blake said blandly and leaned forward. "Remember how I told you the White Fang would always say your family were the worst? Ilia heard that too, except she lost her parents in your family's mine so the lesson stuck a little harder. But she doesn't know you, just like how I didn't know you."

"Isn't she still getting fed that line though?" Weiss countered. "That all Schnees are bad?"

"No," Blake said with a shake of her head. "She's nowhere near the branch that preaches that message anymore. And honestly, she was never especially close to it anyway. Me and Yang were closer."

Picking her drink up to take a sip, Weiss stared at the Faunus curiously wondering what she meant by that, though quickly pieced it together when Blake's hand purposely moved to itch her rib cage. Weiss knew what lay beneath the clothing, the mark of regret that both Blake and Yang shared.
from their time in the White Fang.

"Ah," she hummed quietly. "She doesn't have one?"

"Nope, though we shouldn't either really."

"What do you mean?" Weiss asked out of confusion, a confusion that was mirrored on Blake's face.

"Yang didn't tell you about how we got them?"

"We don't exactly spend the little time we have together talking about the White Fang," Weiss said with a raised eyebrow. "But if you want to tell me, I wouldn't be opposed to knowing."

Truthfully, Weiss didn't need to know how the two had wound up getting the mark. Though that didn't mean there wasn't a part of her that was curious about it. The tattoo had originally been used to show separation between the White Fang that held peaceful protests, and the more radical branch. Over the last five years however, the radical branch were pretty much all that remained and the mark was already becoming obsolete even then.

"Well," Blake said with an air of regret as she slumped back in the chair. "They're my fault. I joined first with Ilia when we were fourteen, though Yang joined pretty much the moment she found out; and it was mainly just hanging out with other Faunus at first, talking about the way stores treated us, the looks people gave us. But then someone joined us, a man named Adam. I was angry, he was seventeen, I think you can understand how bad of a match those are."

"Can't say I'm into older guys, so no," Weiss grinned, trying to lighten the mood a little as she was aware of how easily Blake could fall into a self-deprecating spiral. Fortunately the joke earned a small smile from the Faunus. "You fell for him?"

"Hard," Blake confirmed with a nod. "He… I dunno, he certainly wasn't a good person, but he wasn't a bad one either. But the more we hung out, the more we got those looks, the more he would say people deserved to be taught a lesson. He fed my anger in a bad way, and that's when we started moving away from just hanging out and started tagging stuff."

"Eventually we started dating and I start doing things to impress him. Stupid things that I thought would make me seem older, like less of a kid. Things I probably shouldn't have," Blake paused and Weiss remained silent. "But it never felt like enough. He started having these outbursts, saying I didn't understand because I was too young to experience what he had. So I decided to prove him wrong."

"The tattoo?"

"Yup," Blake nodded. "Yang found out I was gunna do it from Ilia. By then she had already begun to try and talk me out of stuff, but Adam was always a tough subject. She hated him and tried to tell me he was just using me, but I wouldn't back down. Finally she gave up and said that if I was going to make that big of a mistake, then we would make it together. It actually made me pause."


"Yeah," Blake said and took another bite of her food. "I think seeing it on Yang is what really started to make me look at things differently. We still tagged stuff but it never felt right anymore. When everything happened at your tower, we finally left and I broke up with Adam."

"Why do I get the feeling he didn't like that?" Weiss asked, thinking that Adam sounded a lot like her father. Angry, possessive, and manipulative.
"Because he didn't," Blake said as her voice darkened slightly. "He started to track me down, tried to convince me to come back by saying that what was done was for all Faunus, that in time I would see it. I guess he got just as obsessed with me as I did with him. There was one day though where he cornered us and pulled out a knife, said that we were traitors, that all I had ever done was hurt him. I was fine, but Yang…"

As Blake stopped talking, Weiss remembered back to the last time she had stayed the night with Yang, how she'd felt a scar on Yang's chest between her shoulder and breast. She'd been curious of its cause for a while but had never asked.

"Her scar?" Weiss asked, wanting confirmation from the now obviously more downcast girl.

"She pushed me out of the way, and if she hadn't then it probably would've caught my throat," Blake said with a sigh. "She was hurt because of me."

"No," Weiss said firmly, knowing what it was like to blame yourself for the actions of others. "He did that."

"He did," Blake replied quickly and looked up to show a huge amount of remorse behind the amber eyes. "But it was me who got us into that position in the first place. Adam may have done it, but I was the reason Yang was even there to begin with."

"You can't think like that," Weiss said softly and took a sip of her drink. "You, Yang, and Adam all made your own choices and mistakes. Yang may have been there for you, but neither of you could have known where it would end. A writer can write a book, but what it inspires is unknown to them. Though they may intend it to unite people, it may only divide."

"Is that your roundabout way of saying things just happen?"

"Pretty much," Weiss chuckled and leaned forward. "My point is that things do just happen sometimes. The true test of who we are is how we adapt to them. You and Yang saw something becoming bad and you both began to distance yourselves from it, Adam chose to embrace it instead. That's not your fault."

"You're starting to sound like Yang," Blake groaned and threw the crust of her sandwich back onto the plate.

"Well she did give me some advice that was in the same ballpark a while ago," Weiss grinned, thinking back to her own little meltdown during their second date and how Yang had consoled her then. "And I know she would be saying the same if she was here instead of me."

"That's true," Blake sighed but visibly relaxed. "Though she usually calls me an idiot."

"I can do that too, if you would like?" Weiss laughed, earning a smile from the brooding Faunus.

"Please no," Blake said, the smile growing as she shook her head. "I love Yang but I definitely do not think I could handle another."

"Now that is where we differ," Weiss grinned, her joke earning a slight eye roll from her friend.

"Yet another thing I hear too much about from Yang."

"Says the girl who once called me while getting hot and heavy with Sun," Weiss replied placing the final piece of her sandwich in her mouth.
"I called for a reason," Blake countered as a blush appeared on her face. "Yang just blur…"

"ILIA!"

The loud, girlish shout that interrupted whatever Blake was about to say was immediately recognizable to the both of them, and they both turned to see a blur of red running towards the small chameleon Faunus. Apparently unfazed, Ilia opened her arms and Ruby immediately flung herself into them. It was a strange sight to Weiss as while the Yang's younger sister certainly had her excitable moments, the redhead was generally a little shy around people. Clearly that wasn't the case here.

"I guess they're friends too?" Weiss asked Blake as the two girl pulled apart and began chatting happily on the spot.

"As I said, she is one of Yang's closest friends," Blake said and brushed the crumbs off herself as she stood up. "That means she's one of Ruby's too. Also means I now need to get back to work since they are likely gonna spend an hour catching up."

"Alright, have fun," Weiss said as Blake picked up her plate.

"You too."

Weiss watched her walk over to the counter a receive a hug from Ruby, who also looked in her direction and gave her a wave, which Weiss happily returned. Settling back into her seat since she was alone, she reached out towards the bookshelves and pulled a random novel towards herself to read for the last fifteen minutes of her break.

A nostalgic feeling washed over her as she opened the book. The position she was sitting in was the very same as the one she'd been in during her first conversation with Yang, however once they began dating, most of her visit were spent in the back room. And while she liked those visits, loved being able to enjoy herself in private with the beautiful blonde, she did miss reading during her lunch break. But as she nestled into her seat to enjoy the book, a thought came to mind that annoyed her a little.

This is where me and Yang should be spending our breaks, not in the back room.

Chapter End Notes

Hello everyone :) So first things first.

As I put in the notes before the chapter, please do not leave spoilers in the reviews. As for my side, I won't be including any characters or major plot points from V7 in any of my ongoing stories. I will try to keep my story spoiler free as possible too.

So there isn't really much I wanna say for this chapter. It mainly serves to set up some coming things with Weiss, but I did want to have another Blake and Weiss conversation and thought it would be a good place to get some backstory in. The white fang is an area I haven't delved into too much, and that is something I wanna change.

But yeah, sorry this is super short today. For some reason my brain refuses to work and my fingers are very, very cold xD I hope you enjoyed the chapter though.
Annoyance

Chapter Notes

I don't normally advertise here as I want you to enjoy the story, but RT are having there annual 24 hour Extralife charity live stream tomorrow (as of posting this) starting at 8am CT. It's a lot of stupid fun and I'm not asking you to donate or anything, but if you wanna stop by or share the word then that really helps too.

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Edited by ToxicExotic

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Weiss Schnee

The sound of classical music filled Weiss' room as she sat with her head in her hands, frustration coursing through her body as a loud sigh threatened to leave her. The source of her frustration sat only inches away, it's screen lighting the surface of the white desk with a duller shade owing to Weiss having turned the brightness completely down. Her headache had been too much since the very moment she'd woken that morning, the strong pulsing enough to make her feel bile at the back of her throat. What was written on the screen had hardly helped with that pain.

'I have told your father numerous times that I'm not selling to a Schnee. Leave me alone."

She had expected that answer of course, but it was annoying nonetheless. She needed that patent, needed something that could secure her position. But there was nothing else. Everything that the STC wanted to acquire, they did. It was the perk of being the biggest company in the world. It was exceptionally rare to find a hold out and usually when they did it was a small company that wished to remain family run.

But Fletch's patent was not small. It was revolutionary.

She may have spearheaded the tremor chip, name pending, that Doctor Polendina was working on and increased the efficiency of not only the R&D department, but the factories that held their project; but even those feats were small in scope to Fletch's design. Revolutionary air travel that could change the world and make life a hundred times easier. Easy and affordable access to the world for everyone. A patent that, as records showed, the STC had been trying for years to get a hold of to no avail.

Surely Fletch knew what his patent meant. The idea was so fundamental to any such design that he could easily sue any who tried to go ahead with it and likely win. As such, every major technology company was reaching out to him for it because of how valuable it was; records even showed that Merlot industries had tried to go through the courts for it. But he was refusing all of them, and most annoying of all was that he wasn't giving a reason. If she knew why then she could try and work around it, try and talk him into deciding why it was best for him to sell to them.

Letting out another sigh and looking back up to her screen where the email was still open on her laptop, Weiss pulled it back towards her and stretched her fingers as she thought of what she could
type in return. He may have told her to leave him alone, but that was something she just couldn't do.

'Dear Mr Fletch,

I understand your reluctance, and I hate to deny your request for you to be left alone, but this patent of your is incredibly important. With the funds of the Schnee Technology Company, I believe that we could make this project a massive success and usher in a new age…'

"Weiss?" She heard the voice of whatever staff member was trying to get her attention but ignored it, the email far more important than whatever meal was to be prepared in her father's absence.

'... of travel that could help pave the way to a better future. I please ask that you reconsider your stance, as a partnership between the Schnee Technology Company and yourself coul…'

"Weiss."

"What!" Weiss snapped and turned her head towards whoever was who was disturbing her when they knew they shouldn't, only to find someone she didn't expect. Her mother.

The blue eye of the older woman hardened and Weiss' temper immediately cooled. Though it was far less frequent than Winter's, their mother also had the same glare that could turn fire to ice. Fortunately, the glare didn't last too long as Weiss quickly bent her head to the older woman.

"S-Sorry, Mother."

"Please, it is my fault for my impatience, Daughter," Willow said with a dismissive wave and walked into the room. Something immediately struck Weiss as off, but she couldn't quite place her finger on it. "I remember that look on your grandfather's face, the look of working too hard. Be careful not to push your limits too far."

"My limits are a ways off, Mother," Weiss sighed as she inspected the woman, trying to find what felt off. "Was there something you wished to discuss?"

Willow eyed her for a moment, but quickly gave a short nod of her head.

"I have business to take care of away from the manor, but my preferred driver is at the baby shower for his soon to be born son," Willow said firmly, her crystal blue eyes not dropping from Weiss' for a second. "I was wondering if I could use your driver? Only if you are not planning on leaving your room for the day, of course?"

"Oh," Weiss breathed, thankful that her mother's request was simple enough as it meant that she could get back to work quicker. "Yes, I will be here all day so he should be free. I shall call him for you."

"Thank you, Daughter," Willow said with a smile and a slight bow of her head. "I will leave you to your work. Please tell him I shall be waiting for him by the front door."

After Weiss gave a small nod to show she had heard, Willow turned as left her room. Again Weiss was struck by the feeling that something was off, that something was different about the woman, but she shook her head and dismissed it as simply being tired. Not wanting to waste another minute, she picked up her Scroll and typed out the message to Hazel before throwing it aside and continuing with her email. An email she knew she would likely be rewriting multiple times.
"Preserving your image of Summer?"

"Yup."

"That was all he said?"

"Well, no," Yang sighed, placing the mug she'd just finished drying on top of the stack. "He told me about how Raven's trust issues made their relationship very difficult. That she even ended things with him a couple of times."

"And you don't believe him?" Blake said in an exasperated voice.

"Of course I believe him, Blake," Yang countered quickly. "And I even get that he wanted to preserve my image of mom, but that isn't the point."

"Then what is the point?" Blake asked, twisting the knob for the steam spout to clear it out. "Because it sounds to me like you two are fighting again."

"We're not fighting," Yang said honestly, picking up another mug. "I'm just tired of him making the decisions of what I should and shouldn't know. Especially about things like this. Every time I think we are getting somewhere, that he has learned to stop babying me, something like this happens and I find out there is more he isn't telling me. It's annoying."

"He's your father," Blake replied with a sigh of her own. "I'm not saying he's perfect, but he is always going to try and do what's best for you."

"Yeah, yeah. That's what he said."

Watching Blake return to cleaning the coffee machine, Yang let out a groan on continued her work. The conversation with her father hadn't happened when she had expected it too since Ruby had Oscar over for dinner, instead her and Tai had talked yesterday when Ruby had ran off somewhere. The conversation itself went exactly as she suspected however, her father talking about how him and Summer were stupid teenagers who had no idea what they were doing. That they hurt their friend and that Summer hated herself for it, but also that love was complicated.

Tai had also told her about his relationship with Raven, how the woman's issues would repeatedly get in the way and make her push him away no matter how much he tried to reassure her. That it had been during one of those break-ups that things had first happened with Summer, and that he deeply regretted every time that it happened after. But he also made the point that even with everything him and Summer did, Raven didn't have the right to take her away without a word. It was a point that Yang could agree with.

Yang hadn't simply listened to the man though. In truth she was still a little angry at him for repeatedly going back on his word to be completely honest with her, and she made that very clear during their discussion. She hated to do it but she had been honest with him about how she felt. That she was the one who looked after Ruby for years, she was the one who kept everything together. That she loved him but also that she couldn't do the half-truths anymore, and she wasn't going to settle for them anymore either. That if he really was set on maintaining their relationship, then he had better start treating her like the adult she had become in his absence.

She hated herself for having said it in such a way, but it needed to be said. Too many times had the secrets put a distance between them, a distance that she hated more than her words. And thankfully the words seemed to have finally struck the chord she needed. The conversation had become less
heated after that and they had both sat down at the table, the place many of their previous talks had taken place. He had promised to be better, to not hide things from her anymore and she had said she hoped he did. She didn't want to lie and say she believed him after telling him to be honest, because a part of her didn't. Just like with Raven, there was a part of her that feared Tai would let her down again. Go back on his word and continue his secrecy. She also hoped that feeling would go away one day as, for all of their arguments, she really did love him.

"I just hate that we keep coming back to this," She groaned and put the last mug on the stack before turning to lean on the counter.

"I get that, Yang, I really do," Blake said and tossed her towel aside. "I've been there after every fight you two have had."

"I know," Yang replied, shoving a bag of coffee beans under the counter with her foot. "But what would you do if you found out your parents were lying to you repeatedly?"

"I did, remember," Blake said with a raised eyebrow as she sat down and pulled out a book. "My parents always show themselves as the perfect couple, high school sweethearts; but it took me years to find out they actually broke up for a year before I was conceived when my mom ran away with a band."

"Oh yeah," Yang hummed, remembering that Blake had been rather angry too when she found that out.

"That was the first time I ever worried they weren't as strong as I thought," Blake said, though Yang already knew that was the case having been the one to help her friend. "But when we sat down and they explained it, things all worked themselves out and we've been close ever since. That was only possible because I chose to trust them."

"I've trusted Tai plenty of times, Blake."

"You've tried, Yang," Blake sighed and tossed the unopened book aside. "But you always let yourself fall back into old habits. Yours and Tai's relationship has always been strained, and I know there are reasons for that; but whenever you find out something new, your instinct is to tackle it head on. But if you take some time, let him think through stuff and show that you understand they are painful memories for him, he will be more forthcoming. Just like he was when you gave him space after he told you about Raven. He told you more about her then than he ever has. What you don't need to do is fall back into the habit of calling him Tai again."

"I… I didn't mean to call him that."

Yang hung her head at Blake's scolding. It wasn't often that it happened, and she never raised her voice, but Blake knew exactly how to get through to her, just like she did to the Faunus. Her mishap was an old one, one that had been born of her dad's absence, and was what she had referred to him as for a while after his return from rehab. She had broken the habit in the years since, as they'd slowly mended their relationship to where it was now, but it still slipped out on occasion when she was frustrated with him.

"Look," Blake said softly with a shake of her head. "I'm not saying you don't deserve the answers you want, because no matter my feelings for Raven I still agree that you do, but your dad has a delicate past that likely fed into his addiction. Cornering him and demanding things is not the way to deal with an addict; even if it's not about their addiction. So just try doing what you did last time."
Blake was right and Yang knew it. Pushing an addict never solved anything and only made them withdraw into themselves more. Unfortunately, the remnants of her childhood frustration had always won out against logic and led her down that path, a path that quite frequently saw them clashing. She was also right that he had told her more about Raven than ever before after she gave him some space. So letting out a sigh, Yang gave a short nod and crossed her arms.

"I guess," She breathed sullenly. "But how long is that going to take? I've already waited over five years."

"As long as it..." Had Yang not been in her head so much, she might have noticed Blake tone fading and her ears straightening as her eyes locked onto the door. "... Takes."

"That doesn't help..."

"Yang..." The tone of Blake's voice definitely caught her that time, as did the fact that Blake stood up rather abruptly. "... Don't freak out."

"What are you talking..." Yang asked and turned, the thing that had caused Blake's words immediately causing her to freeze on the spot.

Walking towards the front door of the store was an older woman with stark white hair. Despite her smaller stature and the distance still between them, the woman still drew the eye and held a presence. She wore a light blue, sleeveless waistcoat over a long sleeve, white shirt that transition perfectly into a flowing white skirt that seemed to glitter in the light. Much like Winter, the woman wore her hair in a bun, though a curled lock of hair hung on each side to frame her face.

As she entered the store, Yang felt her heart begin to race. Weiss' mother was walking towards her at a brisk pace and she was completely unprepared. What had happened? Had Weiss told her? No. Weiss wouldn't make that decision without her input. So why was the woman there? Had she figured it out on her own? They were trying to be careful, but Whitley had succeeded in finding out.

In less than a minute, the woman had inspected the fridge and made her way to the counter. Up close, Yang could see how extraordinarily like Weiss the woman looked. The thin face, the pale skin, blue eyes that held a glint that Yang knew well, everything about the woman was like getting a glimpse into the future of her girlfriend; A future that was still a ways away. From the deeper lines around her eyes, Yang could tell that she was older than even Kali or Raven, but she was still exceptionally beautiful.

"Good afternoon," Blake said politely, acting normal though anyone close would be able to see that the Faunus was just as tense as Yang herself. "What can I do for you?"

"A flat white and a slice of that carrot cake, please," The woman said, her tone equally polite as she looked around. "This is a rather nice store you have. I assume from the name that it is your family's?"

"It is, thank you," Blake smiled in return and began preparing the drink as Yang moved to cut the cake. "This is the first time I have seen you here I believe, are you in the area on business?"

"Of a kind," The woman smiled in return. "My driver suggested it to me. Said my daughter enjoys this place, perhaps you two know her. Her name is Weiss."

"W-Weiss?" Yang tripped over herself, though not only because she didn't want to drop anything, but also because the pair of brilliant blue eyes had settled on her after she'd blurted it out.
There was something in those eyes, something she knew. But it wasn't from Weiss, nor was it from Winter. It was from her father. The look in the woman's eyes was the exact same as the one she had seen in his after his return from rehab. The forced focus that made the gaze intense, the fog in the distance that remained from the desire to think of anything but the object of their addition. Weiss has mentioned a couple of times that Willow was a heavy drinker, that she had been for the last eight years, and it was something Yang knew Weiss hated.

But that wasn't the woman before her. The woman before her was focused, steady. Her body exuded a sense of control that wouldn't be possible from someone still recovering from a binge. No, the woman before he was stone cold sober. So sober in fact that Yang doubted she'd had a drink in days, if not weeks. And that was an issue as Weiss had told her just how perceptive her mother could be.

"We know of her," Blake said coolly, her amber eyes flicking to Yang just before her words brought the attention of the elder Schnee back to her. "She generally keeps herself to herself, but she has taken quite a liking to our little reading corner."

"That sounds like my Weiss," Willow chuckled, the sound almost exactly like Weiss' delicate laugh. "Though I do wish she would make more attempts at forging friendships. I often fear her role in the company has robbed her youth a little too much. Even now, with her father gone, she refuses to leave her room due to her work."

Yang's head perked up at those words.

"She certainly seems like the studious type," Blake said effortlessly and gently poured the coffee. "But she always seems perfectly content, right Yang?"

"Huh?" Yang asked while distracted by her thoughts, placing the slice of cake on a plate and making her way back to input everything into the register as the woman paid. "Oh, yeah. She seems happy."

"I am glad she still appears to be happy then," Willow said, the same hint of relief in her voice that Yang had heard in Raven's days ago. However as Blake went to lift the tray, Willow placed a hand on it and gave her a soft smile. "I can handle that. Having people carry my things has always made me feel old."

"If you're sure," Blake said with a small nod. "Please enjoy."

"I'm sure I will."

Watching the woman walk away, Yang let out a deep breath. As most of the woman's attention had been spent on the small talk with Blake with barely a glance in her direction, Yang felt safe saying that the woman had no idea about her relationship with Weiss. Feeling the tension drain from her as Willow sat down in the same chair Weiss often occupied, Yang dropped against the counter and thought on what Willow had just said.

Contact with Weiss had been rather limited since her last visit. And though their nights often ended with their Scrolls in hand, Yang was missing the girl more than ever. When she'd told her about the meeting with Raven, she'd wanted nothing more than for those words to be said while holding Weiss in her arms. However, if Willow's words had been correct, then Weiss was currently alone at home, or as alone as someone with thirty servants could be, without her father there. The stress in Weiss' voice had been a little more evident recently, so to know she was alone and likely fretting over more work didn't sit well with her.
But what could she do? There was nothing she could do. She was at work and the only thing she
could do would be to call her and that…

"Here."

Blake's words cut through her thoughts, as did the sound of metal sliding along the wooden
counter. Looking down, she saw a car key and simply stared at it for a moment. After a second
however, she glanced up to her best friend to receive a roll of her eyes.

"What?"

"You've already been distracted enough today," Blake groaned and sat down on her chair. "And
now you're gonna be even more distracted thinking about Weiss. So take my car and go see her."

"But what about my shift?" Yang asked, her hand already reaching out for the key.

"Tell dad you're leaving, he can cover you," Blake said with a shrug. "You're taking the closing
shift tonight though. I have that thing with Ilia."

"Are you sure?"

"That I don't want to look at your sad, lovesick eyes all day? Yes," Blake sighed and shooed her
away. "Maybe Weiss can get through to you a little more too."

Without warning, Yang threw an arm around Blake and finally reached to take the key.

"Thank you," she said in a hurry and pulled away from the hug to make her way towards the door.
"I'll be back by five. Love you."

Hearing a faint hum in return, she rushed through the back door. With the exception of the half an
hour the day before her meeting with Raven, she hadn't seen Weiss since before Christmas. So with
excitement coursing through her, she ran up the stairs to tell Ghira that Blake wanted him to work,
pulling out her Scroll and finding the number she needed before sending off a quick message.

Chapter End Notes

Hello everyone. I hope you enjoyed the chapter, it actually has some stuff from a long
since scrapped chapter that I finally decided to bring back. Willow is a character I
have subtly been working on for a while now, trying to slowly show her progress in
the odd mentions of her, so I hope it all went well and you found her state in this
chapter to be a suitable one.

So as I have said in the comments, I decided against actually having the talk between
Tai and Yang on-page as it just felt like I was retreading stuff that was already said in
chapter 24. Hopefully this chapter gives you a good indication of how that talk went
and the underlying frustrations there with Yang.

But that's it for me. I hope you enjoyed and the next chapter will pick up where this
one leaves off, so hopefully you are looking forward to that too. Also, these chapters
are being edited a lot more due to me wearing gloves which makes it harder to type
properly because it is bloody cold, so if a mistake slips through then it is my fault for
making so many and feel free to point them out.
Stress

Chapter Summary

Yang's visit to Weiss doesn't go exactly as planned.

Chapter Notes

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Edited by ToxicExotic

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Yang Xiao Long

Wind rushed past Yang as she made her way through the woods, the scent of dried leaves and soil filled her nose as her feet disturbed the ground. Thankfully, the trees were not too thick and the branches she pushed aside snapped more often than swung back, as she wasn't keen on the idea of showing up to Weiss' room with twigs in her hair. Not that it was something she liked in general anyway. She was also thankful that the walk wasn't too far from a place she could park Blake's car, as it meant less chances to get those twigs in her hair.

A little part of her was nervous as she saw the wall looming on the edge of the forest. She had only been to Weiss' house once, and it had been in the middle of the night so sneaking was easy, this time however it was only a little past midday, so the difficulty would be much greater. Even with the help. There was also the fact that Weiss had no idea she was coming. She didn't believe this would be an issue, but she had been hearing more and more stress in her girlfriend's voice during their recent phone calls. Especially the night before. She knew Weiss' work was super important to her, but the idea of Weiss pushing herself too much didn't sit well with Yang.

While Weiss had worked hard for almost the entire time they had been together, to the point where there would be days they wouldn't see each other, the woman had never seemed stressed. In fact, she always seemed like she was filled with purpose, like she was enjoying everything she was doing. But since her transfer back to her old department, Weiss no longer seemed happy about her work. Even when they did talk, the subject of work would pass quickly whereas previously Weiss would go in depth on everything she was doing; or as in depth as she was allowed.

With the disheartened voice of her girlfriend fresh in her mind, Yang let out a sigh as she reached the wall. She had gone a little off track somewhere along the way but the gate wasn't too far away. Moving over to the dark brown door, Yang reached up to the top of the frame and easily found the key that Klein had placed there for her. Slipping it into the lock, she twisted and gently pushed the gate open to peek inside.

Klein had kept his promise of keeping the garden clear for her, but that didn't mean she didn't have to take care. There were still plenty of staff who would likely be cleaning rooms that looked out over the garden. The extremely, massive garden. A long stretch of green field stretched out along
one side of the area and was even complete with fountains and shrub statues. In the center of the
field stood a giant marble statue of a snake that she hadn't seen last time due to the dark, each end of
its body holding a large, intimidating head with its tongue flicking the air. Compared to the
serenity of the rest of the garden, it was rather jarring.

_I guess he likes to hang out with his own kind_, Yang thought to herself bitterly, quickly turning
away from the hideous statue to make her way alone the chest high shrubs that lined the garden.
Making sure to keep herself low, she made her way toward the window that she knew was Weiss',
occasionally dipping to a knee when she saw someone enter one of the others. With being able to
see this time, the journey involved less tripping over bushes than previously, and she quickly found
herself nearing the tree that led to Weiss' balcony.

However, just as she darted out from behind the last bush, movement caught her eye up ahead and
someone small stepped out from behind the tree. For the second time that day, she was met with
another white-haired person who commanded a massive presence for their size. Instantly she knew
the person had been waiting for her as his eyes locked onto her with an almost amused expression.

"You do know that people quite frequently spend the night in jail for trespassing here, don't you?"
Whitley said with a sardonic grin, his head tilting a little to show his intrigue as he pulled out his
Scroll. "All that is required is the press of a single button."

Staring at the young boy, Yang sized him up. She knew he was exceptionally smart for his age and
liked to play games, he also had the cunning of his father; maybe more so as he'd said when they
last met that he was using the older Schnee. But he had also said he wouldn't stand in Weiss' way,
then had spent the day seeing them together and no consequences had occurred from it. So despite
his cold exterior, Yang knew Whitley cared for his sister in some way.

"Go ahead," She said firmly, standing up properly to keep eye contact with him. "I don't think you
would do that to Weiss though."

Whitley stared at her, the cold blue of his eyes very different to the warmth eyes of his sister's, cold
enough that Yang almost second guessed whether her thoughts were right. Thankfully though, the
boy gave an amused hum and collapsed the scroll to put it back into his pocket.

"Games are no fun when they end so soon," He shrugged and leaned against the tree. "Which it
will, should you keep sneaking into our house."

"If your father wasn't such an ass, I wouldn't have to sneak," Yang said and put a hand on her hip.
Normally she wouldn't badmouth someone's parent after only meeting a person once, but Whitley
didn't seem to care. She knew that the boy liked honesty, and that he could smell a lie from a mile
away. "How did you know I was coming anyway?"

"Very little happens in this house without my knowledge," the boy said, a boredom returning to his
voice now that his little game had ended. "Though I would advise you to be cautious when talking
about my father like that."

"Why? You probably hate him more than I do."

"True," the boy pushed himself off the tree with a grin. "Can I ask, do you know what my father
will do when he finds out about you and my sister?"

"Yeah," Yang said with a small jut of her shoulders. "He's gonna do everything he can to get me
away from her."
"Yes, he will," he said and took a step forward, his eyes glowing slightly as the pale sun reflected off them. "But he will do it in ways you can't think of. You may think you are prepared, but there is nothing about your life he will not exploit to get what he wants. Your family, your friends, the people you pass on the streets; they will be his targets too. So it would be wise to not anger him more."

Something about the assurance in the boys words made Yang shiver.

"I'm not scared of your father."

"Then you are a fool," Whitley said, his voice turning harsh for a split second as his eyes sharpened, though they quickly returned to normal. "But that is none of my concern. I win regardless of whether my sister's plan works or not."

With little more than a courteous wave, the boy walked past her. However, as she turned to watch him leave, she remembered that she actually did have a reason to talk to him. Though admittedly she was originally going to ask Weiss to do it for her.

"Whitley!"

"Yes?" Boredom had returned to his voice as he stopped and swiveled her head to look her.

"When you were at my house, you were hanging out with a friend of mine. Oscar."

"The farm boy?" Whitley replied, the raising of his eyebrow betraying the boredom of his voice. "What of him?"

"Well he asked me to give you his number," She replied honestly, pulling out her Scroll, bringing up Oscar's number, and activating the transfer feature. "For if you ever wanted to hang out again."

"I do not need my sister's girlfriend trying to make friends for me," he replied coldly.

"I'm not," she rectified quickly with a shake of her head. "He said he found you interesting. But if you don't want it then…"

The words hung in the air for a minute, the cold glare of Whitley trying to see a lie making the hair on the back of her neck raise up. She tried her best to stay calm and keep her eyes steady despite knowing that she was simply passing along a message, but she was also aware she was holding her breath for some reason. Weiss had spoken before on how much Jacques had pressured Whitley to be like him, and staring into the boy's eyes felt like she was getting a glimpse as what would come very soon. And despite her earlier words, it did in fact scare her a little.

Thankfully the moment faded, and with enough speed that she barely saw it, Whitley pulled his scroll from his pocket and tapped it against hers; the quiet beep signalling that the transfer was successful. Without another word, the boy stalked away and rounded a corner out of sight and she finally let out the breath she had been holding in a long sigh.

*Hard to believe Weiss said he likes me,* she thought to herself and turned around to begin climbing the tree. It wasn't a far climb but the tree limbs were spaced far enough apart that she still had to use her strength to pull herself up occasionally. In just over a minute, she had finally reached a point where she could jump to Weiss' balcony and effortlessly made the leap, landing quietly on the floor.

Glancing to her side, she saw the curtains were open and Weiss was sat at her desk. Had her hair not been free of its ponytail and curtaining her face, the woman would have definitely seen her.
However, just from her sitting position, Yang could tell something was up with her as Weiss very rarely slumped. Not wanting to stand there and watch her girlfriend continue to be downcast, she reached out and tapped the glass, the sound making Weiss visibly jump and turn to face her. Immediately her eyes flew open and Yang gave her a smile, pointing to the handle; not that it was necessary as Weiss was already rushing to open it.

"Yang!" Weiss said in a hushed voice and ushered her in once the door was open. "What are you doing here?"

"I heard your dad was out of town," Yang said with a smile, stepping into the room and seeing papers sprawled across the desk with the laptop open. "Thought I would sneak over."

"And risk getting caught?" Weiss said in a scolding tone as she shut the balcony door. "It's the middle of the day, Yang, anyone could of seen you."

"I was careful," Yang reasoned, straightening up. "I'm always careful."

"It only takes one mistake," Weiss snapped quickly and crossed her arms. "One mistake and ever…"

"Okay," Yang interrupted with her hands up. Weiss had never snapped at her before, but she had also never seen the woman so high strung. "I'm sorry…"

Weiss' face fell a little and a hand raised to press against her head. It was something Yang knew she usually did when she had a headache.

"I just thought it would be cool to spend some time together," Yang said quietly, looking at the ground. "But if you're busy, I can lea…"

"No," Weiss groaned, her hand moving away from her head as she looked up again. "I don't… I didn't say that. Just please give me some notice next time. What if one of the guards had seen you?"

"I called Klein," Yang said carefully as there was still some annoyance behind her girlfriends eyes.

"You should have called me," Weiss said firmly, though she did finally unfold her arms from her chest and sat down in her chair.

"I know, I just wanted to surprise you for once."

"And I love your attempt at spontaneity, but I am extremely busy right now."

Weiss' hand motioned towards the open laptop that had numerous tabs opened and overlapping, the largest of which looked to be a half finished email. Walking up to the table, Yang saw that there were actually far more papers than she had seen through the window. Binders and folders were stacked on one side while many more were open in purposely placed positions. Individual sheets of paper with lists of numbers and long paragraphs of text were scattered everywhere, with seemingly no organization.

As she looked upon the workload, it became very clear that Weiss was taking on too much. Though Weiss was undoubtedly a diligent worker, everyone had their limits and Weiss seemed to be approaching hers.

"Weiss…" Yang breathed, picking up a piece of paper that she was completely unable to decipher. "What is…"
"Work," Weiss breathed, pulling the paper from her hand and taking a look at it before shoving it into a folder.

"Too much work," Yang corrected her, keeping her voice as strong and unwavering as she could. "You are burning yourself out."

"I'm fine," Weiss said stubbornly and turned back to the laptop. "I just need to get stuff done and then I can relax."

"Weiss!"

Hooking her foot behind one of the legs of the chair, she gave it a hard pull and a loud squeal filled the room as the legs scraped along the tile floor. Now so close to Weiss, who was now glaring up at her, she could see just how tired the girl looked. Her normally perfect blue eyes seemed duller, and the white held a hint of pink. The eyelids themselves were dark, the bags under them standing out a little more due to how naturally pale the woman was.

"How much did you sleep last night? Or the night before?"

"I don't know," Weiss said as she tried to turn her chair back, but Yang kept her foot in place. "Like 3 hours, but I've had less. Now will you please let me get back to work, and hang out on the bed or something?"

"No!" Yang said matching Weiss' stubbornness and reaching over to pick up the laptop.

Had Weiss not been sluggish from running on fumes, she might have actually been able to intercept it; but as that wasn't the case, Yang easily pulled it away and held it out of reach as Weiss stood up.

"Yang! Give me back my laptop!"

"No! You are exhausted. You need to rest."

"I'm fine!" Weiss half shouted, taking a step forward but stumbling and practically falling into Yang's arms.

"No you are not," Yang kept her voice low. "You are pushing yourself too hard. Have you eaten today?"

"I don't have ti…"

"Bullshit." The words came out angrier than Yang expected and Weiss took a step back. "You just fell over because you were light headed from standing up."

Weiss' lack of reply was all the confirmation Yang needed to know that she was right. With a stern look at her girlfriend, Yang quickly dug into her pocket and pulled out her Scroll to call the last dialed number; making sure to keep the laptop out of reach. After less than two rings, the call was answered and the cheerful voice of Weiss' butler came from the other end.

"Hello, Miss Xiao Long. If you are looking for the ke…"

"I'm in Weiss' room already, Klein," Yang cut him off, trying to be polite. "Would you be able to bring us some foo…"

"I'm not hung…"

"...d please, Weiss needs to eat."
"Of course, It will be only a few minutes."

The call ended and Yang shoved the Scroll back into her pocket as Weiss took a step forward.

"I don't need food, Yang, I need my laptop," The final words were said in a different voice, the anger subsiding to be replaced with what sounded like desperation. "Please?"

"Why?" Yang replied, her voice steady as Weiss eyes gleamed again.

"Because I need to work."

"You don't need to work this hard, Weiss."

"Yes I do!"

"Why?"

"BECAUSE I AM TIRED OF THIS!"

There was no holding back this time, no restraint to the shout that echoed through the room and sent a rush of panic through her at the vagueness of those words. Anger flickered behind Weiss' visible eye and her fists clenched as she took a step backwards. Yang immediately worried she may have pushed too far, but she pushed that feeling down as she saw Weiss take a deep breath.

"I am tired of hiding this, of hiding us," She said angrily, her hand pointing between them in a jerky motion. "I hate that I cannot be public with you, that every time we see each other it is for minutes and then I have to leave. I hate that the only way I could be there for you after Raven was on a bloody phone call, and that I can't keep the promises I made to you because I am doing nothing at my job. Nothing but sitting in a stupid cubicle filling in numbers for pointless meetings that change nothing."

"When I was heading up a department I was doing something, I was making a difference and showing everyone how important I was to the company, but I'm doing nothing now. When I returned to accounting I thought I could find something, something that could help me fix the mess my father has made of everything, something to help us; but everything is buried so deep that I can't find anything without having to go through months of paperwork. Paperwork that also tells me nothing. Roman's estate, the mines, the patent, I don't have time to look through any of them because I have to catch up on work that is beneath me. I'm not changing anything, not making an impression, and every avenue I try to go down is nothing but a dead end. I can't change anything between us until that is done. And to do that I need to work harder, I need to get these deals."

"Weiss…"

"Please, Yang," Weiss said, the anger fading from her voice to be replaced yet again by desperation. "Just give let me get this do…"

Yang closed the rest of the distance and pulled her into a hug that cut her off. Letting her hand finally drop from its elevated position, she gently placed the laptop on the bed and held Weiss tighter against her.

"That's enough," She whispered quietly, keeping her voice strict as she felt Weiss shake in her arms. "I don't want this. I don't want you feeling like this. We do not need to rush this Weiss. You do not need to make yourself ill by pushing yourself too hard for something that doesn't need to happen right now. So please, just stop."
Yang felt her voice crack on her plea, her arms tightening just that little bit more to get the importance of it across. For a few seconds the words hung in the air, and Yang fear it hadn't been enough, but ever so slowly she felt a pair of arms raise against her back and Weiss' body slacked. Keeping the girl in the embrace, Yang let herself drop to her knees and cradled her girlfriend, the increased shakes an indication that the woman was crying.

Saying nothing and letting the moment continue, Yang held her close and waited for the trembling to stop. As she waited, she ran her hands through the silk hair knowing that Weiss tended to enjoy the feeling. Thankfully the tears seemed to pass quickly, but the hands holding her back remained firmly in place.

"I-I'm sorry I shouted at you."

The voice was quiet, quieter than Yang’s plea had been, but she still managed to pick it up and ran a hand up Weiss' back to soothe her.

"No biggie," Yang breathed, continuing her ministrations as Weiss buried her head into her shoulder. "Might need to get my eardrums checked though. You shout really loud."

The gentle vibration against her as Weiss let out a wet chuckle was a huge relief, and Yang let herself relax. Tired anger always passed rather quickly, but seeing Weiss in such a way certainly wasn't an experience she had liked.

"I'm stupid," Weiss said sadly when the vibrations stopped.

"Yup," Yang agreed, earning a tighter hug from her girlfriend.

"You're not supposed to agree with me."

"And get the stink eye for disagreeing with you? No thanks."

"You're an idiot too," Weiss said, her tone a little brighter. "I wanted the next time you saw me to be when I stayed."

"Well I'm glad it wasn't, or you might've worked yourself to death," She sighed and moved a hand up to the woman's head, her fingers gently caressing her scalp in a soothing massage.

Weiss nuzzled into her a little more and Yang let herself slump into a more comfortable position, breathing a contented sigh as her knees left the hard floor. A comfortable silence filled the room as they sat together, a silence Yang didn't want to break. However, Weiss seemed to have the opposite desire as the hands on her back grabbed her jacket.

"Yang," She said softly, a care to her voice like she was about to ask for something. "I really do need to keep working."

Staying silent for a couple of minutes, Yang thought over the statement. She really didn't like that Weiss was still focused on work, but she had certainly calmed down enough to where it felt like the request was out of genuine need. She didn't want to give the permission, but she did know Weiss' work really was important, even if the woman felt it wasn't. But that didn't mean she was going to let her go back to how she'd been doing it before.

"On two conditions," She said, stopping the stroking on her girlfriends back. "One, we sit on the bed so you can rest while you work. And two, you eat when Klein brings us the food. Okay?"

Weiss replied with an immediate nod into her shoulder. Satisfied with the answer as she fully
intended to hold Weiss to it, Yang pulled away and raised to her feet and offered a hand out to her girlfriend, helping her stand. Looking at Weiss once she was stood up, Yang gave her a soft smile and received a shy one in return. Clearly Weiss was still regretting her earlier meltdown, so wanting her to know it was okay, she leaned down and placed a gentle kiss on the woman's forehead before leading her over to the bed.

As she sat down however and started to scoot backwards, Weiss kept her in place and leaned to return the kiss, though hers landed square on Yang's lips. Letting herself enjoy the affection for a moment, Yang happily returned the pressure as her hands trailed down Weiss' legs. Hooking them onto the woman's thighs, Yang pulled the snow princess onto her lap and rolled them onto their sides, breaking the kiss and gazing lovingly into her girlfriends eyes.

"I'm sorry," Weiss said quietly, her eyes fluttering a little as Yang raised a hand to gently stroke her cheek. "I'm just… I'm getting far less done than I thought I would."

"Is that what caused this?"

"Sort of," Weiss shrugged, cuddling up a little closer. "I mean, I knew it would slow. But I was sitting in the café yesterday, and for the first time in so long, I didn't go into the back with you; instead I just sat there reading. It reminded me that all we ever do is hide in the back, that I hated we couldn't enjoy our breaks cuddled up on that couch while I read. It felt like my fault because I know you're waiting on me."

"I am, but that's not your fault," Yang said softly, wiping away the trail of an earlier tear. "It's your dad's. And as far as waiting to go public, like I said earlier, I'm not expecting it right now. In fact, not going public right now might be better for me too."

"Because of Raven?"

"Yeah, I kinda need to figure that out first too," Yang said with a nod. "So don't stress and try to speed it up. I don't want you to be relieved when we go public, I want you to be happy."

"I'm always happy when I'm with you, Yang," Weiss sighed with relief. "I know it's dumb, but I really wanted to keep my promise about staying over."

"It's fine," Yang said with a grin and sat up to reach for Weiss' laptop. "At least now you will stop avoiding me."

Turning back to Weiss with a raised eyebrow, Yang grabbed the laptop and sat against the headboard. Wasting no time at all, Weiss moved into her usual position between her legs and took the device, resting back against her as Yang put her arms around her and rested her chin on the smaller woman's shoulder. Just like the paper she looked at earlier, the numerous documents open on the screen were filled with so much stuff that Yang had no idea how Weiss knew what they all meant.

"I should really stop telling Blake things," Weiss breathed and closed two of the open tabs. "She has a surprisingly big mouth."

"She was worried," Yang reasoned, settling in to watch Weiss write an email, the recipient being the Fletch guy she had talked about before. "And clearly for a good reason."

"Still…"

Yang kissed Weiss cheek and hugged her a little tighter, watching her hands glide across the keyboard only to delete what she just wrote within seconds.
"So," Weiss said with intrigue and rewrote a sentence. "How did you hear my father was away?"

"Oh… Uhh," she hummed, a little conflicted as to what to tell her. Deciding on the truth, she let out a breath. "Your mom stopped by the sho…"

"What!"

All attention to the laptop was forgotten as Weiss' head whipped around to face her, her eyes wide and the pale blue struck with concerned.

"It's fine, I don't think she knows anything, she just said it while talking to Blake," Yang said quickly to reassure the tense woman in her arms. However, at the same time, she remembered what she had noticed and knew she had to relay it. "But…"

"But what?" Weiss asked suspiciously.

Yang took a deep breath and let it out.

"I could be wrong, but I don't think she's had a drink in a while."

Weiss stared at her for a minute, her eyes unblinking as she sought the truth from Yang's own, just as her brother had earlier. After a couple of seconds though, Weiss let out a breath and turned back to her laptop.

"How can you be sure?"

The words sounded cautiously, like Weiss mind was racing through the possibilities.

"I recognised the look in her eyes," Yang said slowly. "It's the same look my dad had when he came back from rehab."

The returned attention only lasted seconds as she let out another sigh and closed another page. From the way her fingers had yet to move on the keyboard, Yang took it to mean that Weiss was deep in thought and allowed her the space to think. As she waited, she read through the half complete email and started to get an inkling as to why Weiss might not be making much progress on it. None of it felt like her, it felt like it was written by someone Yang didn't know. Every word was corporate and carefully picked to sound proper, none of it conveyed her feelings at all and made everything seem hollow.

"I have noticed that she seems to have a little more focus as of late," Weiss said slowly, her words pulling Yang away from the email. "And she has been drinking less at dinner."

"Maybe she is finally turning it around," Yang said happily, as Weiss' mom stopping her drinking could hardly be a bad thing.

"If so then we need to be careful," Weiss said, her voice retaining the caution. "My mother is an exceptionally sharp woman when she isn't drunk."

"And we can't just tell her?"

"No," Weiss said firmly, a conviction entering her voice that made Yang knew Weiss wouldn't budge on that. "I was fine with Winter knowing because she already despises our father and is willing to take that risk, Whitley found out on his own so that couldn't be helped. But I do not want my father to have any reason to suspect my mother of keeping this from him."
"Okay," Yang nodded, understanding Weiss unspoken words. "You still think she will take it well?"

"I don't doubt that. She is rather accepting."

"Good."

"You are sure she didn't suspect anything, right?"

"She barely even acknowledged me, so pretty sure," she replied with a smile to cheer her girlfriend up. "She said Hazel recommended it to her because you like it."

"Then I will have a word with him about that," Weiss sighed, finally returning to her email, except she erased a small part instead of writing anything.

"You know, none of that email feels like you," Yang said before she could stop herself since it was something Weiss was clearly struggling with.

"Huh?"

"I mea…"

She was cut off by a knock on the door and Weiss quickly begin to leap off the bed, only for Yang to grab her wrist. She had witnessed Weiss lose her balance from standing too quickly earlier and didn't want it to happen again while she wasn't there to catch her. Weiss seemed to understand, so gave her a small smile to confirm she was okay and Yang let her go, ready to spring into action if needed. Thankfully everything seemed fine and Weiss cracked the door open to reveal Klein stood there with a tray of food.

"Your food, Miss Schnee," His cheerful voice echoed through the room. "Should I put it at your desk?"

"No thank you, Klein," Weiss replied politely and held out her hands. "I can handle it. Please thank the kitchen staff for me."

"I shall send them your regards," the man said and handed the plate over.

With a little wave in her direction that Yang happily returned, the man shut the door and Weiss slowly made her way over with the food and drink. Feeling a little mischievous, she gave her girlfriend a smirk.

"All you need now is a maid outfit," Yang teased and put her arms behind her head as Weiss scowled at her.

"I don't know why I expect anything else from you," Weiss said with a roll of her eyes and placed the tray on the bedside table. "So what were you saying about my email?"

"That it's too… I don't know… Business like."

"This is a business email and I am a businesswoman, Yang," Weiss replied and straightened up.

"And you are a remarkable one," Yang said seductively and moved to the edge of the bed onto her knees, coming to a stop right in front of her girlfriend. "But that's not all you are."

Leaning in to place a kiss on her girlfriends lips, a kiss that was a lot more heated than the one they had shared minutes ago, Yang rested her hands on Weiss' hips to keep herself steady. She enjoyed
the kiss a lot more as Weiss' more cheerful mood showed when the woman leaned into it with a soft hum.

"You are a businesswoman, but not one like your father," She said kindly, feeling Weiss body press against hers and instinctively biting her lip. "You are kind, and thoughtful, and you want the best for everything you do because everything you want to do helps people. I don't see any of that in your email."

"Are you just trying to get me out of my clothes with compliments?" Weiss grinned and placed another kiss on her.

"After seeing what's under them? Always," Yang said effortlessly, earning a wonderful laugh in return. "But seriously, you said all the top tech companies have tried to get this patent and he's refused. Maybe he just doesn't care about the money, maybe he just wants his invention to mean something more. Just like you with your company."

"So you're saying I should try to be more honest?"

"I'm saying you should be yourself," Yang said and pressed her lips back against Weiss' for a second of warmth. "Your good intentions will shine through."

"That's not how business usually works," Weiss replied with a smile and placed her hands on Yang's shoulder to push her back so she could get on the bed. "But I suppose I'm not getting anywhere anyway."

"Good," Yang grinned, picking up a grape from the tray and offering it to Weiss, who opened her mouth to receive it. "Now about those clothes?"

Yet another laugh was earned as Weiss pulled the laptop towards her and they returned to their earlier position. Once again they sat in peace, Weiss working and Yang enjoying the feeling of just being nearby, and she let out a happy sigh as she reached over to grab some sandwiches. Weiss' mood may have improved, but Yang wasn't going to let her girlfriend forget her promise of eating. So handing one to the snow-haired girl, Yang gave her a quick kiss on the cheek before settling in and taking a bite of her own.

Chapter End Notes

Hello everyone :) Hope your day is going good. Sorry if these notes are a little scattered, I haven't been sleeping well and am kinda tired.

So not sure if you can count it, but this might be there first fight xD Even if it was small. As we are getting ever closer to them going public, it felt right to show them getting a little worked up about it and Weiss getting tired of hiding. You might be seeing a lot of that in the coming chapters. Also, I tried to show the pressure of her work here. Obviously she is in a much lower position than she previously was and is trying to overcompensate for it, so hopefully these things felt good. However, I still tried to have some cutesy stuff. You will be seeing more of that in the coming chapters too.

Anyway, as I said, I am rather tired, so I'm gunna leave this here xD Hopefully this chapter was good and you enjoyed :)
Weiss Schnee

The halls of Schnee Manor were oddly quiet as Weiss walked reluctantly towards her destination. With each step she took, the clacking of her heels bounced off the walls serving only to accentuated the silence, and to give the mansion's halls an abandoned feel. There was no warmth to it, no love or care, just a hollowness that was still rather unnerving despite growing up in it. However, she would gladly take the eerily silence halls over where she was heading.

The source of the silence, the reason no-one dared make a sound, was her father. It was rare that he worked from home, but when he did everyone knew that the slightest disturbance would lead to a firing. Every member of staff knew to stay out of sight, to go about their work silently unless they were spoken to directly, so it didn't surprise Weiss that Violet kept her head down as she passed instead of the usual friendly greeting she always gave.

Arriving at the end of the hallway, she glanced over the banister into the entryway and saw that the door that led to her father's office was already open. Taking a deep breath, she made her way to the stairs and gently walked down them, careful not to allow her heels to make too much noise as they were positioned right above her father's domain. Despite taking her time, she reached the bottom rather quickly and turned to walk through the door, closing it behind her as she knew her father would be annoyed to find it was left open.

She had no idea why her father had called her to his office, though she suspected it was likely something to do with her work at the company. It still annoyed her that she wasn't doing much, that her time was taken up by menial tasks; but after Yang's visit two days ago, some of the stress had lifted. Knowing that Yang wanted to delay their reveal to focus on Raven was actually helpful as she no longer had to push herself. However, that didn't change that the work was boring and beneath her.

Though she could hardly say that if her father asked her. He had placed her there, to voice her desire would be the same as questioning his order and would not be received well. Unfortunately the T-shaped hallway was shorter than the stairs so Weiss didn't have much time to think of a clever way to work around that issue before arriving at the plain white door of her father's office. Stopping in front of it, she heard voices on the other side and raised her shaking hand to knock.
Normally there would be consequences for interrupting a meeting, but her father wouldn't have called her to wait outside. So taking a deep breath, she closed her eyes and knocked; the voices stopping immediately.

"Enter."

The cold voice of her father sent a chill down her spine and she wasted no time in pushing the door open. Walking into the equally cold office, Weiss saw her father sat behind his desk. His chilling blue eyes locked onto hers as her peer at her through templed finger and she matched his gaze. She hated that she'd inherited those eyes, that no matter her temperament her eyes always held a hint of his ice, that hatred broiled even hotter knowing what the man had done to Winter in this very room; but nonetheless, she smiled.

Standing in front of his desk was her brother, his hands locked behind his back and his back straight and he looked at the ground. As she approached the desk, he sheepishly looked her way but quickly returned his gaze to the floor.

"Good afternoon, Father," She said politely with a small bow of her head. "You called for..."

His hand raised and she stopped talking instantly.

"Weiss, remind me what grade you received on the exam your business tutor gave you?"

"A+, Father," Weiss replied and saw Whitley turn his head slightly away from her. It immediately clicked what had happened.

"You hear that, Boy?" He said, his eyes finally leaving her own and locking onto Whitley's, who quickly looked up. "Both of your sisters managed to receive full marks. So would you care to explain why..." His words turned venomous as he held up a slip of paper. "... You barely managed an A?"

Whitley didn't reply straight away and Weiss tried her best not to look at him.

"I would think that being in my office everyday to gain first hand experience would be more than enough to achieve this grade, so did you not study to cement the rest?" Their father drawled as his eyes narrowed. "Well? Speak, boy."

"I'm sorry, father," Whitley said, his voice quivering slightly despite his clear attempts to keep it even. "My hand was injured and the difficulty in writing led to me missing a few poi..."

"You have another hand that you can use, do you not?" Jacques interrupted, the annoying in his voice and lack of care about Whitley's injury making Weiss' blood start to boil. "You know I do not care for excuses. Now I ask you again, how did you barely manage this grade? Did you not study? Was I not a good enough teacher? Were the years I have spent on you wasted on an idi..."

"I'm sorry, Father," Weiss interrupted, her body trembling. Normally she wouldn't interrupt her father like that, but seeing her brother wince at every question had made it impossible to stand by and watch. "Whitley's grade may be partially my fault."

She worded her lie carefully, making sure not to remove all blame from her brother otherwise her father would see right through her attempt. Slowly, the man's eyes shifted back to her and his brow furrowed as scepticism and intrigue passed across his eyes. "Explain!"

"I knew the course was a hard one so I offered Whitley some of my old work to reference," She said firmly and held his stoney gaze. "However I was in a rush to acclimate myself to my new
position in the company at the time and may have accidentally given him one of my practise notebooks that held a few errors."

Jacques eyes bored into hers in search of the truth and Weiss held firm, not even daring to hope he would believe her as he would no doubt see through that too. After what felt like a minute, he dropped his gaze and returned to Whitley.

"Is this true? Did you use these reference notes your sister provided?"

Before answering, the boy turned to her and she saw a hint of surprise in his eyes. Knowing she couldn't make any obvious sign to tell him it was okay, Weiss simply blinked and held her eyes closed for a second longer than necessary, hoping he would get the hint. Thankfully he did and returned his gaze to their father to give a solitary nod.

"I see," the Schnee elder said and pressed his fingers back together, though there seemed to be a happiness to his voice. "Then we shall let this serve as a lesson on what happens when you rely on others. But you will be retaking the exam and you will be receiving full marks, do I make myself clear?"

"Yes, Father," her brother said with a firm nod of his head.

"Very well. Now leave us."

Turning on his heel, Whitley gave her a small look and Weiss gave him an imperceptible nod. She couldn't help but smile inwardly at their father's words about relying on others and how he had no idea that the lesson had actually been the opposite of what he thought. She hoped that Whitley had seen it too, but whether he did or not, Weiss didn't know as he quickly left the room and shut the door behind him.

"Should I be concerned that a menial position has caused such ineptitude already?"

Hair stood up on the back of her neck at her father's drawled words. Consequences for what she was doing were already inevitable, but the last thing she needed was him questioning her abilities. Especially when the position was actually far less than she was capable of. So putting a practised smile on her face, she looked up to face her father's heartless eyes.

"Of course not, Father," she said calmly, trying to keep the venom out of her voice as her stomach churned from looking into his eyes. "It was simply an adjustment period."

"Good," He scowled, pulling open his drawer and pulling a letter from it. "Sit."

The word was an order that Weiss knew not to refuse. With a small nod, she pulled the chair opposite his desk to the centre and sat down quietly, her hands crossed on her lap. She watched her father read the letter for a minute, his eyebrows furrowing more and more as his eyes slid across the words. Finally, when he reached the bottom, he placed the letter on the table and slid it over to her.

"Would you care to explain this to me, Daughter?"

Weiss couldn't help but be slightly nervous to pick up the slip of paper as thoughts rushed through her head of what it could be. Had someone found out about her and Yang and reported to him? Had her snooping into old records triggered an alarm? Whatever it was, she couldn't hesitate much further as her father's watchful gaze turned suspicious. So after taking a deep breath, she reached out and took the letter.
Relief instantly washed over her as she saw it was simply a business email from the Atlas headquarters with the topic being the nerve chip. Of all the things that could have been in the letter, she couldn't be happier about it being that.

"This here say that you denied the transfer of a project to Atlas where it would receive more funding, but I don't recall ever agreeing to such a thing."

"I decided to seek funding elsewhere, Father," Weiss replied, her voice taking on the tone she used solely for business. "I felt moving the project to Atlas might jeopardize that and cost the company more."

"At what made you think that?"

"Should we moved this project to Atlas, we will undoubtedly secure funding from the Atlas military, but it is highly unlikely we will acquire funding from the RMRF. Due to our... tenuous relationship with them and their policy of reduced funding for project undertaken outside of Vale, I believe that keeping the project here with Dr Polendina as its lead was our best chance to secure funding from both."

"And what makes you think the Atlas military will fund a project from outside its walls?"

"Because this directly benefits them," Weiss replied simply. "When this chip is finished, it will undoubtedly be very beneficial to the militaries of each kingdom. As we are an Atlas based company that is unable to request funding from the militaries of other kingdoms, I'm sure General Ironwood will see how important it will be to aid in this project to gain favourable prices in the future."

"And you are certain of that?"

"Yes, Father."

The man leant back with a hum as his cold blue eyes surveyed her. In truth she didn't care too much about the military funding, sure she wanted it to increase the odds of her project being a success, but her main goal had always been the Remnant Medical Research Foundation. Atlas funding did nothing but make sure the chip was made, it helped no-one but the military that way; but funding from the RMRF made sure that she could get it to the public for reasonable rates, and that was what she really wanted. So as she watched the thought behind her father's eyes, Weiss hoped that her reasoning had been sound, but they quickly darkened and she knew that the battle would not be that easy.

"Very well," he said with an edge to his voice that made her nervous. "We shall see about that."

While she thought on what he could mean, Jacques stood up and walked over to a painting of Atlas. While it was undoubtedly a magnificent done art piece, something about it felt lifeless. She didn't know if it was just Atlas in general or the fact that the painter had no vision, but she found it plain and boring.

"I hear that General Ironwood will be visiting Beacon in two weeks," He said, his voice just as bland as the painting her was staring at. "I will be holding a gala at the museum and he will be in attendance. You will secure a promise of funding there."

"Wh-What?"

"You said that the funding would be easy to acquire, so prove it," He said with a noticeable up-tick in his voice. It was clear he wanted her to fail, that the order was just for his amusement. "Should
you succeed, the project will remain here and you will be in charge of it. Should you fail, it will be transferred to Atlas."

"This is a test."

She didn't need to question it, only to confirm it.

"Of course," He replied with a wave of his hand. "You are the heiress and I need to know you are capable of sealing a contract. This shall be your first step." He turned around as he finished speaking and his eyes bored viciously into her own. "But while this project might be yours for now, make a decision regarding another project without my input again and you might find yourself working in that cubicle for the rest of you life. Do I make myself clear, Daughter?"

"Yes, Father," Weiss said, though her main intention was to simply placate the man for now.

"Good," He said and sat back down. "Since the staff tell me you have resumed your piano playing, you will also be performing at the gala."

"What?" Weiss coughed, that sudden news having taken her completely aback. "But… I haven't been playing again for very long. With work and college next week, I don't think I..."

"This is not a discussion, Weiss," Jacques cut her off absent-mindedly, his attention already returned to some paperwork on his desk. "If you are rusty, then you will practise. Now I have work to do, so you can leave."

Knowing better than to argue with him, Weiss gave a small nod and stood up to leave the office. She should have known it would happen, that her father would turn her renewed passion against her, but that didn't stop it from annoying her. Every single time she took an interest in something, he twisted it and turned it towards his own gain. The piano, the company, her project. However, as she thought about the chip, she found it lightened her mood.

The task her father had given her was difficult, especially with the General having already denied their request for funding; but that only meant she would have to ensure that she succeeded. Not only was she not going to allow her project to be taken away from her, she was also going to use it as a chance to further her own goal. Proving she was valuable to the company.

As she shut the door behind her, she let out a sigh and quickly left the hallway. There was a lot to do in the coming weeks, but right now there were only two important things to her. The first would require only a single message, so she pulled out her Scroll and quickly typed it out.

'I will be staying on Sunday if that is okay with you? Will have to leave early for college though. X'

The second was likely one that would fight her a little, but she had a promise to uphold. So turning to head up the stairs, she made her way towards her brother's room to make sure he was okay.

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**Yang Xiao Long**

'I will be staying on Sunday if that is okay with you? Will have to leave early for college though. X'

A wide smile stretched itself over Yang's face as she read the message. She knew it must have been a sudden decision from the brevity of the statement, and though she wanted to ask what caused it, she knew Weiss was likely rather busy. So putting it aside as a question for later, she quickly typed out her obvious response.
Hitting send and feeling her mood lighten considerably, Yang placed her Scroll back on the ground and picked back up her torque wrench to continue her work on her bike. As she worked on tightening the brake caliper bolts a little, she heard the voices of her friends that were walking into the garage. With a glance around from her position on the floor, she saw the long, toned legs of Pyrrha Nikos stood next to the shorter, freckled legs of Ilia Amitola.

"Now that is a sight," Yang grinned, her eyes trailing up to greet the pair of them.

"Do you ever stop flirting?" Pyrrha asked in amusement and nudged her in the back with her foot, Yang quickly spinning around in an attempt to smack her back but missing.

"Please, she has been flirting with everyone since she finally got those braces off," Ilia scoffed and sat down on the seat of the bike. "What's got you so happy anyway? You were swearing at your wrench for being trash when I left."

"Now that sounds more like you," Pyrrha laughed and took a seat on a nearby table.

"Oh this thing is still a broken piece of shit," Yang shrugged, though thankfully it had worked enough to properly tighten the bolts so she quickly tossed it aside, the sound of metal on concrete ringing around the garage. "Just heard from Weiss..."

"Ugh!"

"Ilia…"

"What?" Ilia replied indignantly and crossed her arms. "I just don't get how you two could be friends."

A sigh escaped Yang as she stood up, and not just because her legs screamed at her from being in one position for too long. Whenever Weiss was brought up around Ilia, the little chameleon girl would always turn slightly blonde and her mood would sour a little. Normally that would be enough to make Yang avoid the subject, as she did with the White Fang or the girl's parents; but the issue was that Weiss was going to be around a lot more rather soon, so she needed Ilia to get used to that idea.

"She's nothing like her father," Yang said for what felt like the thousandth time. "Blake told you what she did for Sun."

"Because you are friends," Ilia countered disbelievingly. "What about all the others who aren't her friends? Do you know how many people I see in the groups who used to work at the STC and were fired for no reason after being treated so poorly."

"I highly doubt Weiss has much say in that," Pyrrha reasoned, picking up the tool Yang had cast aside and placing it in the box. "She may be there heiress, but her father still runs things."

"Exactly," Yang confirmed while stretching her back, her arms reaching out to the ceiling. "Plus, Weiss hates her father and is working to fix the company."

"Whatever you say," Ilia shrugged, though it was clear she still didn't believe her. "So what time is Ruby back?"

"Uhh…" Yang tapped the Scroll with her toe to check the time. "Like forty-five minutes. Hey, P, can you pass me that screwdriver?"
"Didn't you spend all of yesterday with Ruby?" Pyrrha asked curiously as she passed the screwdriver to Yang. "And the day before?"

"Not all day," Ilia said in a way that caught Yang's attention.

Yang gave a slight glance at her friend and saw the freckles and hair had gone from blonde to a red that bordered on pink. Rolling her eyes at the irony of a chameleon faunus being as obvious as possible, Yang tightened one of the screws that kept the brake levers in place.

"So just half the day?" Pyrrha said teasingly, clearly noticing what Yang had.

"It's not like that.."

"... Mhm, sure."

"She's just a friend."

"Who you've spent almost every day with since you got back, and seem very eager to see again?" Pyrrha said with a chuckle, the question hanging in the air as Ilia's hair grew slightly more pink. "What do you think, Yang?"

Yang didn't answer straight away and focused on fixing her bike instead. If she was honest, Ilia crushing on Ruby didn't bother her much at all, as the two had always been rather close and had a lot in common. Should they start something, Yang really wouldn't feel any need to intervene. However, that didn't mean she didn't have reservations about it. One very specific reservation in fact. Ilia wasn't over Blake, and everyone who knew the girl knew that.

"If you wanna ask my sister out because you like her, then I don't have an issue," Yang said firmly, though she quickly straightened up and pointing the screwdriver at her friend. "But if you're only doing it to get over Blake, then leave it alone."

"I..." Ilia let out a loud sigh and slumped a little in her seat. "I don't know what I want. I spent so long trying to get Blake to notice me, that I never really looked at anyone else. Menagerie gave me a chance to work things out away from her."

"Been there," both Yang and Pyrrha hummed, Yang passing the screwdriver back to Pyrrha.

"But you're actually dating the person you like," Ilia groaned at Pyrrha, Yang giving her maintenance a break to sit beside the girl. "And you moved on."

"I'm guessing Menagerie didn't help as much as you hoped?" Pyrrha asked carefully.

Ilia looked down at her shoes and brought one leg up to play with her laces. A downcast look came over her face and her freckles darkened to blue splotches. Giving the girl a minute as she recognized the reason, she gave Pyrrha a small glance and saw that recognition was held within her green eyes too.

"I think it did," Ilia breathed sadly. "I mean... I think I've finally accepted its not going to happen."

"A good first step," Yang said kindly with a nod.

"Yeah, but those feelings are still there."

"So what about Ruby?" Pyrrha asked gently.

"I don't know what that is," Ilia shrugged. "I remember she was always really cool and fun to hang
out with, but I never saw her as anything more. But we stayed in contact while I was in Menagerie and when I saw her the other day, she was a lot prettier than I remembered for some reason and all the other stuff was still the same. I thought maybe there might be something there, now I'm not sure. I really have no idea what I'm doing anymore."

Letting out a disgruntled groan, Yang put an arm around her friend and pulled her close. She knew exactly how Ilia was feeling because she had felt the same when moving on with Arslan. The confusion of if the feelings were real, the feeling like you were betraying the person you liked; accepting that it would never happen was the easy part, but moving on completely was a real struggle. She remembered that even after her relationship with Arslan ended, the odd glance from Blake would still send her heart racing, and had Weiss not stolen her heart so completely, they likely still would.

Looking to Pyrrha, an unspoken understanding passed between them, and she received a small smile as the athlete got to her feet and left the room. With Ilia still focused on her laces, Yang let out a breathe and gave her a small, comforting squeeze.

"It's good you're finally moving on," Yang said, making sure to keep her voice as soft as possible. "But take it from me, they're likely not going to go away completely, but you still need to sort out these feelings before you do anything. If you think you want something with Ruby after you have a better handle on things, then you have my blessing. Though I should be honest and say I have no idea if she likes girls or not."

"Knowing my luck, she doesn't," the sullen girl said dully.

"If she doesn't, then you'll find someone else," Yang replied as Pyrrha reappeared in the garage doorway and held up a large tub of ice cream. "But right now, we are gonna start working out your Blake stuff. We'll start with ice cream, then I'm thinking pizza and a movie."

"I don't know…"

"Nope, there wasn't a choice there, Rainbow," Yang grinned and stood up, pulling the brooding girl with her.

The loud groan that issued from the girl was a great indicator of just how little the girl wanted to face those feelings, but that was exactly why Yang knew she had too. Wallowing in the emotions would never get her anywhere, and Ilia really needed to talk it out with people who understood. So urging the girl forward into the living room, Yang quickly darted back into the garage to grab her Scroll before shutting the door and grabbing the small stack of take-out menus from near it. If they were really going to help Ilia, it might require a little more than just pizza and ice cream.

Chapter End Notes

Hello everyone, I hope you enjoyed this chapter. It's mainly to set up a few coming things in future chapters. I mainly wanted to show Weiss' role in the company becomes more and more important, as well as the importance of her project, as it is a big part of the story. I also wanted to show a little of Yang being the caring friend she is as I know a lot of her stuff has been about Weiss and Raven lately. There is a lot more of those Weiss and Raven moments to come though, and I am actually writing a rather big turn for the story now.
That won't be the next chapter though xD The next chapter is actually a rather special one off for a side character to this story, but that is all the hint I am giving you so I hope you are all looking forward to that :) But thank you so much for reading as always, it always means a lot to me <3
Field Trip

Chapter Summary

During a school trip, Ruby meets some new people

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: All characters belong to Rooster Teeth Productions

Edited by ToxicExotic

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Ruby Rose

The sound of spraying water and excited chatter filled the air as Ruby looked around the area in wonder. She had seen the Vale branch of the STC on television numerous times, but seeing it in person was another thing altogether. The large, white stone building was one of the tallest in Vale and it's gleaming windows were visible from pretty much everywhere. Ruby knew that its architecture was common in Atlas, but with Vale's darker tones, the building stood out magnificently. The Schnee Tower did not stand alone though, in fact the building had an entire square to itself.

The square itself was filled with various things. Large lawns of well-maintained, green grass sprawled out with a winding path of white marble between them, tables and benches were placed thoughtfully beneath lush, green trees in perfect spots where people could eat. In the center of everything was the source of the spraying sounds. A large fountain stood and filled the area with a soft trickling noise and atop it was a statue depicting a burly man wearing a button up suit with a see-through cube held in both hands; three rotating items were contained within. As Ruby got closer she could see that they were a medical cross, a Scroll, and a glowing blue orb that Ruby knew was meant to be a power cell. The man's kind face looked out over the square with a jovial smile visible just beneath his beard.

Though she would have loved to look at the fountain for longer and maybe, check out the smaller buildings along the edges, Ruby had to keep moving with her class. As they moved towards the main building which stood at the back of the square, she heard her teacher rattling off random facts about the company's founding, facts that Ruby already knew. How could she not know them when she wanted to work there in the future. The world leaders in technological innovations that were in every house across Remnant, how could she not dream of working there one day; though admittedly, it was a dream she had kept to herself. She hadn't even told Yang about it, as she didn't know if it was a dream she could make come true for quite a while. She didn't want her sister asking Weiss for any favours either. She wanted to accomplish her dream on her own merits, not because her sister was dating the future CEO of the company.

Walking through the doors, albeit the action taking two tries as the first failed due to her being so in her head that she bumped into a fellow student, Ruby stared up at the high ceiling, the entire
thing one big screen that showed the clouds that filled the sky outside. She knew from books that it was a live feed from a camera on the roof, but she still found herself gawking, and completely missed the woman who had greeted them until she walked into her. Annoyingly, it was an unfortunate commonality in her life so it happening twice in less than five minutes didn't surprise her one bit.

"S-Sorry," She stammered, looking up at the tall Faunus woman to see her smiling.

"It's quite alright," The woman said kindly as Ruby backed away with a nervous smile. Straightening her dark green dress, she straightened up and passed a bag to the teacher as she looked over the class, who were already snickering at Ruby's clumsiness. "Welcome to the STC everyone, it's great to see so many students still interested in technology. My name is Abigail Jadis, whichever name you wish to use is perfectly fine by me, and I will be showing you around our facilities today."

Something entered her vision and she looked around to see her teacher handing her a name tag with her name on it.

"Please make sure to keep your badges on at all time. They will track your position in the building and will also allow you to get your lunch during our break. Now if you all have your badges, please follow me."

While Ruby was expecting to head to the elevators, she quickly realised how dumb that was with nearly fifteen students in tow, so she course corrected and made her way after her class towards the stairs.

"Ahhh," Ruby groaned and collapsed against the table.

There had been so much walking and talking throughout the day that she was glad to finally have a breather. The tour of the building had been pretty extensive so far, but they had yet to arrive at the part she was really eager for. So far they had explored the science labs and the product development floor; but while she really did like those things, especially the product development tour as she got to see all the cool things getting built for testing, she was really looking forward to what would be the last tour of the day.

The research and development department was where they came up with all the cool stuff. New Scroll designs, experimental batteries and other power sources, pretty much everything the STC ever made had come from that department. And that was what Ruby wanted. To be a mind behind those projects, to be the first person who built some random piece of tech that could change the world. She loved what she did at home, repairing broken laptops and VCRs and other stuff, because if made her extremely happy. To be able to ensure that she would never lose another tape of her mother had started her passion, but she wanted to be able to give that to as many people as she could.

Though admittedly, she had no idea what that would involve. She couldn't exactly fix everyone's VCR when they are already long since out of fashion. She had ideas of course, but they were still a long way from meaning anything. She had worked on them a little for the last week, but had quickly realised that they would never be ready…

"Salutations…"

"Huh?"
Raising her head from the table, she looked up to see a small, freckled girl standing before her holding a tray. She wore a pair of grey overalls with green accents over a white blouse, and a pair of black stockings covered her legs. Her bright orange hair fell to just above her shoulder, curling at the tips and a light pink bow poked out from the back of her head. The oddest things however was that her bright green eyes sparkled as a wide smile etched onto her face.

"Would I be able to sit here with you?" The girl said, her voice rather proper, but in an oddly robotic way. "The other tables are quite full."

"Oh," Ruby said and looked to see that her table was the only one with some space. It wasn't particularly surprising as the only person who ever really sat with her was Oscar. "Uhh… Sure."

"Thank you, Ruby Rose. My name is Penny."

The girl held out a hand that was stark white, even compared to her already exceptionally pale complexion, but as Ruby tentatively reached out to take it, the limb fell at the wrist and dangled there comically. With her own hand having stopped in mid air, Ruby looked up at the girl to see her brow had furrowed a little.

"Oh, right," She said and placed her tray down on the table so that she could reach out with a hand that actually did match her skin tone. "My apologies. My father is rather busy right now, so I have to wait to get that fixed."

"You have a prosthetic arm?" Ruby asked stupidly as she reached out to shake it for a second, her excitement of having just seen one up close for the first time started to edge out her awkwardness.

"Yes," Penny replied with a smile as she sat down. "And a leg, though thankfully that does not need fixing… this time."

Ruby felt a small smile pull at her lips due to the ease of which the girl seemed to talk about her condition, as her own had always been something she tried her best to pretend didn't exist; however, she still found herself a little jealous of her classmates. They all seemed to have such an easy time making friends, of laughing and talking about pretty much anything and everything, but it had never been that way for her. She was fine with specific conversations, or with having fun with people she was very close to, but those relationships always took time.

Though she was in her last year at school, Oscar was the only real friend she had managed to make on her own. Of course she had plenty of others, but those were Yang's friends, who she had grown close to because they were always around. But when she went off to college, she wouldn't even have Oscar any more. It worried her a lot in all honesty because she was just so awkward around new people. She had tried a number of times to practise small talk in the mirror, to try and make herself normal like she thought everyone around her was; but every time she tried to put that into practise, she fell short and it just led to people snickering at her.

The worst had been in middle school, where students had taken to calling her Rambling Ruby. They'd taunted her, mocked her shyness, even chased her when she was feeling particularly down. And though Yang had quickly seen to that and put a stop to it when she found out, Ruby still hated being chased. It did something to her, made her panic in a way she hated. She'd talked about all of those things with her therapist, but those feelings had never gone away.

After a couple of years however, she had simply given up and resigned herself to her awkwardness. It wasn't all bad though. She enjoyed hanging out with Oscar, even though she often felt bad as she knew he wanted a little more, but he seemed to understand that she wasn't interested in him that way. Then of course there was Ilia, someone who she had found herself really enjoying the
company of lately. They had been in regular contact while the older Faunus was in Menagerie, and they had spent pretty much every day together since her return. Things felt easy with Ilia, she seemed to understand what it was like being an outcast and never pushed for Ruby to be anything but herself. Other than those two, she was actually rather happy when being left to her own devices.

"Forgive me for asking," Penny said kindly, though her tone made it sound like the apology was merely something she thought she should say. "But why are you sitting alone and not with your friends? Are you having a fight?"

"They're not my friends," Ruby sighed, plucking at her sandwich meekly as she wasn't too fond of mayonnaise.

"Then we are the same," Penny said happily, taking a small bit of what looked to be an egg and cress sandwich. "I have no friends either."

Much like her earlier statement, the words were said in an almost robotic way. Something about the girl felt off, yet oddly familiar at the same time. She was very clearly awkward due to her openness, and it was even clearer why she didn't have friends; but it was the same reason Ruby didn't have many friends. Penny didn't fit in. And likely for that reason alone, Ruby found a lot of the nerves that were usually associated with a new acquaintance faded away.

"I'm sorry to hear that," Ruby said with a soft voice, only for Penny to shake her head in return.

"It's quite alright," Penny shrugged with a smile. "Though it does sometimes get a little lonely."

"I can relate there," Ruby replied with an understanding nod. "So… How did you break your arm?"

"It fell down the stairs."

"Your arm?"

"Yes," Penny said with a firm nod of her head, though she didn't sound upset about it at all. "I forget to secure it and it slipped off."

"Oh," For some reason, Ruby got the feeling that much like she had a tendency to walk into people, Penny's limbs falling off was an everyday occurrence. "Will you father be mad that you broke it?"

"Oh no, not at all," Penny said firmly and pulled her half eaten sandwich apart to eat only one slice of the bread. "My father is a very kind man. He will likely be thankful that it wasn't my leg that I forgot to secure again."

"That's good then," Ruby smiled, putting her own sandwich aside and eating her cookie instead. "Did you father make it for you? I assume he works he works here?"

"He did. He made all my arms and legs while I was growing up."

It was such an odd thing to hear, but even odder to hear it said so happily. In fact, Ruby doubted she would ever hear someone say such a thing in such a happy voice again. The fact that the girl before her seemed so comfortable with who she was brought a smile to Ruby's face.

"He sounds like a really good dad."

"He is," Penny said happily. "So what are you doing at the STC?"
For the five minutes, Ruby found herself in comfortable conversation with the quirky ginger. After telling her what she was doing at the STC, Penny had revealed that she was the daughter of one of the scientists in the research and development department. She had also talked about studying computer sciences at Beacon. What had been the most exciting however was when Ruby had talked about her interest in mechanics, Penny had actually detached her arm to let her inspect it.

It was a dream come true for Ruby, but she had been rather cautious at first as she didn't want to break it any more than it already was, but Penny had reassured her that her father wouldn't mind and would be able to fix it anyway. After the assurance that it was fine, Ruby had gladly accepted and spent the next five minutes looking at the incredibly complex inner workings of the prosthetic. Of course she had no idea what most of it did, but she never thought she would get to see one so close for a while. She had even managed to maybe see what was wrong with it and pointed out to Penny what looked to be a broken hinge that was no longer supporting the weight of the hand.

However, as she was handing the limb back to Penny, she heard a voice from near the entrance of the cafeteria.

"Ruby!"

Looking to her side at her teacher's voice, Ruby saw her classmates gathered around their teacher and knew she had to go. She found a small part of her was disappointed at that realisation, so turned back to Penny with a regretful look.

"I'm sorry, I've got to go explore the Scroll communications department," She groaned and stood up with her tray. "It was nice talking to you though, and good luck with your arm."

"That place is sensational," Penny said with a wide smile and went to raise her prosthetic arm, before remembering it was busted and waving with her other one instead. "Farewell, Ruby Rose. I hope to meet you again some day."

"You too, Penny."

Giving the girl a wide smile of her own, Ruby returned the wave and walked away. She was a little sad that her conversation with Penny had ended so soon, but couldn't help but be a little proud of herself for actually managing to talk with someone like they were just two normal people for once.

The tour of the Scroll communications floor had actually been much more interesting that Ruby had originally thought. Listening to the technician talk about the upkeep of the equipment had obviously been the highlight, but listening to the operators talk about how they manage all the calls through the surprisingly thorough programming wasn't as dull as she expected. Thankfully however, the tour had only lasted an hour before they moved on.

It was with a smile that Ruby happily followed her teacher and Mrs Jadis down a long hallway. The walls were a stark white and if she was honest, she was quite thankful for the lights above. During the tour, she had noticed the company seemed to favour the bright bulbs and due to the white walls they had begun to give her a little bit of a headache; but thankfully the hallway to the R&D department had chosen some softer lights that gave the hallway a pleasant, yellowish glow.

Seeing Mrs Jadis stop in front of a pair of large doors, the whole class came to a halt and Ruby finally succeeded in stopping on time. Watching as the woman turned to face them, she focused intently on every word the woman said.

"Now we are at the department that no doubt most of you have been wanting to see all day," the
woman said with a knowing smile. "Behind these doors is most of the projects the STC are currently working on, albeit a few secret ones that you will have to wait a few years to see. Due to these still being rather fragile, expensive, and some even having live power running through them, I please ask that you don't touch anything while you are here."

"Everyone understand that?" The teacher asked, earning a loud groan of agreement from the class and Ruby understood their frustration at their teacher's tendency to treat them like they were still toddlers. "Good. Whenever you are ready then, Mrs Jadis."

With a nod to the Teacher, their guide pushed open the doors and with palpable anticipation, the class walked through them. Ruby had expected to be impressed, but the sight that greeted her was more than what she could have imagined.

The room was huge, explaining why the corridor before was so narrow, and filled with things that Ruby would likely never know the use of. Along the far wall was an entire see-through cabinet with dozens of shelves, each one holding a half complete project behind a glass door that was marked with a number. The other walls lining the room held doors, the windows beside them showing offices and storerooms. Around the room were five large, circular tables, four of which were made of wood and sat in corners of the room, each surrounded by people talking and comparing notes on whiteboards.

The fifth however was made of glass and metal and sat right in the center of the room. The table itself was split into four sections, with each section cordoned off from the other with a glass screen, and each section held a project that was currently being worked on. From the briefest glance, one held what looked to be a prototype for a new prosthetic that was being worked on by a man in a blue waistcoat. As they approached, his head raised to look in the mirror before turning around to look at them with a raised eyebrow.

"Dr Watts," the woman said with a pleasant smile as the man stood up and stroked his walrus mustache. "I was just showing the Signal students around. Students, this is...

"Save the introductions, Jadis," The man interrupted with an almost bored look. "If you must bother someone with this, I'm sure Dr Polendina has more than enough time on his hands. I, however, have work to do."

"O-Of course," The woman said, her smile staying on her face but no longer as bright as it was before. "Come on, students, I will show you a few of our exciting projects that should be releasing within the year."

With a murmur of excitement, the students followed the woman to a nearby table where a group of people were hovered over a smaller project. As she walked passed the man Jadis had called Watts, she met his eye and felt herself immediately look away at his glare. Lowering her head, she quickly caught up with the rest of her group.

For the next forty minutes, Ruby took in all the information she could about what she was shown. The first thing they got to look at was something simple, the new Scroll that was set to release in the summer and they even got to handle it. It wasn't anything special and mainly just an upgrade to the last one, but the technology was still cool to look at. Once they had done with that, they moved on to a cutting edge power source that, when finished, would be used as backup for hospitals and emergency shelters.

Despite them obviously not showing the important stuff that were still secret, Ruby was quite happy to look at everything she was shown. The thing that excited her most however was when they were shown the almost finished design for a projected television. It may not be a world
changing piece of technology, but it was pretty awesome to her. The base that projected the holographic screen was only a little bigger than the palm of her hand, making it extremely portable. There were also sliders that adjusted the size of the projection so it was possible to use it as a standard television, or for travel by plugging it into a power outlet. With power outlets and car adaptors being everywhere now, anyone who cared about technology was excited for the release. Unfortunately, she knew it was going to be priced way out of her range.

After they had sadly moved on from the device, Jadis led them all to a door that stood apart from the others. With the curtains being closed, Ruby was unable to see inside, but the woman stopped outside the door and turned to face them all.

"And here we have the office of Dr Polendina," The woman gave a short knock on the door and a cheerful voice called for her to enter. "Doctor Polendina, the stude… Oh!" her voice faltered for a minute. "Sorry, I didn't know you were busy."

"It's perfectly okay, Jadis. Bring them in," the man replied, his voice kind and warm. "I am almost done here anyway."

With a nod, Jadis opened up the door to allow them to enter. As they filed into the room, Ruby found herself taken aback yet again; though not by the white-haired man that sat at his desk, but by the pale, orange-haired girl who was sat in a chair next to him. Penny watched as they all entered and when Ruby entered, she girl gave a wide smile and waved.

"Salutations, Ruby Rose… again."

"Hi, Penny," Ruby replied with a shy wave of her own, her classmates turning to look at her as the man that she could conclude was Penny's father glanced up at her with a smile.

"Now, now, Penny dear," he said kindly and held up the arm that Ruby herself had been inspecting earlier. "Best not to interrupt the students. Here you go, all fixed. Best get going before you are late for your class."

"Right you are, Father," Penny said happily, slipping the arm on and twisting it into place before giving the man a hug. Once it was done, Penny quickly made her way towards the door but stopped short and turned to Ruby with a wide grin. "You were right about what was damaged with my arm. You will be a great engineer some day, I just know it."

"Th-Thanks," Ruby stammered as the girl left while humming a tune to herself.

If the class were looking at her before, they were practically staring now and Ruby let her eyes fall to the floor. She had never been one for attention.

"I apologise for that," Dr Polendina said with a smile as wide as his daughter's. "I can handle them for now, Jadis. I believe Mr Thrush could use some help."

"Of course, Doctor," the woman who had been guiding them replied. "I shall be back in fifteen for them."

Receiving a simple nod from him, Mrs Jadis made her way out of the room.

"I'm afraid that even in my office there are not enough seats in here for all of you, so why don't you all take what you can and I shall go and retrieve the last few we need. Miss Meadows, would it be okay to get some aid from young Miss… Rose, was it?"

"Of course," Ruby's teacher said while organizing the students who had already begun to scuffle in
their pursuit of a chair. "Ruby, please help Dr Polendina."

"S-Sure," Ruby said, knowing it wasn't a coincidence that the man had asked for her specifically.

Following the man out of the room and towards one of the nearby circular tables for some spare chairs, Ruby held her arms crossed. She wasn't sure why he had asked for her, but she feared she might have done something wrong by looking at Penny's arm.

"Sorry for pulling you away, Miss Rose," he said finally as they reached the table and stacked a few of the chairs. "I simply wished to thank you for keeping my Penny company today."

"Oh…" Ruby said, thankful that her fears were wrong. "I-It was no problem. She's really sweet."

"That she is," The man chuckled, the sincerity of the sound making the room feel much warmer. "Though even I have admit that being raised by parents obsessed with robots, in a house with such films always playing, has clearly influenced her personality. Not many people are willing to sit down with her due to it."

"Well people can be dumb," Ruby said, feeling herself blush at having been so brazen though the man simply let out another laugh.

"That is certainly true," he grinned and picked up the chairs. "Good work on the observation of her arm too. Engineers these days have a tendency to always look for the most complex thing and miss the obvious. It refreshing to meet someone who still knows the importance of checking the fundamentals."

"Th-Thank you," she stuttered as she picked up the other stack of chairs, shocked that she had just been complimented for her skill by one of the world's most renowned engineers.

No more words were exchanged as they made their way back into the office and spread the chairs out, but Ruby already felt much better. Picking a chair at the back of the room, Ruby settled in to listen to whatever Dr Polendina was about to say.

As she listened to the man talk about what he did at the company and the projects he was working on, she realised just how far she still had to go. While she understood a lot of what the man said, he would frequently mention things and methods that she and her classmates had never heard of. It was no doubt purposeful, as if he were to talk with the full extent of his full knowledge then none of them would understand a word for at least a few years.

Nonetheless, Ruby took all the notes she could. When questions had come around, Ruby couldn't help feel like her way stupid, but once most of the class had asked theirs, Dr Polendina had looked to her. After what felt like an eternity, she had asked him what minor, personal project he was most proud of was. A wide smile had broken over his face at the question, and he had quickly launched into a little story about how he had messed around with a large toy car so that Penny could drive around and keep up with them as a child while he worked on her limbs. The story itself was heart-warming to hear and the entire class had laughed at his expression of irony that his daughter had been driving since she was five, yet still couldn't get her license.

Once the fifteen minutes were up, Mrs Jadis returned and they all thanked him for the talk before leaving and making their way over to the centre table. As part of their tour, the STC was actually giving them an early update to the Scroll's next operating software that was to release the next week. It was while waiting for her turned that she saw her walk into the room. At first she didn't recognise her, but on a second look, she saw that it was actually Weiss.
She looked so different than she always did when visiting the house, but it wasn't anything physical. She was wearing her hair the same way as always, and Ruby had definitely seen her wear those white pants and blue shirt before, but something about her was much more rigid and frightening; though not in a scary way, but more an awe inspiring way.

Whenever she visited the house, she was always relaxed. A smile always painted her features and she seemed very easy going, but at her place of work, she looked like someone that shouldn't be messed with. Was her relaxed state really just because of her relationship with Yang? Ruby thought to herself curiously, confused as to what could make someone go from pure businesswoman to a smiling lover so effortlessly.

While friendships were rough for Ruby, they were nothing compared to the idea of relationships. The idea of finding someone had always confused her as people often only said that you would know when you find that person, that you would feel it. Even Yang had told her as much when she'd asked. But Ruby had never felt it, or at least she didn't think she had. It wasn't that she didn't want something like that one day, because, if how much she enjoyed Blake's romance stories meant anything, then she did. She had just never found anyone she felt that way for.

Like her inability to communicate easily, it bothered her sometimes. Especially when she remembered how easy Yang seemed to find herself in relationships. Guys, girls, they all seemed easy for Yang. But just like her other issues, it was something she also tried to ignore.

Realising she was in her head about it again, Ruby closed her eyes and shook the thoughts away. Upon opening them, she saw Weiss was looking at her and the woman gave a subtle wave as she walked towards the office they had just exited. Unfortunately, Ruby instinctively reacted.

"Hey, Weis…"

She caught herself, but she knew it was too late. She had already taken a step forward as she'd called out and she was very aware that her classmates were watching her. Weiss raised an eyebrow, her hand already resting on the handle of the door and Ruby turned away to simply look at the floor, very aware of the snickers that were issuing from her classmates.

"Recognised by one guy's kid and she thinks she knows Weiss Schnee," one of her classmates scoffed to her friend who chuckled.

Not correcting them as she knew she had already messed up, Ruby let out a sigh and turned back to simply wait for her turn. She hated that she sometimes just blurted out things even when she knew she shouldn't. It had happened with Oscar about her sister's relationship with Weiss, and though Yang hadn't been angry, she had scolded her for…

"Hello, Ruby."

The sound of Weiss' voice right behind her and the tap on her shoulder drew her out of her head. Turning back around, she saw Weiss standing there with a smile on her face. The sight confused her. She had messed up and called out to Weiss when she wasn't supposed to even know her, so why was Weiss talking to her instead of continuing her business.

"I forgot that your visit was today, how are you enjoying the STC so far?"

_Huh?_ Ruby thought to herself. Weiss shouldn't have known that she was visiting.

"F-Fine," Ruby stuttered a little, still rather confused as to why Weiss was taking this risk.

"Good, I hope my staff are treating you well," Weiss smiled again. "How is Yang?"
Again Ruby was filled with confusion. The couple had spent the entire morning talking before Ruby had to leave, so Weiss clearly knew how Yang was. However, as if sensing her hesitancy, Ruby saw Weiss' eyes flick to her left where the girl who had made the earlier comment was stood. The blue orbs filled with a cold ice that even made Ruby shiver and the realisation hit.

Weiss had heard the girl's jab and was not happy about it. Feeling a confidence well within her that Weiss cared so much for her as to risk her secret over a comment that wasn't too out of the norm, Ruby finally raised her head properly.

"She's... fine," Ruby said carefully as Weiss eyes returned to hers and became much softer. "She's spending the day at the gym."

"No doubt working out her nerves for tomorrow," Weiss said thoughtfully. Obviously Yang had told Weiss about the upcoming meeting with Raven too.

Duh, why wouldn't she?

"Yeah," Ruby said, feeling a little braver. "Typical Yang."

"Can't argue there," Weiss grinned softly, checking her watch. "I'm really sorry, Rubes, I really would stay and maybe give you and your class a more thorough tour, but I do have a meeting that I must attend. Please give Yang my best and tell her that I am looking forward to our meeting on Sunday?" Weiss paused for a minute, clearly noticing her own little error, and continued. "That last art piece she did for me was fantastic, and I can't wait to see what she has for me next."

"I'll let her know," Ruby said confidently, knowing the last part had simply been a cover as she already knew Weiss was staying over on Sunday. "I hope your meeting goes well."

"Thank you," Weiss said with an appreciative nod and made her way back to Dr Polendina's office.

Once Weiss had walked in and shut the door, Ruby turned back to her class with a smile on her face and saw them all staring at her in shock, even her teacher was staring. Feeling a little blush from the unfamiliar attention, Ruby looked back down at her notes as the engineer went through them one by one and updated their Scrolls.

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Twenty minutes later, Ruby climbed up onto the bus and took her seat. The day had been much weirder than she expected. When she had set out that morning, she had thought she would just see a bunch of new tech, talk to some workers, get some information, then head home. What she hadn't expected was to meet someone new, get complimented by a world renowned inventor, and then have her entire class find out that she was friends with Weiss.

Her classmates hadn't said a single word to her since Weiss had talked to her, not even when she dropped her Scroll trying to give it to the engineer. Honestly, she quite liked that the situation hadn't caused them to snicker. For once she didn't feel like the gazes on her were mocking her for not fitting in, so with a small smile to herself as everyone took their seats on the bus, Ruby looked at her Scroll and saw she already had a message. Unsurprisingly it was from Ilia and she quickly opened it.

'How was the trip? Got some free time after work if you wanna geek out about it?'

Feeling oddly happy at the offer, Ruby hurriedly typed out a yes and settled in for the drive home. The day had definitely not been what she expected, but she ultimately decided that was definitely a good thing.
Hello :) A small side chapter today. I wanted to have a little outside story today, and I thought Ruby would be perfect for it as I want to bring the side characters in more (especially where I am in actually writing, which is Chapter 49,) so expect some more of these fringe chapters in the future. They won't be super frequent, but they will be a thing occasionally. I hope the chapter was good at least and not a little jumbled. I put a bunch of myself into Ruby here with my own struggles and sorting my thoughts out it difficult, so hopefully everything was fine. I hope you enjoyed the little side story, I know bunch of you have been asking for Penny due to her father being in the story, so hopefully I wrote her well here. She was always intended to make an appearance, but I never found the right spot, but now I have xD

Speaking of where I am in writing, while next chapter isn't a long one, the next chapter does mark a turn for the story. So I hope you look forward to that. But anyway, that's it from me. I hope you enjoyed, and thank you for reading.
Yang Xiao Long

"AHHH! STOP!"

As the streak of red darted away from her, Yang let out a small chuckle and took a step towards the cringing girl and opened her hands. The brown house spider, that was almost the size of her palm, quickly scurried to her fingertips, but she effortlessly caught it. Ruby had hated spiders for her whole life, and though Yang was always quick to get rid of them for her, it was hardly very sisterly of her, to not tease her sister a little first.

"Why? He just wants a hug," Yang laughed and held her hands out a further, Ruby jumping backwards. "That's why he had so many arms."

"Noooo, get it awaaaay!" Ruby squealed, her hand reaching behind her to grab one of Zwei's discarded toys from the desk that she immediately threw at Yang.

Dodging it with another laugh, Yang gave the redhead a small shrug walked to a nearby window. Pulling it open, she rested her hand against the wall and allowed the spider to crawl away. Though she had just killed them for the first few years of doing it, eventually she had stopped. Though she was happy to eat a steak, or any meat for that matter, the idea of killing such a small creature, simply for the act of it being there, had started to make her feel sad. So whenever she could, she would always place them safely outside, despite knowing they would find their way back in.

"Cheers, Spider Buddy," Yang said cheerfully as the small arachnid scurried along the bricks. Turning back to her sister, she showed her hands and saw Ruby let out a relieved sigh and give her a firm pout.

"Thank you."

"Mhm," Yang hummed in return and made her way to the top of the stairs. "Now hurry up and take your shower. Every second wasted is another second someone could take something good."

Slowing her pace as Ruby walked towards her, she met her sister's silver eyes and felt a smirk take over her face. Once the girl was close enough, Yang cupped her hands and made the motion to throw something at her. The scream that Ruby released echoed through the house, quickly followed by Yang's raucous laughter as she dodged yet another thrown toy and ran down the stairs.
Jumping past the last three steps, she landed gracefully and came face to face with her father. Things had been tense for the past week, yet again, but the two were still on speaking terms, and he had not let himself go this time. He had still been rather secretive however, but Yang had been trying what Blake had said. Though she made sure to remind him every day that the subject was not forgotten, she wasn't pushing him, instead allowing him to think things through.

It was working so far. The tension had eased a little and they were able to hold a conversation, and Tai seemed to genuinely be thinking about what she'd said. When she told him yesterday that she was meeting Raven again, he had told her that despite his caution, he thought it was good she was willing to give Raven a chance. She had also overheard him on the phone to his sponsor, but she never liked to pry into those conversations and quickly left. So giving the man before her a smile as he picked up the toy, Yang made her way to the kitchen.

"I'm making bacon," she said as she entered the living room, flicking the television on.

As it loaded up and switched to the last channel, a music station that Yang liked, she moved into the kitchen and set about making breakfast. In minutes, the smell of cooking bacon filled the house and as it mixed with the fast paced rock music floating through from the living room, Yang breathed out a small, contented sigh. It was moments like those that easily made her forget all the family troubles. There was no tension, no arguing, no secrets, just the feeling of being surrounded by everything she loved.

*The only thing missing is Weiss,* she thought to herself with a sigh, though not a sad one. Sure their communication was at an all time low, with last night being completely without a phone call and the usual morning hello being absent too, but she understood why. Weiss had told her about the seemingly impossible task that her father had set her, and she knew how important it was she succeeded. However, Yang was still sending her messages where she could to show her support and make sure Weiss wasn't running herself ragged again.

"Your sister is going to get you back one day," said a voice from behind her and Yang looked over her shoulder to see her father sitting down at the table. "You know that, right?"

"Pfft," Yang breathed and flipped the bacon over. "She can't pick up anything with more than four legs, she would never go near a scorpion."

"That's a fair point," he chuckled and ran a hand through his scraggy, blonde hair. "So, you two are going shopping for the day?"

"Mhm," Yang hummed, reaching for the eggs and cracking one over the second frying pan. "She should be back around four-ish. If she doesn't go and bother Blake."

"And you're going to meet Raven at the food court?"

Yang could hear the caution in his voice as he asked.

"Yeah," she replied with a small nod. "Do you need me to pick anything up while I'm in town?"

"A new bulb for the bathroom," he said, though Yang definitely got the sense it was the thing furthest from his mind. "So uhh... A second meeting so soon. I take it things are going well?"

Turning to look at her father properly, she saw his blue eyes glancing down at the table where his thumbs were twiddling. Worrying that he had changed his mind about her getting to know Raven and no longer considered it a good thing, Yang raised an eyebrow.

"You said yesterday that you thought it was a go..."
"I still do," He interrupted her and looked up from the table. "I'm just... asking."

"Oh."

Returning to the almost finished food, she shoved some bread in the toaster and pulled a plate from the cupboard.

"It's going... okay," Yang said, unsure how to describe it properly. She was however glad that Tai had brought the conversation up, and decided that since he had done it, she was okay to go a little deeper. "She seems different to how you said she was though."

"How so?"

"Well, you always said she was complicated, that she was always reserved," Yang shrugged and placed all the food on the plate. Turning everything off, she walked over to the table and sat down, placing the plate between then with two sets of cutlery. "But she hasn't been like that. Not with me, At least."

"Or maybe she has and you just aren't recognising it?" Tai questioned, picking up a slice of bacon. The words weren't said with any judgement, but there was a certain belief in his voice that made her raise her eyebrows. "I'm not saying she's hiding anything, I don't know her well enough to say that, not anymore, but the Raven I knew was never this straightforward. She's been gone for eighteen years and now wants to get to know you. She is likely putting her best foot forward right now."

"Or maybe she has changed?" Yang countered, unable to keep the hope from her voice. She actually liked that Raven was being so forward with her.

"Maybe," Tai hummed and swallowed his mouthful. "I'm not trying to make you doubt anything, just please be careful. I know how much this means to you, and I don't want you hurt."

"I know," Yang nodded, picking up a knife and cutting the egg so that the yolk spilled over the bacon. "So... are you... Are you willing to talk about her now?"

Tai's blue eyes locked onto hers. They looked tired from his long shifts at work, and though it had been years, she could still see that cloud in his eyes from his desire for alcohol. With how tired they looked, she half expected him to say no, but was surprised when he gave a slow nod of his head. It was subtle, but she saw it nonetheless.

"As adults," he said after a minute. "So no shouting or arguing. You hear me out, I hear you out. Agreed?"

Without hesitation, Yang gave him a firm nod and sat up straight in her chair. Receiving a defeated sigh from the man, she picked up her own piece of bacon and waited patiently.

"I'll skip the finer details as Raven explained them anyway," he said slowly, his voice cautious. "But the first time I kissed Summer, it was a mistake. Me and Raven had just had a fight over something stupid that even I don't remember, but she broke up with me, not for the first time, and Summer found me drunk in the park. What happened is hazy, but I know I initiated it and she slapped me. Hard enough to sober me up. Once I was in my right mind again, I apologised and we agreed to write it off as a stupid, drunk mistake. Also not my first."

"But I guess those things are easier to say than do. Stupid teen hormones, desperation, whatever it was, that kiss triggered something. Me and Summer had been friends since kindergarten and I had never thought of it as something more, but after it had happened, it was all I could think about. Her
too. But I also loved Raven at the time, despite all our break ups. So I made the stupid decision of trying for both. Summer hated it, always said she couldn't go behind Raven's back anymore and that it was the last time, but it never was. That was my fault."

"Then years later when it started happening again, and we were found out, Summer had had enough. She was in tears when she told me to choose, not just because we were found out, but because she was actively hurting her friend. She couldn't do it anymore. We couldn't stay away from each other, and she couldn't be the other woman either. That was when I made my biggest mistake. All the others are miniscule compared to what I did that day."

"Choosing Raven was a mistake?" Yang asked, confused as to how that was the biggest mistake he had made in the situation.

"Yes," He said simply, though regret passed over his eyes. "I loved Summer more, almost every part of me screamed to pick her. But you were in the picture by that point and I was scared what picking her would do. But Raven saw through it anyway and things turned worse. She took you and ran, and I've only seen her a couple of times since, but I know her life has been a mess ever since. I was a coward, and she deserved far better than I ever gave her. But more than anything, I shouldn't have lied to her."

"You shouldn't have cheated, either," Yang said firmly, trying to keep the judgement from her voice. "None of it would have happened if you had just chosen back in high school."

"That's true," Tai said with a nod, but something else entered his voice. Something Yang instantly recognised as resolve. "But, and you may hate me for this and you probably should, I'm not sorry that I did cheat."

That admission hit Yang like a truck. Taken aback, she simply stared at her father. Had he really just admitted to not being sorry to cheating on Raven? To not being sorry he caused her so much pain?

"Wh-What?"

"You want me to treat you as an adult," he said with a sigh. "And part of being an adult is accepting things about yourself."

"I regret so much of how I treated Raven. The cheating, the lying, the cowardice; but I cannot be sorry that they happened."

"Why?"

"Because staying with Raven gave me you," he said with a shake of his head. "And everything else that happened with Summer gave us Ruby. I know this might make me a monster in your eyes, but while I have failed at being a father in so many ways, I would rather go to my grave before I think about taking anything back that gave me you two. You and Ruby are my world, and I cannot be sorry for anything that brought you into it."

"That's…"

Yang cut herself off, unsure what to say. How did she reply to that? Those were her father's feelings. That was how much he cared for them, so much so that he was willing to accept the worst part of himself and take the consequences for his actions. However, no matter how much she appreciated the words, the idea of someone being fine with ruining a life just for her didn't sit well with her.
"...Wrong."

"I know," He said with a nod, though there was no shame there. "You will understand one day when you are a parent, Yang. I know you feel very strongly about Ruby, but when you actually have a child, you will know what it means to be willing to sacrifice everything for your child without a second thought. For you and Ruby, I will accept that I did something unforgivable, because that means you were brought into this world, whether you still talk to me or not."

"I..."

Yang looked down at the table, unable to maintain eye contact with her father anymore. Despite all of their issues, she had always thought of him as a good man at heart. He always tried to do his best by people, to treat them with respect, and though he had made many mistakes, those values had always been there. But what he had just said, what Raven had revealed, they had shaken her. Like Blake worried about the solidity of her parent's relationship, Yang now worried that her father wasn't the good man she thought he was. And had he not just admitted as such?

He had. He'd said he can't be sorry for doing it, for ruining a life he knew was fragile. If he could do that, what else had he done? Those values he instilled in her of treating people right and always working to better yourself, had they all been lies?

"I didn't want to admit that to you," he said sadly. That time there was remorse in his voice. "Because I am pretty sure I know what happens next. But you are right that you deserve the truth, and now you have it. So if that is what you need to do, then I won't fight it."

Yang knew what he meant, as it wouldn't be the first time. However, her mind was still running through everything, thinking on her whole life. She wasn't sure what she wanted to do anymore. As she thought, she heard Tai stand from his chair and make his way to the door. From her peripheral, she saw him stop and turn to look back at her.

"But please remember that I love you, Yang," He said with a heavy sigh. "No matter what happens."

With those words, he left. Left her to her thoughts, to her doubts and uncertainties. Why was that what it always came back to? Why could her life never be simple? A good father, a mother who hadn't left, one who hadn't died, why couldn't she have those things? Was the world really keen on shattering everything she had? Was Weiss next? Or Ruby? Or Blake? How much more could be taken from her? And was anything safe?

Questions. All she had were questions with no answers. It was all she had had for her whole life, and just as it always did, the anger welled inside her. A flick of the wrist was all it took for the half full plate on the table to be sent flying towards the wall where it shattered on impact, the sharp sound audible even over the music.

"Yang?"

The soft voice caught her attention, and she looked up to see her sister. Her hair was still damp from the shower and her eyes were wide, glancing back and forth between her and the mess that Yang had made. Glancing into those silver eyes, she thought on her father's words. He wasn't sorry he hurt Raven because he had Ruby. The girl from another relationship that, to him, validated everything he'd done.

As she stood, Yang saw Ruby shrink a little. Yang knew the girl hated when she was angry, something about it unsettled her, so she wasn't surprised to see the young redhead grow
increasingly nervous as Yang walked to the door.

But Yang wouldn't settle for it. Never would she allow Ruby to feel like she herself did. Never would Ruby doubt the person she loved, so the moment Yang was in arms reach, she pulled her sister into a tight hug. Through all her anger at what her father's words had caused, she would never blame Ruby's existence for them, she could never blame her. Instead she held there for a couple of minutes, Ruby's quietly accepting the hug.

Finally, after a couple of minutes, Yang pulled away and looked down at her sister. With one of the most forced smiles of her life, she gave her sister a light poke to the forehead.

"Time to go shopping, Rubes."

"I can't believe you made me buy a dress," Ruby groaned as they exited the store, a couple of bags in their hands. "Especially after I showed you that jacket."

"A jacket I can't afford," Yang said with a raised eyebrow to the younger girl.

"That's not my fault."

"Not my fault you have a dance coming up either."

"But you're the one making me go."

"Yup," she replied firmly, giving her sister a small shoulder bump.

Receiving another groan from the redhead, Yang let the silence between them continue as they walked to the food court. Having fun with her sister was always a surefire way to cheer herself up, but as they made their way down the busy hallway, she knew it wasn't working like it normally did. Whenever she was alone for more than a minute while Ruby tried on clothes, or while she herself tried on clothes, her mind would drift back to that morning's conversation.

She still wasn't sure how she felt. On one hand, she was grateful Tai had finally told her the truth and, at the very least, admitted that what he had done was wrong; but on the other, he had shattered everything she had believed of him with one simple admission. She still remembered that it had been Tai who pushed her into boxing after an altercation at school. Some students had taken to throwing magnets at her during science class in hopes that they would stick to her braces, and though she'd kept her cool for a while, she eventually snapped and got into a fight that left them both with broken noses.

Tai had been furious with her when they had called him in. She may not have always had the physique she did now, but she had always been rather sporty and that made her naturally stronger. He had scolded her for at least an hour when they got home, about how she was lucky not to be expelled, how anger didn't justify violence towards those weaker than her. But mostly he had been angry that she wasn't sorry about hurting them.

"You are stronger than them, Yang," He'd said angrily, though Yang remembered she was also just as angry at the time. "And more importantly, you are better than them because you know right from wrong. But not when you are like this."

After that argument, he had signed her up for boxing classes. Twice a week in hopes that it would focus her temper into something more productive, and even reduce it all together. And it had worked. Just like her art and her cooking, boxing clicked with her instantly. It quickly felt like something she was born to do, and now she guessed that was because she literally had boxing in
After her first meeting with Raven, she had looked up her grandfather and discovered he actually won a few tournaments in his day. There was nothing major and he wasn't known worldwide, but he had blazed quite the trail through the lower professional scene and people seemed to think he was a natural who was destined to go the distance. But then he dropped off the face of Remnant, for seemingly no reason. No-one knew why, but from the dates of the papers it seemed to be roughly forty years ago. The same time Raven and Qrow were likely born. Raven had also mentioned an injury, but she hadn't been able to find anything about that in the articles.

"Yang?" Ruby's broke the silence and drew her from her thoughts. Looking to her side, she saw Ruby watching her carefully, her silver eyes shining with worry. "Are you okay? You keep drifting off."

"Sorry," she breathed out with a small smile. Fortunately it didn't feel as forced as the one she had given that morning. "Just stuff on my mind, is all."

"Dad?" She asked carefully. "Or Raven?"

"Both." She wasn't going to lie to Ruby. "Just… I don't know really know if either of them are who I thought they were."

Ruby stayed silent for a moment. Yang knew the girl had overheard part of the conversation, but she wasn't sure how much. Turning the corner and seeing the food court, she wondered if the girl had overheard enough to know about the affair. While she wasn't going to lie to her, she knew how much Summer meant to Ruby. As much as Yang loved Summer, and still did, Ruby practically revered her. Yang guessed it came with never really knowing her, and therefore wanting to believe she was perfect.

"Dad is right, isn't he," Ruby asked sadly, drawing Yang's attention. "You're going to do it again?"

"I don't know, Rubes," Yang replied honestly as she looked at the ground, as she really wasn't sure. "Would… Would you be mad at me if I did?"

"No," Ruby head shook after a second of thought. "I don't want you to, but I would understand."

Giving her sister a brief look to see a comforting smile on the girl's face, Yang breathed out a sigh of relief and slung an arm around her shoulders.

"I'm still not sure what I'm gonna do, Rubes," she admitted and pulled the girl closer to herself. "Except buy you that party-sized cookie you're always eyeing."

Though she was clearly still worried, Yang saw a small smile pull at her sister's lips. Once they arrived at the door to the food court, Yang pulled them open and pushed her sister lightly inside.

The multiple smells of food hit Yang like a truck, and she actually found it rather horrible. Not unbearably so, but the mix wasn't a good one. The smells of cooking fish and beef, fries and rice, and so many other things all joined together to create a smell that made her nose crinkle. She loved the smell of spices delicately blending together, of food that complimented each other. Thankfully, while horrible, it wasn't bad enough that she couldn't deal with it and they quickly made their was over to the small baked goods stand.

As they walked, Yang scanned the crowd. The meeting with Raven was in less than ten minutes so she doubted the woman would be there just yet, but she looked anyway. Taking almost a minute to look at all the couples and business men and women while Ruby ordered her cookie, she was
almost ready to say the woman wasn't there yet when her eyes fell on a head of pitch-black hair. The moment she saw it, Yang became aware of the dark red eyes that were looking her way; but they weren't looking at her, they were looking at Ruby.

She thought Ruby would have already left by the time the woman arrived, but she should have known it was a foolish thought. It just wasn't her day after all. A small tap on her shoulder caught her attention and she turned to see the woman at the register holding a cookie about the size of her chest and waiting to get paid.

"Oh, sorry," Yang said, pulling a Lien card from her pocket and handing it over. "Keep the change."

After Ruby accepted the cookie, they both turned around and Yang saw Raven was still staring at them.

"Is that her?" Ruby asked, her looking directly at the woman. "She looks just like you."

"Yeah," She replied with a nod. "You should probably head home or something. We're not really at the whole 'meeting the family' part yet."

"Oh, that makes sense," Ruby said with a nod and turned away.

As the small redhead gave her a coy smile, Yang pulled her into a one armed hug for a couple of seconds before pulling away. "I'll see you at home, later."

"Have fun," Ruby said as she walked away.

Once Ruby made her way through the doors, Yang turned back to Raven and saw that the woman was still looking at the entryway. Clearly introducing her to Ruby was going to be more complicated than she thought. However, when the door was shut and Ruby was out of sight, the red eyes flicked back in her direction and Yang let out a sigh as she made her way over to her.

As she approached the table that the woman was sat at with a large tray of food in front of her, she noticed the woman was wearing a top that exposed her a good portion of her chest. The tattoo she had only seen a hint of before was on full display and the closer Yang got, the easier it was to make out. Two black birds, a crow and a raven, sat on a branch. The larger of them had bright red eyes and its wings were spread wide, while the smaller one had duller eyes and sat behind it. The meaning behind it was obvious, and from the heavily faded lines it was clearly very old.

"Hi," Yang said awkwardly when she finally reached the table and slowly sat down.

"Hello," Raven replied, something in her voice sounding off. Though Yang was pretty certain she knew what had caused it. "How are you?"

"I'm..."

Yang didn't know what to say. She had promised to herself that she would be honest with Raven since the woman was always honest with her, but did she really tell the woman about her doubts? They weren't so close yet that she was willing to bare her soul to her.

"From that look, I'm guessing not very good," the woman said before Yang could talk. "This can be postponed if you want?"

"No," Yang answered with a firm shake of her head. "I'm fine. And you?"
"I'm fine," Raven said loftily. "Though seeing what could pass as a clone of my best... former best friend is not what I expected to see today."

"Sorry, I wasn't expecting you to be here early."

"It's okay."

There was a tension in the air. A tension that made Yang uneasy. From the way Raven was sitting up straight, it was clear she was a little on edge herself. Despite living with her father for her whole life, she still couldn't imagine what it felt for him and Raven to see Ruby. However, just like her words about Summer always being her mom, Yang knew there was another thing she had to make clear.

"Ruby is important to me," Yang said, keeping her voice even so that Raven knew she was serious. "The most important thing to me."

Scarlet eyes locked onto hers and Yang could feel her searching for something. She had no idea what Raven was looking for, but she made sure to hold the gaze. What felt like a minute passed before the older woman looked away and gave a short nod while pushing the tray on food that was on the table to the middle.

"Understood," She said stiffly, and picked up some fries. "But she isn't to me. I want a relationship with you. Not them."

"Having a relationship with me means you will know her," Yang said stubbornly. "That is not up for debate."

Raven's eyes hardened at her words and Yang felt fear run through her that the woman might walk away. But if she did, then so be it. Ruby was a non-negotiable thing in her life. If the choice was between a relationship with Ruby or a relationship with Raven, then there would be no choice at all. Clearly the woman saw that and let out a heavy sigh.

"I do not want a relationship with her, Yang."

Without hesitation, Yang stood and looked down at the woman. It pained her to do so, as she genuinely did want a relationship with her, but she needed to show how important a point this was for her. "Then we're done..."

"But..." Raven cut her off quickly and raised a hand. The word caused Yang to pause and raise an eyebrow at the woman. "I do want a relationship with you. If dealing with her presence is what I have to do, then I will. So long as you understand that it will likely never be anything more than me tolerating it for you."

Staring back at her for a minute, Yang stayed firm. Finally, she gave a nod and sat back down.

"I'm not expecting you to care about her in the way you did Summer," She admitted, picking up some fries herself. "I don't even expect you to care for her. But my dad once made the mistake of lying to you, and it's a mistake I won't repeat. I don't care what, or who, I have to lose, or how painful it is to do it, I will always choose Ruby."

"I won't be making you choose, Yang," Raven said, her eyes looking on to hers. "But you are right that I will likely never care for the girl."

"I can deal with that," Yang said finally, placing the fries into her mouth.
"Good," Raven hummed, pulling one of the burgers towards herself. "And thank you. I appreciate the honesty."

"You have been honest with me," Yang said slowly, reaching out for a burger of her own. "I understand how you feel though. It's not like I am expecting you to meet me at the house while she is there. But she will be there for important events."

"Then, as I intend to be there for them too, I will learn to deal with that."

The two looked at each other again and let the understanding settle in. Yang believe the woman's words about likely never caring for Ruby, but it was clear she care about the relationship between them enough to honor her word. So letting her body relax, Yang slumped back in her chair and bit into her food.

"So…" Raven said, her own voice sounding a little more relaxed too. "How is the progress on your bike coming along?"

Laying on her bed as she thought about her day, Yang rolled to her side to see that it was almost two in the morning. From the discussion she had with her father to the meeting with Raven, it had probably been the hardest she'd had in a while.

She still wasn't sure how she felt about Tai's admission. She understood that he simply cared for them that much; but at the same time, she couldn't agree with his position. Being sorry it happened wouldn't change anything, both she and Ruby would still be here. Him being sorry for his actions also didn't mean he would be sorry they were born. Was there something else? She was willing to belief what he told her about the affair was the truth, but no matter how much she tried she just couldn't help think there was something more to why he thought that way.

Of course, she could be wrong. Or she could be right and Tai didn't know himself. Raven wasn't able to offer any insight either.

During the meeting they talked about plenty of things. Yang's bike, how it was living in Mistral, and what it was like to be back in Vale, along with what her work was like. With the history talked about and out of the way for the most part, the conversation felt a lot easier. She was able to relax more, and so was Raven. She had even heard Raven laugh when Yang had talked about how she accidentally sprayed herself in the face with fluid while fixing her bike. The sound had been weird, almost like it was something the woman wasn't used to doing. Though Yang suspected she wasn't.

However, when the woman had asked about how other things were such as Weiss, or White as Raven knew her, and things at home, they had both stiffened. Yang still didn't like lying about Weiss, not when Raven so clearly valued honesty, but it was another thing she simply couldn't tell her yet. Raven had stiffened up when Yang told her what Tai said.

It was an awkward talk, and Raven clearly didn't enjoy it, but Yang was already lying about one thing and she hoped the woman might be able to provide some insight from what she knew of him. The result was the opposite though. Once she had finished telling her what Tai said, she had stiffened just as much as Yang did when lying about Weiss, and had even snapped a little too little harshly at a roaming server for getting their order wrong. Yang had been quick to tell her to apologise, but the conversation from that point just felt off.

With the relaxed mood broken, they had ultimately decided to call it once they were done eating and after a quick goodbye and a promise there would be another meeting, Yang made her way home.
It was on the way home that once again that Yang found herself disturbed again. She wasn't taking
the quickest route home, instead she found herself taking a route that added at least half an hour to
the walk. At one point she even realised she was walking the opposite direction. The worst was
when she finally made it to her street, where she had spent almost an hour sat at the bus stop at the
end of the road. Things like that had happened before, the longer route, the desire to not go home,
and they almost always led to the same thing. But she was trying to not do that because she didn't
know if it would help this time.

However, as she finally made her way into the house and saw her father, she knew it would
happen. She only met his eyes once, but quickly realised she couldn't look at him. He was her dad,
but with what she thought of him broken, he looked like a stranger. She still loved him, he was still
her father, but she knew then what her decision would be. Though it wasn't until that moment, at
half past two in the morning that the defeat finally took her and she had to admit to herself what Tai
and Ruby already knew that morning.

I can't stay here.

She couldn't stay. She couldn't look at Tai everyday and try to work things out. She needed space, a
place away from him to think. But where? Every time she left before, she had stayed at Blake's, but
that was not an option this time as Ilia was there, and Yang refused to put Kali and Ghira out like
that. The rest of her friends stayed at the college dorms. There was Raven, but that was far more
than she was ready for, and Yang didn't know if Raven was either. Thankfully there was one
person. One person who Yang knew would help.

Weiss.

She hated to do it as the girl was always really busy and had a meeting tomorrow, and she really
didn't want to wake her up, but she had made a promise to call if she ever needed something. So as
she lifted herself off her bed and made her way to her closet to pack a rucksack for the morning,
Yang picked up her Scroll and called her girlfriend.

Chapter End Notes

UPLOAD UPDATE!

I will be quick. Due to the holidays and the fact that I really, really want to get the 5
day rotation with How It Feels going again as having two stories being edited so close
together puts a lot of stress on Toxic, this story will next be updated on the 4th of
January. Sorry that you will have to wait a while longer, but its something I feel needs
to be done. The next chapter is the first of a two-parter though, and both parts are quite
long.

A/N

Soooo, that happened xD This chapter was really necessary as it now puts Yang into
the position I need her to be. There is a quick part I want to touch on though, and that
is Tai. I know he's comes across really badly to some of you in this arc, but I'm really
not trying to paint him that way. Maybe this is just something I have screwed up in the
writing, but I really want it to be clear that he isn't a bad guy, he has just made a lot of
mistakes. I normally don't outline what I am doing with my characters in these notes,
but I felt I needed to clear that up as there is a bunch coming there.
Another thing I want to talk about is a comment I got, and really appreciate, saying there are a lot of plot points going on right now. I agree here and this is somewhat purposeful to show everyone has a lot going on in their lives, and not just what the story is about. I just wanted to promise that all these plot points are planned out and are going to converge, and all of that will begin to happen after the upcoming Ironwood meeting. I am currently writing chapter 50, and that meeting with Ironwood will be Chapter 52, so please just hang on a little longer. That was just another thing I wanted to clear up.
A New Home (Part 1)

Chapter Summary

With Yang having reached out for help, Weiss is happy to give it. But can Yang accept the help Weiss is giving?

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: All characters belong to Rooster Teeth Productions
Edited by ToxicExotic
Warning in the end notes

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Yang Xiao Long

It was with caution that Yang stepped out of the car and looked up at the building in front of her. It was huge. She counted fifty floors, at least, but the rest were so high up that they were indiscernible from each other and started to look like nothing more than a large sheet of glass. Not that what she could see didn't look like a giant sheet of glass anyway. Yang knew what it was instantly.

*Founder Towers.* Named after the two people who originally settled Vale centuries ago, Salem and Ozma, the Founders Towers were a pair of apartment buildings stood side by side. Only the richest of the rich could afford to live there. Celebrities, millionaires, business tycoons, even diplomats; anyone that lived in Vale who's name carried significant weight sought to live on any of the floors.

When she had asked Weiss for a place to stay, she had never expected this. Maybe helping her afford a small hotel that Yang could eventually pay back, not the most sought after living locale in the entire city. There was no way she could comfortably stay there. People would stare, they would know she didn't belong instantly. So with a shake of her head, she turned back around, only to be stopped by Weiss. The woman had already stepped out of the car and slung her bag over her shoulder, and with a pointed stare, she shut the car door. It was clear Weiss was not going to let her go anywhere.

"Weiss," She hissed, thought the street was pretty dead as it was barely seven in the morning. "I don't belong here."

"Yes, you do," Weiss stated firmly, her blue eyes holding her gaze despite the tried red rings beneath them. "And I have nowhere else for you to stay."

"I told you," she countered. "A small, cheap hotel will be fine and I'll pay you back."

"And I have told you, Yang," Weiss with a hard tone. "You will never be paying me back for
anything. And I will never have you feeling obligated to, which you will if I put you up in a hotel. Besides, I have already made these arrangements. Now, are you going to continue to stand there arguing with me in the street? Or are you going to allow me to show you where you'll be staying?"

Though it was phrased as a question, the fact that Weiss walked past her towards the door let her know that it wasn't. Weiss had made up her mind and seeing how she had wanted her help finding a place to live for a bit, then she would have to accept that. So letting out a heavy sigh, she accepted her bag from Hazel with a small nod, and turned to walk towards the door that was being held open by a doorman.

As she walked through, she felt herself look around in awe. The atrium was just as huge as one would expect from looking at the building's exterior, it was so large in fact that someone would be mistaken for thinking they had walked into the ground floor of a global company.

The entire floor was shining, white marble with an exception of a pattern on the centre. It was hard to tell from her current position, but she knew it was a compass with an eye at its centre and a cane that ran through it from north to south. The logo for the two buildings. The two walls were also made of the same marble and on the far side was a large counter. Sat behind it was a man that Yang could tell was in his mid twenties. He was clearly very tall, even though he was sitting, and the tanned skin, large muscles, and short hair gave off a very intimidating presence.

Whether Weiss felt that presence, Yang wouldn't know as the small, snowy-haired girl walked up to the giant with confidence. Knowing she should catch up, she adjusted the duffel bag on her shoulder and made fast steps to catch up. *He's going to see that I so do not belong here*, she thought to herself as she quickly caught up to her girlfriend.

However, contrary to her thoughts, the man gave a smile as they approached and stood from his chair. *Is everything here huge?* Yang thought to herself as she was correct in her assessment that he was, in fact, also huge. Not quite the size of Hazel, but still easily seven feet. Although, she had to admit she was wrong about the intimidating part. With a smile on his face, he was actually rather handsome, and exuded an aura of protection rather than intimidation. As she drew closer, she saw his uniform had a security badge with the name *Yatsuhashi Daichi* printed on it below the symbol of a compass. Clearly they were in *Compass Tower*, and the one next door was *Cane Tower*.

"Good morning," He said once they were both close enough, his voice gruff but friendly. "Can I help you with anything?"

"Yes," Weiss said and rifled through her bag. "Weiss Schnee. You were informed I would be coming?"

"Ahh, yes," he said with a polite bow and typed something on the keyboard. "If I could just get two forms of ID from you?"

"Of course," Weiss replied and pulled out some paperwork from her bag and handed it over.

"ID? You're not renting this are you?" Yang whispered into her girlfriends ear as the man typed more stuff on the keyboard and sorted some things out.

"You do not rent these apartments, Yang. You buy them," Yang was very quick to raise her hand in objection as there was no way she was letting Weiss buy a luxury apartment just for her to stay in and sort her head out. However, Weiss cut her off even quicker. "And before you say anything, no I am not buying it either."

"Then wh…"
"All seems to be in order, Miss Schnee," The man said before Yang could finish her sentence. "The apartment owner has authorized two key-cards." Pulling out a set of keys that were attached by wire to his waist, he unlocked a drawer in his desk and pulled out two cards that were roughly the size of a credit card. "Please take care that these are not lost as there is a rather large fine, but if they are then you can report it to us and we will cancel the chips immediately. On behalf of Founders Towers, welcome to the most luxurious living spaces in Vale."

"Thank you."

Accepting both the cards from the man, Weiss gave him a small nod and made her way towards a hallway to the left of the desk. Offering him the same, Yang slowly made her way after her. By the time she caught up, passing what appeared to be a retractable metal gate embedded in the wall, Weiss was already pressing the button on one of the elevators. Yang still wasn't sure about this arrangement, but became even more unsure when she saw Weiss press one of the key-cards against a blank panel and the word *Top* appeared on the screen.

Once the door was closed, Weiss' hand slipped onto hers and the woman took a step closer, her head coming to a rest against Yang's upper arm. While she was still unsure about staying in such a fancy place, she instantly recognised it as tiredness. It wasn't surprising since she had called her at half past two in the morning, and she had likely been awake for a while afterwards to organise this place. It annoyed her that she was keeping Weiss awake when she knew the woman had a meeting; so letting out a sigh, she slipped her arm around Weiss' shoulders.

"Don't do that," Weiss said immediately, her voice firm despite her eyes still being closed. However, as she pulled her arm away, Weiss' stopped it in its place. "I meant sighing. You are not keeping me awake."

"Yes I am," she counter sadly. "You stayed awake to sort this out for me, even though you have a meeting today, and so far I've just been ungrateful."

"You've been stubborn," Weiss corrected her, a thin arm snaking its way around her waist. "As you tend to be. But I want to help you."

"I know," Yang said with a nod, letting her head fall against the top of Weiss and inhaling the sweet, vanilla scent that drifted from it. "But I'm still not sure about this place. Who lives in this apartment, Weiss?"

"No-one."

"Weis…"

"No-one lives here, Yang," Weiss said with a shake of her head. "It's Winter's."

Taken aback by that answer, Yang lifted her head and looked down at the woman in her arms. Winter may have said she liked her, but she also said she was cautious. Would a cautious person really let someone they were suspicious off stay in there house while they were aw… Wait!

"I thought you said Winter always stayed in hotels when she was here?" Yang asked, the memory coming back to her clear as day.

"She does," Weiss said with a nod, lifting her head up too as the elevator began to slow. "She bought this place when she was younger, but barely used it."

"She bought an apartment that costs a couple million Lien and doesn't use it?"
Before Yang received her answer, the elevator came to a stop and the door opened. She felt her jaw instantly drop at what was in front of her. She had expected it to be luxurious, but this was beyond anything she could have thought.

The living room was massive. The floor was comprised of light, wood tile and a white rug was spread over the middle. Atop the rug sat a large sofa that could easily seat five people, and two smaller chairs were sat on either side of it; all of them facing a enormous television that hung on the wall. As she hadn't yet left the elevator, Yang couldn't quite see what was down there, but one of the walls were open and she believed she saw a few cupboards and guessed it was likely the kitchen. The far wall opposite her however was nothing but glass, and Yang could already tell it overlooked the whole city.

The thing she considered the stupidest however was that there were stairs leading up to a second floor. Again, she couldn't see what the second floor held.

"What! The! Fuck!" She exclaimed slowly as Weiss pulled her into the room and she saw that she was indeed correct that the area she had seen before was a kitchen. "Weiss… I… I can't st…"

"Yes! You can," Weiss said with a raised eyebrow as she span around to face her. "As I said, Winter doesn't use it so it's unoccupied. Plus, the type of people that live in this building all know the value of privacy, so you will have plenty of peace. That means more space to think."

"Space is a bit of an understatement, Yang said, looking around to see a balcony bordering the second floor and what looked to be more chairs.

"She did go a little overboard when she bought it," Weiss chuckled, clearly amused by the bewildered look that Yang knew was on her face. "From what I understand, she bought it before she left for the military. She only ever brought me here once, and she didn't seem too happy to be here."

"So she bought a multi-million Lien apartment, but doesn't like it?"

"I'm pretty sure the reason she bought it was due to the falling out with my father," Weiss replied thoughtfully. "This place likely reminds her that she failed at something. I think its stupid thinking, but she has always hated feeling like she failed."

"And you are su…"

"One hundred percent," Weiss interrupted her and held out one of the cards, thought Yang still didn't take it. Seemingly done with her hesitancy, Weiss rolled her eyes; and when they came back to settle on her, they were noticeably softer. "If you need extra incentive, this place is closer to both Beacon and the STC. Which, with college starting tomorrow, is something I will be able to use to stay over a little more often."

Yang felt her pulse quicken at that revelation. Though the idea of freeloding in, what was likely, the building's most expensive apartment still felt off to her, the promise of Weiss staying over more frequently was definitely appealing. Weighing the two against each other, Yang was easily able to see which she liked most and let out a small, resigned sigh as she stepped forward to place her hands on Weiss' hips.

"You'll really be able to stay more?" she asked quietly, wanting to make sure before she made her choice.

"Not everyday," the heiress elaborated with a smile pulling at her lips. "Probably not even more
than once a week, twice if I'm lucky; and I will still be working, but yes. I could maybe stay every Sunday, and even visit during my breaks a few times a week. But that is only if you, you know, stay."

"You are making it very hard to say no right now," Yang hummed as she felt one of Weiss' hands snake itself into her hair.

"So say yes," Weiss whispered, a hint of hope in her voice as the thumb caressed her neck. "It's your choice, but I can't help but want to be a little selfish. Not being there for you during your first meeting with Raven tore me up. I don't want that this time. I want to be here for you as much as I can. So please stay here."

Looking down at her girlfriend, Yang couldn't help but smile at the sincerity in her beautiful blue eyes. She didn't think it was selfish at all, and the mere fact that Weiss thought it could be was the final deciding factor. So pressing her lips against Weiss' and feeling the gorgeous woman pull her in a little deeper, Yang raised a hand from the slim waist and accepted the card that was being pressed into her stomach. Pulling away from the kiss after almost a minute, she gave her a small nod.

"Okay," She smiled, knowing there was no way she could decline now. Not with all the benefits it offered. "I suppose I can deal with this… big, luxurious apartment if it means I get to see you more."

"Good," Weiss said happily with a smug smile before pressing their lips back together for a minute.

"Mmm," Humming once the girl pulled away, Yang took a quick glance around the truly enormous apartment. "Sooo… Have you got time to show me around?"

The groan that escaped the girl wasn't a good sign, and Yang let her head drop know that the odds of it happening where slim.

"I'm sorry," Weiss replied with a sadness to her voice. "I really need to get to the office. But I promise I'll be coming straight back here after I finish."

"I know," Yang breathed, sneaking one last kiss as Weiss stepped backwards towards the elevator and began to rummage through her bag. After a couple seconds, she pulled out another card. "Here."

Looking at the card, Yang was confused more than ever as she had just taken the apartment key from her. To show as much, she squinted at her girlfriend and held up the silver card in her hand only to receive a head shake in return.

"No, this is a card to my private bank ac…"

"No!"

Yang's voice was firm, as was the step she took away from the held out card. That wasn't something she ever wanted, and the apartment was already too much anyway. But just as when Yang tried to decline the apartment, Weiss' face hardened to match the stubbornness that was settling in on Yang. "This card is not leaving with me, Yang."

"Well I'm not taking it either."

The two of them locked eyes, frozen blue meeting hard lilac, and the softness that had invaded the room earlier disappearing as they squared off in a battle of wills. Yang knew Weiss meant what
she said about not taking the card with her, but Yang also refused to use it. The money wasn't hers, it was Weiss', and to use it felt like a step too far for her; a step that said she cared about the money, and would use it to get what she wanted. However, Weiss seemed to realise neither would budge too, and let her arm drop. Before entering the elevator, she placed the silver rectangle on a nearby counter.

"The code is 7246," She said firmly and stepped into the small metal room. "Buy whatever you need or want. Food, clothes, a new television, anything. Just please use it."

"I won't," Yang replied adamantly, causing Weiss to pinch her nose as she shook her head and let out a sigh.

"Why did I have to fall for the most stubborn woman in the world?"

Something about the exasperation in the statement made Yang smile, an action that Weiss copied in seconds. Locking eyes again, though this time they were both notably softer, Weiss threw her a grin that made her brilliantly blue eyes twinkle.

"I'll be back around half three," She said with certainty and bit her lip. "I love you."

"I love you too," Yang replied as Weiss pressed the button and the doors began to silently close.

With little more than a final wave, the doors sealed shut and the only evidence that there was even an elevator there was an almost indiscernible crack and a panel next to it. Feeling a little sad that her girlfriend was now gone and she was left in a humongous apartment alone, Yang let out a loud sigh and walked over to a nearby chair to slump down. As she set her duffel bag and the floor, she leaned her head back and stared up at the second floor to see a bunch of closed doors. Leaning her head back further to look down the hallways she had seen earlier and saw a marvellous kitchen. What looked to be another hallways branched off at the end, but Yang couldn't see what was down that one.

Well... She thought to herself, feeling a little hint of eagerness well up within her. *Five minutes of resting, and then I guess I should explore a little.*

"I'm sorry, Rubes."

The goodbye with Ruby was still fresh in her mind.

Yang hated to say those words. She hated it every time she had said them in the exact same context.

"It's okay, Yang."

Those words still rang in her head. She knew her sister hated that she was leaving again, that the face she had put on was forced, and it was almost enough for Yang to stay. But she knew she couldn't. The morning had proved that, just like the night before, Yang still couldn't look at Tai without seeing a man that only looked like her father. However, despite that feeling, she had given him a hug goodbye. She still cared about him after all.

"Please look after her," Yang requested in a whisper. *She knew he would anyway; but with her gone, Ruby would be relying on him even more.*

"I will."
The way those words were said rang in her head too. The resignation in her father's voice, the regret that he was the one who made it so Yang couldn't stay. It hurt her. She hated hurting him, hated leaving like Raven and Summer had, but she knew that if she stayed then all that would occur would be arguments.

"I'll text you where I'm staying when Weiss tells me," Yang said, walking back to the door and hearing the slight rumble of Weiss' car outside. "You can visit whenever. As always."

Before Yang had even finished her sentence, Ruby's arms had been wrapped around her and Yang felt her own embrace the girl on instinct. Again she wanted to stay, wanted to do anything that stopped Ruby hurting, but it was the one thing she couldn't do as the fighting would only hurt her anyway. So all she could do stroke the girl hair lightly and wait for it to pass.

"I'll miss you," She whimpered, the noise making Yang's stomach churn.

"I'll miss you too, Ruby," She had replied, tightening her embrace on her sister. "But hey, nothing's gonna change. You ever need me, or wanna stay over, just call."

She'd received a nod to that, and after another couple of seconds, the girl had moved away with a sniffle. The weak smile that Yang gave her did nothing to really cheer the redhead up, and only served to upset Yang a little further at the fact she was leaving her. But she had to suppress that, she had to put her feelings aside and go, otherwise she would never leave; and she would also make Weiss late for work.

So it was with a heavy heart that she turned away from her sister and pulled the door open, daring not to turn back for fear of her resolve breaking, so simply settling for a wave as she left and shut it behind her. It had only taken the short, twenty second walk to the car for tears to roll down her face, but Weiss had been quick to comfort her the moment she entered the vehicle.

During the drive, she had told Weiss about everything that happened. Everything with Tai and Raven, her worries about leaving. It felt good to talk to her after days of sparse conversations, to rest in her girlfriend's arms and spill her tears without judgement.

But those tears had stopped spilling, and now Yang was left with nothing but the silence of her new apartment while she waited for Weiss to return. Her thoughts on the place being big were a massive understatement. From her exploration, she found that the apartment had three living rooms. Three! What kind of apartment needed three living rooms? Each one had its own apparent reason for existing. The upstairs one was the smallest, still far bigger than the one at home, but clearly designed for more comfort. The one at the entryway was the biggest by far and looked out over the business district, well pretty much the whole of Vale honestly; it was clearly designed to make a good first impression to whoever stepped out of the elevator.

The third, however, was immediately Yang's favourite. While larger than the upstairs one, it was nowhere near the gargantuan space of the entry room. The dark brown wooden tiles and grey couches that sat atop a cream rug made the space feel warm, but the thing she loved the most was the window. When she first looked out of it, she knew that it would be the room she spent most of her time in, and had instantly pulled one of the single chairs and a small table to it.

While the other room overlooked the business district, this one overlooked the ocean. Including the island of Patch, the beautifully lush island standing out vibrantly against the water. She still hated the ocean, and the sense of unease that came over her as it gazed at her, but there was something else that made the unease bearable. On the left of the island was a small forest, and jutting out from the dense grove of trees was a cliff. The cliff. She couldn't see the grave, she doubted she would even be able to with binoculars, but at least she could still see her mother's resting place.
She didn't know how long she had been sat there in the exceedingly comfortable chair. She knew it must have taken at least an hour to explore the apartment, as there were so many rooms dedicated to different things. As well as the three living rooms and the beautiful kitchen, that Yang had fallen in love with the second she entered it, there was also a dining room, small personal gym, two offices, four bedrooms, and a small space that lead out to the covered balcony that was so large it had its own pool and hot tub. And that was just downstairs. Upstairs held more rooms, another office, and a wash-room that was almost the size of the room she was currently sitting in. There was only one word for that she could use to describe her new place.

Luxury.

She knew Weiss' family was rich, it was hard not to know, but this was on a whole other level. The apartment was the penthouse of a world renowned luxury building, a quick internet search had shown that the lower apartments went for over ten-million Lien, but she had no idea what the penthouse was worth; though her best guess was at least triple. As she had roamed its many, many, rooms it had dawned on her just how rich her girlfriend was.

Yang wanted a future with Weiss, she knew that much already, and it dawned on her that apartments like this likely were that future. Even if their plans failed, if Weiss couldn't keep the company, the woman had so much money that Yang knew she could buy a place like this and still not dent her private account. Winter had done exactly that after all, and from what Yang knew of their grandfather, he hardly seemed the type to put more away for one grandchild than another.

But despite all that, despite that realisation, she still hadn't even looked at the card Weiss had left. She didn't care about the money. Where many would have taken the card and had fun to their heart's content, and she knew many of Weiss' past partners had, Yang simply didn't care to. The apartment, the financial security, they were benefits for sure; but Weiss was the important thing. How she felt wrapped in her arms, how good it felt to be around her, and how incredibly lucky she considered herself for finding someone that wonderful who could also be strong and stubborn when needed. Those things were far more important than any amount of money that card held.

So when she felt a small buzz from the Scroll, that had been resting in her hand for however long she had spent looking at her former island home, and saw a message from Weiss saying she had just left the office, Yang felt a wide smile stretched itself across her face for the first time since the girl had left for work. At the thought of Weiss getting in her car to come and see her in a private apartment, happiness flooded her previously downcast mind as a single thought shone through.

I can certainly get used to that feeling.

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**Weiss Schnee**

The slight motion of the car coming to a stop pulled Weiss' focus from the folders she was studying. Though there wasn't much paperwork in them, they had managed to hold her attention all day. Ciel had finally uncovered them, Weiss having reached out to her when she realised she couldn't search, catch up at work, prepare for the meeting with Ironwood, and practise her piano playing all at the same time. She had been hesitant to reach out and ask to add more work to the woman's plate, as she undoubtedly had a lot of her own stuff, but Ciel seemed happy enough to help her. And thankfully she did, because it had only taken her two days to manage to dig up the files for the Amitolas.

While most of the paperwork in that folder was about their deaths and the company investigation, which ruled its as an on-site accident caused by worker negligence, it did mention the name of the mine that they worked in. With the name, Weiss easily had tracked down the files for it and was
rather confused by what she saw. The mines were in perfect condition. An inspector had even checked on them barely a month prior. However, while the letter of approval was signed and stamped by a woman named Carmine Esclados, something about it felt wrong. A mine that passed with almost full marks should not have fallen within a month without being sabotaged.

Admittedly, Weiss knew sabotage was too far, even for her father. He may be cruel and heartless, but he cared about money. Collapsing a mine would cost the company more than the insurance would pay out. Bribing the inspector to give a false report however, that was definitely something he would do. Bribery was a past time of his. Winter, reporters, council workers, employees, Weiss knew he was very capable of bribing a mine inspector in an attempt to avoid the cost of fixing it.

But she had no proof. After the collapse, another inspector by the name of Bertilak Celadon had mulled over the remains and deemed it to be worker error that caused it. Again, Weiss felt it wasn't quite honest, but knew she would have to dig deeper to uncover anything. That digging would have to be done alone though, as she refused to drag Ciel into what could potentially be a rather large mess.

However, with the folders being able to tell her no more, Weiss let out a sigh and put them to the side, stretching her back while waiting for the car to move again. She felt excitement pulse through her as she remembered what awaited her. An entire night with Yang. No work, no practise, no obligations, just her beautiful girlfriend. Of course the mood probably wouldn't be what she had expected yesterday, with her having left home and now staying in a strange apartment, but Weiss was happy she could at least be there for her this time.

From the sound of it, Tai had finally come clean about what had happened, but the answer had disturbed Yang; though Weiss could easily see why hearing someone you love say they were okay with destroying a life might shake someone. But while she agreed with Yang's decision, she also couldn't help but sympathise with Tai. He had already lost so much due to his mistakes, it was only natural for him to be clinging to the good that came from them. More than anything though, she felt bad for Yang as the whole situation certainly was a mess she didn't deserve in the slightest.

Thankfully, as she thought of Yang crying in the very same seat she was currently sat in, Weiss felt the car begin to move again. It wouldn't be long until she arrived at the towers.

Fifteen minutes later, Weiss was pushing the door to Compass Tower open and walking for the elevator. Receiving a polite nod from the security guard, which Weiss returned with an equally polite smile, she pressed the button to call the elevator and made her way up to the apartment. An admittedly large apartment, even by her standards. With how long it had been since her visit, she'd forgotten just how big it was, though thankfully Yang's profane exclamation spoke for her. With the size and the grandeur compared to what Yang expected, Weiss had been half worried the woman would refuse, but thankfully she had been able to convince her.

The access to her bank account had been one area she knew Yang wouldn't budge on, but she offered anyway. And sure enough, when she stepped out of the elevator, the card was in the exact same place as she left it. Despite knowing it would be, Weiss felt a sigh push past her lips anyway.

Not seeing Yang anywhere in the main room, Weiss decided to look around a little. Given how huge the place was, she decided to first try a place she knew Yang would love. Unfortunately, the kitchen was empty, the marble clean and untouched. The sight made her worry Yang had left for a second, but then she remembered Yang had replied to her earlier text and felt relief rush through her. So knowing she was around somewhere, she pressed on and arrived at a second living room. The head of blonde hair instantly caught her attention and she saw her girlfriend sitting in a chair near the window, the sunlight that streamed through it making Yang's hair look like it was
growing.

Very silently, she crept towards her the woman, placing her bag on the couch as she went, and wrapped her arms around the boxer's muscular shoulders from behind. She tensed for only a second before settling.

"Hey."

"Sorry," she said hummed, her eyes still looking out the window towards the island of Patch in the distance. "Must have been in a world of my own. I didn't hear the elevator coming up."

"I'm pretty sure it's designed that way," Weiss chuckled, placing her chin softly on top of Yang's shining hair. "Are you doing okay?"

"Kinda," Yang sighed longingly, her hand coming up to stroke one of Weiss' arms. "Just remembering how simple things were when I lived there."

Weiss glanced up at the island that sat just off the shore of Vale. She knew that Yang had moved away from it just after Summer's death, so she could see exactly why she was longing for it now. It was the place that held all her good memories from a time when nothing was complex.

"You'll work things out, Yang," Weiss replied gently. "I know you will."

"How can you be sure?" The woman asked, her voice filled with so much self-doubt that it almost hurt Weiss to hear it. "We've fought, and argued, but it's never felt like this before. It's never felt like I don't even know him."

"Because I know what family means to you," Weiss replied firmly, removing her hands and walking around the chair to sit on the woman's lap. "You care so much that you're even giving Raven another chance."

"I don't know," Yang sighed again, Weiss feeling the blonde's arms wrap themselves around her waist and pull her close. "If he slipped up and had a drink, I could deal with it. If he fell into another spiral, I could deal with that too. Those are things I know he can't help. But this, this is something he is okay with. I don't know how to deal with this one."

"You'll figure it out, Yang," Weiss said reassuringly, reaching up to push a stray lock of blonde hair behind the woman's ear. "Because you still want a relationship with him. I know that once you figure things out, you won't have an issue mending these broken bridges."

Yang's jaws moved, but no words came out. Instead the blonde's head fell back against the chair and Weiss snuggled a little closer, her own head resting comfortably in the space between the brawler's neck and shoulder. Knowing Yang needed to silence to think, Weiss happily gave it to her, selfishly allowing herself to relax into the lavender scent of the woman she loved while she did. The gentle grazing of Yang's fingers on her side turned into firm pressure on her back that threatened to pull a groan from her, but a small peek up showed that the wonderful massage was likely being done absent-mindedly. Unaware or not though, it felt amazing, and the tension from her day at work began to slowly melt away.

The minutes passed in silence, Yang deep in thought and Weiss enjoying the idle ministrations. However, Yang finally let out a sigh and Weiss felt the woman's head rest against the top of her own.

"So how was work?" She breathed, the tone of her voice making it clear she wanted to change the subject.
"Busy, as usual," she replied in an involuntary groan as Yang obviously realised what she was doing and increase the pressure of the massage. "I could have left early if the department head hadn't given me a last minute task for a meeting tomorrow."

"Can't you tell him to shove it?"

"I may be the heiress, but I'm still just an employee there at the moment," Weiss chuckled, the response completely unsurprising her. "Besides, thanks to the work keeping me there, I was still in the office when Ciel gave me something that might help us."

"Really?"

"I think my father may have bribed the people that inspected the mine that Ilia's parents worked in so that he didn't have to spend money fixing it."

"Are you sure?"

Weiss gave a small shake of her head and stifled a yawn.

"No. I don't have any proof yet, just some things don't feel right," she replied. "But if he did for that one, then he probably did for others too. Probably even Roman's estate."

"What are you gonna do if he did?" Yang asked after a second of thought. "Tell the police?"

"I'm not sure," Weiss said honestly. "He has enough power that the charges likely wouldn't stick. I'll find some way to use it though."

Feeling Yang give a small nod of her head, Weiss reached her hand out to take the blonde's free one. It was nice just how comfortable it felt to just sit on the woman's lap. She would have thought it would be awkward, almost babyish and cramped; but it felt nothing like that at all. Her small body seemed to fit into Yang's larger one perfectly, her strong arms easily able to reach around and embrace her. The awkwardness she expected when she'd first done it was completely absent as well; instead the smell of lavender and heat that always emanated from the woman instantly put Weiss' mind at ease.

It felt loving. Like a position Weiss could easily spend days in just relaxing and letting the stress drain away. She hoped Yang liked it just as much as she did, but was fairly confident that the way the bodacious brawler would instantly embrace her and pull her closer meant she did. However, all of that combined with the long day at work and the lack of sleep from arranging the apartment with Winter, Weiss could feel her eyes start to drift shut.

Looking out the window at the beautiful ocean, she saw it turn dark for a split second as her eyes closed. With a jolt she made to sit up, but Yang's arm held her firmly in place.

"Get some rest if you want," the woman said softly, her massage turning to gentle stroking. "You've been awake for most of the night."

"It's not much of a day with you if I'm asleep," Weiss breathed despite her eyes already starting to close again.

"I'm not exactly much fun at the minute," Yang hummed, the thumb of their joined hands softly stroking her palm. "I can clear my head while you get some rest."

"Are you sure?"
Yang gave a small nod.

"Holding my gorgeous, sleeping girlfriend while I look at my beautiful former home? Can't think of a better way to clear my head."

"Okay," Weiss whispered, too tired to argue. "Wake me up in an hour."

As Yang's head gave a small nod of understanding, Weiss lifted her head for a second to place a kiss on her girlfriend's cheek. She never thought she would feel comfortable enough to fall asleep on someone, but it was easy with her. So easy in fact that once her head was back on the blonde's shoulder and nestled into the crook of her neck, Weiss felt herself instantly fade into unconsciousness. Though not before she whispered a quiet 'I love you' to the woman whose arms she was cradled in.

Chapter End Notes

A/N

Hello, welcome to the first upload of 2020 :) I hope you all had a good Christmas and new years. First things first, During the holidays I went back to upload the edits Toxic did for chapters 16-18. They had been done for a while, but... well... I was lazy. However, they should read better now.

Anyways, onto this stuff. As you can see, Yang now has a change of location xD Not much will change regarding the relationships and it will even allow me to do more things regarding friends and family stuff. But the big thing this does is allow me to give more time to Yang and Weiss' relationship. As Weiss said, the apartment is much closer to both her work and Beacon. It also allows me to let Yang figure things out and there may be a few certain issues she faces now. Who knows, maybe even Raven will visit one day. Though I do want to assure you that, even though she is working through things, Yang isn't always going to be the big grump.

Anyways I won't say too much as this is a two-parter. The next chapter (Going up on 14th of January) is much longer, double the length in fact, and there is another long chapter coming up at 50 too. I hope you are looking forward to them, and the next chapter is one I actually quite like.

Warning

I won't say when it is, but smut is upcoming. This is your warning.
A New Home (Part 2)

Chapter Summary

Weiss and Yang enjoy their first night in the apartment.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: All characters belong to Rooster Teeth Productions
Edited by ToxicExotic

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Weiss Schnee

Weiss was sitting in her favourite seat of Blake Cat Coffee, the bright sunlight streaming through the window to illuminate the book she was reaching an oddly beautiful golden glow. At her side was Yang, the woman's arm around her shoulder as she talked happily to Blake. Customers entered, each one casting a glance their way that made Weiss smile all the wider. They were finally out, people could finally see...

"Weiss."

… how happy she was. No longer did they have to hide in the back, hiding their relationship from the world...

"Hey, Weiss."

… like it was some shameful secret. No. They could just relax. Weiss could enjoy her book while feeling Yang's embrace, the heat of the sun that paled in comparison to Yang's but was nice nonetheless, the feeling of tingling on her lips, of being comforta… Wait. What was that last one? Yang wasn't kissing her, she was talking to Blake. So why did she keep hearing her call her name? Confusion passed through her for a moment and she felt pressure on her lips ag...

Weiss woke with a gentle start. She was a little confused at first. She was warm, and arms were wrapped around her waist. She felt lips on hers, the kiss gentle as if the kisser was only trying to get her attention. Opening her eyes, she saw strands of gold dangling in her vision and a pair of mischievous lilac eyes gazing into her confused blue ones. Though they weren't confused for long, as a second later she remembered having fallen asleep on her wonderful girlfriend. The very same girlfriend who was kissing her with a grin on her face.

With that clarity, the grin was all she needed. Closing her eyes again, Weiss leaned into the kiss. It felt good. No, great. No, wonderful, to be woken in such a loving way, and still happy from a dream that had already begun to fade, Weiss raised a hand to the blonde's cheek and urged her to deepen the affection. Thankfully Yang obliged and Weiss let out a short breath through her nose as the kiss became a little more forceful.
The hand on her back went from gentle to firm, the strength that each finger held obvious, as they pushed into her back and pulled her closer. Yang's other arm came around to hold her waist as Weiss felt her bottom lip get caught between Yang's. Teeth bit down gently onto it, and a small groan escaped her throat. Her hand slipped into the woman's luscious locks, pulling herself even closer as she was determined to make sure there wasn't a single iota of space between them.

The warmth that had been there when she woke increased tenfold and Weiss felt her body shift of its own accord. She wanted more, but for more she needed a better position. However, the hand on her waist kept her in place and Yang began to carefully slow the kiss down. The deep kisses became softer, the fingers on her back slackened and began to run along her back, until finally, after a couple of seconds, their lips parted; leaving Weiss more than a little breathless.

But that was when it came back to her. What Yang was going through, why she had been on her lap in the first place. With those realisations, she felt a little guilty for having lost control so easily.

"Sor..."

She was cut off by another kiss, the intent for her to shut up clear as day. But it only lasted a few seconds before Yang pulled away again.

"You weren't waking up when I called," Yang whispered quietly, Weiss opening her eyes to see a cheeky grin on her girlfriend's face. "Thought I would try something else. Seems like you enjoyed it."

"I could certainly get used to it," Weiss said, her breathing still a little laboured from the make-out session.

"Then go back to sleep and I will wake you up again."

"Don't tempt me," she chuckled, Yang's lips pressing against hers for a moment, successfully turning the chuckle into a wanting hum. "You are such a tease."

"Hardly a tease if you can have me whenever you want," the blonde grinned, her lilac eyes twinkling. "Except for right now that is. What with it being a bad week for that stuff."

"Mmm, that's a shame," Weiss groaned, knowing what Yang meant, as it was a bad week for her too. "I could certainly think of some ways to cheer you up."

It was Yang's turn to chuckle and the blonde reached up to push a lock of white hair behind Weiss' ear. "Seeing how adorable you look when you were sleeping was more than enough."

Shaking her head, Weiss trailed a finger down the woman's jawline, stopping at her chin and placing a gentle kiss on her. This time it was less heated and more loving, though she definitely still felt a pleasant shiver run through her body. Pulling back, she looked her girlfriend in the eyes and smiled.

"How are you feeling?"

"I'm good," Yang smiled with a nod, the smile feeling like the first genuine one she had seen from the blonde all day. "Depressed Yang is gone, for now at least. Right now, the only thing I wanna do is cook my beautiful girlfriend something to eat."

"Hmm," she hummed and sat up to look towards the kitchen. "Unless you went shopping while I was at work, I don't think you will find anything in the cupboards."
"That… is a very good point," Yang groaned. "And now all the shops will be shut. I guess we could order in?"

"Won't they be shut too?"

"Nah, I know a couple that will be open. Can you order though? You've been sitting on my lap for two hours and I really need to pee."

Ignoring the fact that Yang had let her sleep for an hour longer than intended, Weiss shook her head and stretched her back as she lifted up. As she stretched her arms towards the ceiling, Yang leaned back against the arm of the chair and very obviously looked her up and down with a grin.

"Enjoying the view?" She laughed as she slipped off the blonde's lap and stretched her legs.

"Always."

Without missing a beat, Yang pushed herself off the chair and mimicked her actions, clearly wanting to give Weiss the same look as her t-shirt rode up to expose her firm stomach. Giving her a firm poke, the woman folded slightly at the waist and brought her arms down to rest on Weiss' shoulders.

"I would kiss you right now, but I do need to go," she chuckled, though placed a fleeting kiss on her lips anyway before flashing a cheeky smile. "Use my Scroll to order. My usual should already be on the app, so add anything you want to it."

"Alright," Weiss replied with a nod as Yang arms dropped. "Now go to the bathroom already."

"You're right, gunna take me half an hour to walk the mile through this apartment to the nearest one anyway," the boxer laughed and pulled back to walk down the hallway with a wave. "See you in an hour."

Chuckling at her girlfriend's stupid joke, Weiss watched Yang leave before leaning down to pick up the Scroll that was left on the table. Inputting the password, she was greeted by the very first picture she'd taken of them both. Though they'd taken a few more since, it was still Weiss' favourite and never failed to bring a smile to her face. Shaking her head free of the memory, she opened the app and saw that the place Yang wanted to order from was only doing pickups. As it was a Sunday, all the others were closed, and the ones that weren't had low stars.

However, that was when she had an idea. Closing the app, she scrolled through Yang's contacts and found the one she wanted. Typing out a quick message, she hit send then waited. It took almost a minute, but they replied with a simple 'be there soon' and Weiss quickly deleted both messages with a smile.

Closing the scroll, Weiss moved over to the bigger couch in the middle of the room and sat down, picking up the controller as she did to turn on the television. Finding what looked to be a comedy channel playing a rerun, she sat back and waited for Yang to join her. She didn't have to wait long as it only took another minute or two for Yang to re-enter the room and plonk down on the seat next to her.

"I love this show," She smiled as an arm was thrown around Weiss' shoulder.

"I've never seen it," Weiss admitted, leaning into her girlfriend and folding her legs up on the chair.

"What?"
"Television is not a big thing in my house," she replied to Yang's disbelief. "Remember?"

"Oh yeah, because your dad has a stick up his ass."

"More like the whole tree that the stick came from, but yes."

She felt Yang vibrate a little beneath her as the blonde let out a hearty chuckle. Happiness rushed through her at the feeling, and she let her arm slip across the brawler’s firm stomach as she watched the show, where a man clearly had a turkey stuck on his head. Just like the film Yang had shown her almost a month ago, Weiss easily found herself getting into the show. She didn’t know the characters, and one girl was a little… out there, but the show seemed to be written in such a way that it could be picked up from anywhere. It felt like the perfect show to just sit back and relax while watching.

During the break however, Yang leaned down the side of the chair and pulled her duffel bag onto her lap. Watching Yang dig through it, Weiss raised an eyebrow in confusion.

"Something wrong?"

"No, just looking fo… Aha!" Yang cut herself off as she pulled out a large book. It looked a little worn, but the drawing of two girls, one with blonde hair and the other with red hair, was still visible on the front cover. "I have something to show you. I finished it last week, but it’s been…"

"A long week?" Weiss finished, earning a nod in return.

"Yea."

Watching the woman pull the book open, she was greeted by something that startled her. A drawing of the ocean from what looked to be a bridge, the art itself was beautiful in its own right, but rather creepy at the same time. Dark water shimmered all the way to the horizon, a white moon reflecting brilliantly; but creepy, black hands rose from the depths and clawed at the air. She only saw it for a second before Yang quickly turned the page towards the back, but she had seen it long enough to know what it represented. Deciding not to bring it up as the drawing had looked rather old, she waited until Yang found what she was looking for.

"Here we go," Yang said brightly a couple of seconds later, pulling the book open fully and placing it down on her lap.

One the page was something Weiss had already seen before, but only ever half complete. This time however it really did look finished. The intricately designed, flaming heart that Yang was planning to have over her White Fang tattoo stood out marvelously from the page. So much so that Weiss was almost worried that the page might begin to smoke from just how real it looked.

"It looks great, Yang," Weiss smiled and reached out to touch it gently, still half convinced it might actually burn her.

"It better," Yang chuckled and let her look at it a little longer. "Took a while to get it feeling right."

"Hey!" Weiss moaned as Yang shut the book, stroking her hand lovingly across the cover and returning it to her bag. "I wasn't done looking."

"Oh, I know," Yang grinned, placing the duffel bag back down the side of the chair. "The first time you get to really look at it will be when we..."

Weiss poked her hard in the stomach and rolled her eyes as Yang let out a short laugh. However,
while Weiss expected the blonde to return to their position, she was surprised to see the woman looking at her. The gaze was odd, as was the smile that Yang was giving her.

"Also…"

"Wha…"

Before Weiss could finish, Yang lips were on hers again; but the kiss felt different. While definitely passionate, it felt more like Yang was trying to convey gratitude for something. So even without the heat, the love and sincerity behind it was more than enough for Weiss to feel the urge to gently return it. It only lasted a moment, but it still made Weiss hum as the blonde pulled away. A couple of seconds later, she opened her eyes and saw Yang’s gazing caringly into hers.

"What was that for?"

"Do I need a reason?" Yang grinned.

"For a kiss like that, yes," Weiss smiled, giving Yang another teasing poke in the stomach. "So tell me so that I can do it again one day."

Yang’s smile widened slightly and a strong hand came to gently brush the side of Weiss’ cheek.

"Ruby let slip what you did on her trip to your company."

"Oh, that," Weiss replied darkly, remembering how her blood had immediately boiled at hearing the group snicker at Ruby. "You don't need to thank me for that. I spoke with Dr. Polendina and he said she was a standout among them. How come you didn't tell me about the visit anyway?"

With a happy sigh, the muscular blonde returned to her seat at her side and they returned to watching the program. Weiss immediately snuggled back up to her, though this time she laid down across the sofa with her head on Yang's lap. Laying on a couch rather than sitting on it was certainly something a high society woman such as herself was not supposed to do, but Weiss didn't have to fear judgement when she was with Yang. Instead, she could happily enjoy the benefits of relaxing while one of Yang’s hands played with her hair and the other rested gently on her stomach.

"I wasn't even supposed to know about it, honestly," Yang breathed, her hand pulling the tiara pin, that Weiss used to keep her hair in it's ponytail, free. "But then again, I'm not supposed to know she wants to work there one day either."

"She does?" Weiss asked as Yang gave her a nod, lifting her head a little so that Yang could pull the silk strands free. "How did you find that out?"

"She forgot to properly wipe a laptop she gave me last year," Yang shrugged while her fingers ran gently through Weiss’ hair. "Was full of stuff on the STC, and common interview questions. Don't suppose she has a chance does she?"

"Hmm."

There was a hope in Yang's voice that made it very hard to say no, but she wasn't going to lie to Yang. Especially not when it was something in regards to Ruby as Weiss knew how serious those subjects were for Yang.

"I don't know," Weiss replied slowly, thankful that Yang gave an accepting nod. "I've never seen her work, so I can't really say I know what she's capable of. She's graduating a year early, so that is a good sign; but applicants who come from the elite academies like Beacon usually catch more
"I figured as much," Yang sighed, clearly a little disappointed by obviously grateful for the honesty. "Well we can't afford Beacon so…"

"You might not have too…"

"Don't you dare consider pa…"

"I wasn't," Weiss laughed at how quick Yang was to dismiss any kind of financial help. "I was talking about Beacon's scholarship program."

"Oh!"

Yang paused for a second, a confusion pushing her brow down as her hand stopped running through her hair. Disappointment ran through Weiss at the loss of the pleasant feeling.

"You think she could get one?" Yang asked.

"Well," Weiss hummed, bringing her hand up to hold the one on her stomach. Fortunately, Yang got the hint and her hand returned to sifting through her hair. "Due to the 'Encouraging Bright Minds' initiative that the Remnant Education Board started, all students who either graduate with exceptionally high marks, or graduate early are automatically on a 'to watch' list for the four big academies."

"So you're telling me Ruby is already on the list for Beacon?"

"Sort of," she hummed with a half nod, half shake of her head. "More like they're aware of her, so if she applies then she will have greater odds of getting in and even more odds of a scholarship if she can't afford the tuition. But to qualify for the scholarship, she needs to be maintaining all her grades, earning a lot of volunteer credits, and have strong references."

"Rriight."

Yang fell quiet, and from the fog in her eyes Weiss knew she was deep in thought. Allowing her to think, Weiss let her head fall to the side and continued to watch the program as Yang's fingertips traced shiver inducing lines along her neck. Finally, just as the program ran to credits, she heard Yang let out a small breath.

"Can she make up those credits before she graduates?"

"It will be really hard, and it won't reflect as well as her doing them over time during her studies; but she should be able to."

"Then I'll have a word with her about that," Yang said with a nod, reaching for the remote since the program was done.

After a minute of searching, Yang found an action film that was already halfway done and Weiss rolled her eyes as the blonde put it on. The loud sounds of gunshots and explosions filled the room, and not interested in the film at all, Weiss turned her body away from the television and towards her girlfriend. Seeing that one of the holes between the buttons of Yang's shirt was spread enough to see the skin beneath, the memory of how the brawler had once teased her mercilessly while she was studying came to her mind and filled her with mischievous intent. Very slowly, while under the pretense of snuggling up further, she pressed her lips against the thin material and felt the warm stomach jerk slightly.
A smile pulled at her lips as the finger on her neck dug in a little deeper in response. Feeling emboldened, she pressed her lips in again, this time making sure they made contact with the skin that was visible between the buttons. It was hot, as Yang always was, and while the muscle wasn't as obvious due to her sitting down, Weiss still knew what was actually there and the thought made her body heat up. After a couple more kisses that made the stomach twitch, she felt the hand in her hair ball into a fist.

"Everything okay?" She asked innocently, acting like she wasn't doing anything at all.

"You are so no… t funny," Yang chuckled, her voice a little cutting out a little as Weiss once again kissed her.

"Is that so?" Weiss asked, her hand coming up to undo the bottom two buttons of Yang's shirt and pulling the cloth aside so it no longer blocked her access. "What about now?"

Now with almost full access, Weiss leaned forward to place a proper kiss onto the toned stomach. Grinning wickedly at the way it flinched, she quickly opened her mouth and gently bit down, earning a groan as she saw Yang's head fall back.

"Yup."

Weiss almost missed the breathy whisper as she was already moving. Her body rolled away from Yang's and she sat up to lift herself from the couch. Looking down at the blonde, she saw want in the woman's eyes. Still in a teasing mood, she gave a shrug and made to walk away. Not that she intended to go anywhere. It was merely for show as she knew what would happen. And sure enough, before she had even taken a full step away from the blonde, a hand gripped her own and pulled her back. It was her turn to chuckle as Yang pulled her onto her lap, her legs straddling the blonde while she looked down into the beautiful lilac orbs.

"You seem a little worked up th…"

She was cut off as Yang's lips crashed into hers, the force of the kiss and the hand that was gliding to the square of her back more than enough to drag a hum of pleasure from her. Responding immediately to the affection, she slipped her hands to either side of Yang's neck and pulled herself deeper, her thumbs stroking the woman's jawline as their tongues quickly became involved in the kiss.

It only took seconds for them to both to start breathing heavily, both of them thoroughly enjoying the attention the other was giving. Feeling her body start to tingle, she dragged her hands down the woman's collarbone until her fingers arrived at the shirt. She knew it was a little irrational, but she cursed the shirt for existing and getting in her way, so she quickly set about correcting that. The first button was eliminated in seconds and her fingers immediately shot down to the second and third. It wasn't long before all of them were unfastened and the shirt was being thrown wide open to reveal the light brown, lace bra beneath and the creamy skin that seemed to beg Weiss to touch it.

"I don't think I'm the one worked up," Yang half panted, half laughed once Weiss broke the kiss to take a deep breath.

"It's been nearly a month since we had sex, we have the apartment to ourselves, and you woke me from an amazing dream with a kiss," Weiss said firmly, her desire edging out her reasoning. "How can I not be worked up?"

Yang grinned and bit her lip, the blatant admission clearly pleasing her. "Good to know I'm so irresistible, but bad week, rem…"
Weiss cut her off with a firm kiss, unable to resist any longer. Yang didn't mind though and Weiss felt a hand snake under her shirt and nails being dragged up her sides. Pulling away from the kiss, she gazed hungrily into her girlfriend's eyes.

"Good thing about being girls is that there are other ways," She hissed as the nails were dragged back down her side and a wave of pleasure pulsed through her.

"Hmm," Yang's eyes squinted at her, though it was clear she wanted it just as much as Weiss did. As if to confirm Weiss' belief, the blonde's finger hooked onto the hem of her t-shirt and slowly began to pull it up. "Think we can be done before food ge…"

A loud buzzing rang through the apartment and they both let out a loud groan. In truth, Weiss had completely forgotten that she'd even ordered the food, let alone what she'd actually done. It happened a lot with Yang and she cursed just how susceptible she was to the blonde, though admittedly she wouldn't change it at all.

"I guess not," Yang groaned, her tone ringing with obvious disappointment. "I'll get i…"

"I got it," Weiss replied quickly, Yang's sudden movement snapping her out of her distracted state to realise what exactly was waiting downstairs.

Pushing herself off of Yang, after giving her a final kiss of course, Weiss made her way to the hallway and pressed the intercom button. From the other side, she heard a bunch of chatter followed by a loud cough that silenced the noise.

"Hello," A voice came over the speaker, the voice of whoever was at the security desk. "There is a small group of people here seeking entry to your apartment. Are they expected?"

"They are," she replied, keeping her voice low so that Yang wouldn't hear. "Please send them up."

"Right away."

Once the intercom fell silent, Weiss made her way back to the room and offered her hand to Yang. Though a confused look etched itself across the woman's face, she took it anyway and raised from her seat. Leading her down the hallway and through the kitchen, they quickly arrived in the main living room just in time for the elevator to open and reveal four people inside. Before anyone stepped out, the amber eyes of Blake Belladonna locked onto Yang and the reaction was instant. Yang's hand dropped from her own and the blonde quickly embraced the Faunus in a bone crushing hug.

"Good to know we're as invisible as always," said a blonde boy with spiky hair, a tail poking out from behind his body. Weiss had only met him a few times, but she remembered him as Blake's boyfriend, Sun.

"With your loud mouth, invisibility means nothing." Said Ilia, who was leant against the back of the elevator next to a boy with bright blue hair that Weiss had never met. Though he did look familiar.

"You're one to ta… Woah!"

The blue-haired boy's words caught in his mouth as he stepped into the room, his jaw dropping slightly as he looked around. He wasn't the only one either, as Ilia's eyes widened and Sun let out a loud whistle. As they stepped out, the doors closed while another pair opened a little further along the wall.
"Since when was there a second elevator?" Yang asked, her head lifting from Blake's shoulder to gaze towards it.

Once it was fully open, four more people stepped out into the room. This time she recognised all of them. Pyrrha and Jaune stepped out first, hand in hand as they always were when she saw them, Next was Ren, his hands in his pockets and looking as calm as ever, a stark comparison to Nora who came bounding out right after and threw an arm around him.

"Team JNPR is he… Oh! My! God! Ren!" She exclaimed, her head whipping around the room so fast that Weiss was half worried she would give herself whiplash. "Would you look at the place?"

"Yes, yes, it's very big," Ren sighed tiredly, though Weiss had talked with him a few times since their first meeting and knew that was simply his natural state of being.

"It's enormous," Jaune replied in awe. "You're really living here?"

"I guess," Yang said, finally pulling away from Blake and turning to each of them in turn. "What are you guys even doing here?"

"I called them," Weiss said with a smile to Yang. "Though admittedly I did only tell Blake."

"And I told everyone else," The Faunus said effortlessly, her eyes only showing mild interest as they explored the apartment. "Besides, I needed help carrying the stuff."

"We got the food," Pyrrha said, both her and Jaune holding up two bags each.

"And we got the beers," Sun and the blue-haired boy said together, each holding what looked to be a large box of alcohol.

"And we have a party!" Nora grinned wickedly.

Yang looked between them each again and Weiss was worried she saw tears in her girlfriend's eyes. For a second she thought she had screwed up by inviting Blake to their first night alone in a while, but fortunately her worries were for naught as Yang's face split into a grin and she gave Neptune a small punch in the arm as she made her way to Ilia.

"You lot better have made him pay for those drinks," She said and embraced the smaller girl. "We had a bet."

"Bet? What bet?" Sun said turning on his friend, who gave him a sheepish smile.

"Oh yeah, Neptune was supposed to pay next time we all went to Junior's," Blake hummed and moved to take a bag from Pyrrha.

"Oh really?" Pyrrha said with a cocked eyebrow.

"Well you better get that wallet open, Buddy," Sun said with a point of his tail. "Anyway, where we headed with this? Bet this place has like five rooms that're good for partying."

"I'm guessing six," the boy Blake had called Neptune replied in a challenging manner.

"Wanna bet?"

Guessing this was the typical behaviour for those two, Weiss tuned them out and looked to Pyrrha, who was giving her a friendly wave.
"Hello again," the tall redhead said as they drew closer and held up a bag of food that Weiss could already smell.

She quickly pointed to the table that sat in front of the chairs and received a nod. At the same time, Yang appeared by her side and gave Pyrrha a hug before the girl moved to sort out the food. Unfortunately, as Nora passed and Yang went to hug her too, the ginger girl pointed directly at Yang's top with a suspicious look.

"Why is your button done up wrong?" She asked loudly and without hesitation.

A blush immediately overcame Weiss as everyone in the room turned to look, and before anyone could try and connect the dots from how close they were standing, she made her way over to help Pyrrha with the food. Even in her rush, she still heard Blake chuckling to herself as she passed her.

"Oh, the taps here are higher pressure than I'm used to so I sprayed water on my other so had to change," Yang said after a second. "Guess I was in a rush since Weiss was arriving."

"Strange," Neptune said and pulled a bottle of beer from one of the cases and passed it to Jaune. "Never heard of you putting a top on when someone comes over. You usually take it off."

Having never met him before, Weiss didn't know what to make of the comment, but from the way everyone scoffed and chuckled, she assumed it was normal banter between the pair.

"At least people want to see me with my top off," Yang replied with a smug grin, confirming Weiss suspicion.

With the jeers now aimed at Neptune, Yang came over to join everyone as they each took a seat. As she sat down next to Yang, she noticed Yang purposely moved to keep a small amount of space between them and was suddenly struck with the feeling of it being wrong. However she shook the feeling away and settled into the seat and watched Neptune and Jaune hand the beer and food around.

"We haven't been introduced by the way," Neptune said as he held out his hand, his voice much softer than previously and what was clearly an attempt at a charming grin on his face. "I'm Neptune."

"Easy there, Sir Sucks-At-Flirting," Yang said very quickly, slapping his hand away. "Don't want you ruining my staying at this sweet new apartment by creeping Weiss out and making her question my choice of friends."

"She wouldn't be the only one questioning why we're friends with him," Ilia said sassily.

Weiss noticed the girl's eyes hovering over the empty seat next to Blake for a moment before choosing one that couldn't be further away. She'd seen the girl look at Blake like that before back in the shop, and quickly pieced together that there was something more to that look. Blake seemed to notice this as well, seeing as her eyes followed the other Faunus, but she didn't mention it, and simply smiled as Sun sat next to her instead with two beers in hand; one of which he gave to Blake.

The next ten minutes were spent sorting everything out. As beer and food were passed around, Weiss refusing the former, everyone began talking amongst themselves. In truth Weiss felt a little out of place. She knew many of Yang's friends, but the only ones she was really on speaking terms with were Pyrrha, Blake, and occasionally Ren. With Blake and Sun talking to Neptune, who hadn't seemed to have taken any of the jabs thrown at him to heart, and Ren seemingly busy with Nora, who seemed to be trying to convince Jaune to get his shaggy, blonde hair cut, Weiss was thankful
to see Pyrrha walking over to them with a smile.

"Is a professional athlete supposed to be eating that?" Weiss asked with a wave as Pyrrha took a bite from a long strip of meat.

"Even my coach can't stop me from eating this on occasion," Pyrrha laughed, holding out the tray for Weiss. Though normally Weiss would be exceptionally hesitant to try the strips of brown meat, she really was very hungry so reached out and took a small piece. "Besides, I'm apparently eating for two now."

"I heard about that," Weiss chuckled as she recalled seeing something about it in one of the newest gossip magazines. At the same time she took a small bite of the meat to find that, while it was quite nice, the spice was a little too much for her. Yang clearly noticed her reaction to it and reached out to take it from her with a smile that Weiss happily returned. "Is it Jaune's? Or your coaches?"

"ValeTales isn't sure who the father is yet," Pyrrha shrugged with a grin, the gossip magazine being one Weiss was very familiar with. "I'm sure they'll tell me when they figure it out though."

"Yes, I remember when they told me I was suffering from a life threatening illness after my routine trip to the hospital."

Pyrrha let out a small laugh.

"I remember that one, it was in the same edition as my possible transition," Pyrrha laughed, Weiss easily joining her as she too remembered the story that had been based solely on young pictures of Pyrrha when she did look very boyish. "Just don't tell Jaune about the pregnancy. He freaks out enough about what we're gunna do after college, I don't need a fake baby adding to that."

"What if I want to see him have a nervous breakdown?" Yang asked in a humorous tone. "It's been a while since I've seen him grab the sides of his face and scream like a girl."

"Yang…” Weiss rolled her eyes, though a grin spread across her own face as she imagined to blonde doing exactly as Yang had said.

"Tell you what. When it does happen, I'll let you be in the room when I tell him."

"Deal!"

The redhead simply laughed and shook her head, clearly amused by the blonde's excitement at that offer. To cleanse the burning in her mouth from the meat she'd eaten earlier, Weiss pulled a few fries from Yang's tray and placed them in her mouth. They were a little greasy, like almost all the food the group had brought with them, but not so much that Weiss couldn't enjoy them.

"So I hear you and Tai are struggling again?" Pyrrha asked, humour still tinting her voice, but the overall tone of it noticeably lower.

"Yeah, that time of the year, I guess," Yang sighed, peeling the label off the beer bottle in her hand.

"You two will figure it out," Pyrrha said kindly with just as much certainty as Weiss had earlier. "You always do. And you always come back stronger for it."

"Thanks."

"You know where I am if you need a work out partner too," Pyrrha winked, standing up and leaning in slightly so that only the two of them could hear her. "By the way, Weiss. Your hair is a
bit of a mess at the back."

Weiss immediately blushed again, reminded of exactly what had been about to happen just before everyone arrived. However, as her hand shot back to straighten it, Pyrrha held her own wrist out to reveal a bunch of red hair bands.

"Long hair can be a pain, always gotta be prepared," She smiled and slipped one of the bands from her wrist.

Taking it with a silent thank you, Weiss pulled her hair into one neat pile and tied it up, letting it fall over her shoulder. Glancing to her side, she saw Yang look away with a not so subtle smirk, and found her own lips pulling into a smile of their own.

"Anyway, I should get back to Jaune before Nora drives him crazy," Pyrrha smiled, offering out the tray of food to Yang, who took a small handful, before moving back to her boyfriend.

The next hour was filled with conversation and eating. Weiss had found herself so hungry, even after finishing her fries, that she happily accepted a slice of pizza that was offered to her by Sun. At some point, the television has been turned on and switched to a loud music channel as people began to mingle and laugh all the more. While she had barely left her seat, Yang had already moved over to talk to Neptune and Sun; though the occasional glances Weiss caught from her girlfriend were enough to let her know she wanted to be back by her side.

But Weiss knew why she'd moved. She knew Yang was naturally a more sociable person who would usually wandered around and laugh with everyone, so if she stayed by Weiss' side all night then people would likely grow suspicious. It would also be suspicious if Weiss followed her, however due to the fact that she was naturally more reserved, it meant she'd been sitting alone for the past fifteen minutes since Ren had gone back to Nora.

She didn't like it too much. She knew it was a little needy, but she wanted to stay by Yang's side. Yang always brought out a side of her she couldn't bring out alone. With the boisterous blonde, she found it was far easier to interact, to laugh and banter. She got engaged in conversation much more and she felt that she herself was easier to get along with. So for them to be separated, it made Weiss feel weird.

"You look… distracted," said a voice to her left.

Turning to see who had spoken to her, Weiss was surprised to see Ilia looking down at her, one hand on her hip and her other holding a bottle of beer. Her grey eyes seemed rather dark, like they were bordering on becoming black, as did her freckles and hair. She knew chameleon Faunus tended to have a trait that reflected their mood, but they all had unique colours and Weiss had no idea what black meant to Ilia.

"Potentially considering what the odds are that you came to hit me with that bottle," Weiss replied half-heartedly, knowing Ilia didn't like her.

"Hmm… Not today," Ilia said with a shrug before sitting down. "I actually came to thank you.

"Yang and Tai fight a lot," the girl sighed, taking a sip of her drink. "She usually stays at Blake's, but I'm guessing she thought it would be too much of a burden on Blake's parents. I may not trust you, or even like you, but it's good to know she was able to rely on you for help."

"Thank you," Weiss said slowly as Ilia's eyes locked onto her. "Yang means a lot to me… Our
friendship means a lot to me."

Again, Weiss hated saying it like that. Hated denying what Yang truly meant to her.

"Yes... well, I should go and annoy Neptune some more," she breathed, the black of her freckles and hair fading to their natural colours as she stood up. However, before she walked away, she turned back and looked her straight in the eye. "And thank you for what you did for Ruby." Her freckles turned the same yellow they had the first time they'd met. "Though I would have broken their teeth."

Weiss believed the sentiment entirely, and she realised that yellow for Ilia meant anger. From what she'd seen when Ruby entered the coffee shop and threw herself at the Faunus, the two were clearly very close. So with a small smile, Weiss gave the girl a small nod. Without another word, Ilia walked back over to where Yang was and sat down next to Neptune.

Before she could even think about what seemed to be the first positive conversation with Ilia, Weiss felt the seat Yang had previously occupied dip and looked to see Blake sitting next to her. Her amber eyes were on Yang, and Weiss could tell something was on her mind.

"That conversation went well."

"I guess," Weiss sighed, knowing that while the short conversation had gone well, Ilia still didn't like her. "What's wrong with you?"

"Yang." Blake said bluntly. "Anything seem off to you?"

Slightly worried by how cryptic Blake was being, Weiss looked at the laughing blonde. There didn't seem to be anything obviously wrong. She was laughing at something Neptune said, her lilac eyes alight with joy as the small group enjoyed themselves. But Blake seemed worried anyway.

"What am I supposed to be looking at?"

"The bottle."

Returning her gaze to her girlfriend, she looked at the bottle in her hand and suddenly realised what Blake already had. The label was stripped completely bare and the liquid inside reached all the way to the neck. It had been over an hour since Weiss had seen her tear that label off.

"She isn't drinking," Weiss replied. She may never have been partying with Yang, but she knew the woman wasn't opposed to alcohol.

"She's normally on her third by now," Blake replied, confirming Weiss' thoughts. "And she keeps looking at you."

Blake's final words were less an observation, and more a statement. One that Weiss quickly understood. Yang wanted to talk. Realising that, she gave Blake a small nod and stood from the chair. As she approached the blonde, her bright smile became brighter and she leaned back and her hands. Noticing this action, Sun, Neptune, and Ilia all turned to face her.

"Come to join the cool kids?" Sun grinned.

At some point in the night, his button up shirt had been unbuttoned for some reason yet he seemed happier ever since. From the way everyone reacted, it was clearly a normal thing for him.

"Or maybe my super cool appearance finally made her decide she wants my number?" Neptune
said with a sip of his drink, though his confidence quickly turned into a spluttering mess as Ilia tipped his drink up a little. "H-H-Hey!"

"Actually, I was wondering if I could talk to Yang for a moment," She said coolly, ignoring Neptune's attempts to breathe since everyone else was too. "In private."

"Oh, sure," Yang said with a smile as she gathered herself up and stood to her feet. "Later, Douches."

"See ya, Brace Face," Sun replied with a laugh as he dodged the kicks that came from both Ilia and Yang.

With Yang following behind her, Weiss led them out of the room and into the living room they had shared earlier. The television has apparently been left on but the film was long since over. As soon as they were alone in the room, Weiss turned to face her girlfriend and gave her a soft look. Despite her earlier happiness and bravado with her friends, it seemed to slip away once they were alone; leaving the blonde to stand there with one hand stroking her arm.

The nervous stance immediately told her that Blake was right to be worried, as something was clearly on Yang's mind.

"Is everything okay?" Yang asked cautiously, clearly a little nervous.

"You tell me?" she replied gently and pointed to the drink in Yang's hand. "That's the same one you had when Pyrrha came to talk to us."

"Oh…" the blonde's hand slipped down to the neck of the bottle as she shifted her weight from one foot to the other. "I'm… just not the biggest fan of bee…"

"Liar."

The new voice came from the doorway and both of them looked around to see Blake standing in the entryway of the room, her amber eyes firmly stuck on Yang. Weiss hadn't even heard her approach due to both the television in the room they occupied, and the music that blared from the one in the other room.

"You love beer," Blake continued as she crossed her arms.

"I…"

Yang's words failed to come out properly, and instead were replaced with a sigh as she sat down on the arm of the couch. Her head hung slightly as she gazed down at the bottle, her blonde hair falling down to hide her face and suddenly seeming less golden than it always did.

"Talk to us, Yang," Weiss said, placing a hand reassuringly on the woman's knee.

"I…"

A little confused, Weiss looked to Blake and was worried to see her brow was furrowed too.

"I keep trying to," Yang's sighed and shook her head. "But every time I go to take a drink, I remember that alcohol is why I'm here. One stupid, drunken mistake that made my dad realise how he felt about Summer, and everything fell apart for them. What if I do the same?"

"You've never struggled with alcohol, Yang," Blake replied coolly, walking over to kneel in front
"That doesn't mean I won't in the future," Yang scoffed, and though she didn't seem especially sad, like when Weiss had returned to the apartment, there was definitely fear in her voice. "One bad day like that, and I could go down the same path. I'm his daughter after all. Addicts kids often suffer addiction problems too."

A moment of silence filled the room, with the exception of the television, during which Blake and Weiss looked at each other. There seems to be an unspoken agreement between the two of them, so with a nod to Blake, Weiss moved the hand that was on her girlfriend's knee to the bottle and pulled it away. If that really was a worry for her, then it needed to be handled straight away.

"I understand how you feel," she said softly. "Those are the same reasons I only drink on special occasions. While I've never personally struggled with it either, my mother's struggles have always made me hesitant. But just like an addiction, you can't let these fears control you. If you don't want to drink, then don't; but remember that you are in control of that choice."

Another loud sigh escaped Yang, but this time she raised her head. Where Weiss expected to see tears, all she saw was uncertainty, and she found it bothered her all the more. But she also knew Yang needed to break through it, so holding the bottle up, she gave it a little shake so that the liquid could be heard. Yang's eyes gazed towards it, but Weiss felt she was looking through it more than at it.

"Do you want it?"

Another minute passed in silence, but finally the uncertainty left Yang's eyes to be replaced with resolve.

"No," She replied with a firm shake of her head.

With Yang's answer given, Weiss gave her a small smile and passed the bottle off to Blake, who stood up and walked back to lean against the wall. Everyone let out a sigh, Especially Yang who shook her head again and ran a hand through her hair.

"Sorry," she breathed and stood up. "You all came over to cheer me up and I started being a downer."

"Eh, we're used to it," Blake shrugged, taking a sip of the drink as her ears flicked towards the door. "But I know this is a tough time for you, so stop forcing yourself to be happy and just let us be there for you."

The two women locked eyes again and they quickly shared a smile. Seemingly satisfied with that, Blake pushed herself off the wall with a groan and took another sip.

"Good," She said and turned to leave. "Sounds like Nora has started up truth or dare, as usual, so I suggest you stay here as long as you can."

With an over the shoulder wave, Blake exited the room, leaving Weiss alone with Yang again. She was thankfully the blonde hadn't spiralled completely like she had earlier, but wanting to further reassure her, Weiss quickly slipped her arms around her girlfriend's waist and smiled up at her.

Though her action had been done to reassure Yang, she found that the smile Yang returned assured her just as much.

"Why didn't you just tell me you wanted to talk?"
"I didn't want to pull you away," Yang sighed as her shoulders fell. "Sun noticed me looking at you and commented on it, so I thought it might give away something."

"Oh!"

Guilt tore through Weiss' body that Yang had felt unable to turn to her due to them being a secret, guilt that was made worse by the fact that Weiss recently telling her off about sneaking into the mansion and risking being caught might have contributed to that feeling. However it was not the time to beat herself up for that, she could do that later, it was time for making Yang feel better.

"Yang," she said softly with a shake of her head. "You never have to worry about that if you feel this way. You're going through something big right now, so, if you need to talk, I don't care about your friends suspecting. You pull me away, okay?"

"Okay," Yang said with a firm smile.

"Good."

To further press her point, Weiss reached up and pressed her lips tenderly against Yang's. The kiss was solely to reassure her that what had been said was the truth so she kept the heat out of it. Thankfully Yang didn't seem interested in taking it further either, and once the message was conveyed, they broke apart.

"I know I say it a lot," Yang whispered as she pressed their foreheads together. "But even at the risk of you getting tired of hearing it, I really do love you, ya'know."

"I can promise you now, Yang. I will never get tired of that," Weiss grinned. "Because, as you may have realised, I really love you too."

"Mmm, I certainly did," Yang chuckled and pulled her head back to reveal a smile. And hand came up to lovingly stroke Weiss' cheek and she felt her eyes flutter as she leaned into it, though unfortunately it only held there for a couple of seconds before being pulled away. "We should probably go back."

With a smile, Weiss gave Yang a nod and finally pulled away. Picking up the remote, she finally turned the television off before following Yang to the door. They left together, making their way back into the main room to see that everyone sat in a circle around the table. On top of it was a bottle that was spinning at high speed.

Less than a year ago, had someone told Weiss she was going to be playing a game of spin the bottle, she would have called them crazy. She genuinely thought that it was simply a game that was played in movies, but nowhere near as common in real life. However, clearly she was wrong, as the spinning bottle came to a stop pointed at Neptune when they walked in.

"Truth or dare," Ren said, boredom tinting his voice. It was clear he was only playing because Nora had roped him into it.

"I ain't ever taking a dare from you again," Neptune said with a shiver, making Weiss wonder if there was actually more to the boy than she thought. "So truth."

"Hmm, okay," Ren hummed as Weiss and Yang sat down on the couch. "How often do you think about Sun's abs?"

Everyone in the room laughed at the question while Neptune let out a loud groan and fell back into his elbows. As if to add one more occasion to that answer, Sun pulled the sides of his shirt wider
apart and Blake ran a finger seductively across the very clearly defined muscles. It was an action that the raven-haired Faunus very clearly enjoyed, if the smile on her face was anything to go by.

"Every time I work out," Neptune finally admitted with a groan, but quickly perked up and pointed at them. "But come on. Those are goals right there."

"Mhm, I'm sure that's the only reason you think of them," Jaune jabbed, Pyrrha catching the bottle cap that was thrown at him as Jaune stuck out his tongue.

"Shut it, Stumbles," Neptune smirked and moved to spin the bottle. Though Weiss had no idea what the name meant, the rest of the group chuckled at it and Jaune rolled his eyes. As luck would have it, his spin landed on Jaune and the boy immediately groaned. "Truth or dare, Jauney-boy?"

"Truth, I guess," He said in a deflated voice.

"What is the most embarrassing thing your sisters did to you? Oh, and tell us in detail," Neptune replied with a wicked grin, clearly seeking revenge for Jaune's comment.

After Jaune told everyone about the time his older sister Saphron had dressed him as a girl and took him for a walk around the block, a story that got a huge laugh out of everyone including Weiss, he span the bottle and it landed on Blake. After her dare of downing the rest of the beer in her hand, she gave the bottle a spin and landed on Sun.

Without even giving him the chance to choose, she dared him to give her a kiss, something he did without hesitation. After seeing the girl worried about Yang all night, Weiss was glad to see her friend smile so happily as Sun peppered her with small, loving kisses. They quickly ended though as the group started making vomit noises, except Nora and Neptune, who both shouted for them to get a room. Nevertheless, they both parted with a smile on their face and Sun took his turn to spin the bottle.

Weiss immediately found herself more interested in the game as the bottle landed on Yang.

"Truth or dare?" Sun asked with a grin.

"Eh, gimme your best dare, Banana Breath," Yang replied, clearly not expecting much from him. However, that confidence was quickly undone as Sun's grin grew wider and he leaned back in the chair that he and Blake were sharing.

"I dare you to kiss Weiss."

The room filled with coos at the dare and Yang turned to look at Weiss. Knowing she couldn't exactly deny the dare without it looking weird, Weiss gave a small shrug and raised her eyebrows to let Yang know it was fine. While Yang moved quickly after that to press their lips together, the kiss felt much slower to Weiss.

Every kiss they had shared was either in private or with only a couple of people present, but this one was far from private. They were in a room filled with people, friends, yet the joyous feel of Yang's lips on hers told her they were most definitely kissing. Despite the people around, her sense of smell was still being filled with lavender, her sense of taste was being filled with the spices of the food Yang had eaten that still linger on her lips. It felt wonderful to be able to kiss Yang so freely, so wonderful in fact that she knew it was likely everyone could tell she was a little more into it than she should be.

Apparently Yang noticed this too and finally broke the kiss, but the subtle smile Weiss saw as the
blonde moved away caused her to smile too.

"Pretty good," Weiss shrugged quickly to play it off as nothing, her response earning a few chuckles from the group.

"Damn right I'm pretty good," Yang grinned and turned back to spin the bottle.

As she did, Weiss saw Sun wink at the boxer and Yang simply shook her head. Spinning the bottle for it to land on Nora who asked for dare, Weiss figured that would be what she always requests, Yang dared the excitable ginger to eat a fistful of the cold meat, that Pyrrha was eating earlier. To Weiss' surprise, the girl immediately seized a handful and shoved it into her mouth. She was finished with the food before she had even finished wiping her hand on the napkin Ren gave her and loud out a loud burp. Yang quickly informed her that Nora was a champion speed eater.

After the excitable ginger swallowed everything, she spun the bottle for it to land on Pyrrha, who asked for a truth. Nora quickly asked her what her first date was, and Pyrrha responded with what seemed like an adorable date with a boy who took her to a small, enclosed beach around Argus' cliffs. Though she was also quick to assure everyone that nothing happened as he was far too nervous to even talk to her for most of the date.

The game continued for a little while and Weiss enjoyed hearing all the little stories about Yang's friends. It turned out that Ren was just as big a fan of Blake's fan-fiction as he was of Ninjas of Love, an admission that had Blake blushing. Sun came clean that he would much rather be topless everywhere he went, though no-one, not even Weiss, was surprised by that. Blake even offered her support for her boyfriend's dream. Ilia talked about a small, weekend fling she had on menagerie, but also that it was nothing more than that.

There were also plenty of dares too. Jaune had chugged two beers back to back after a dare to see how many he could without taking a breath from Ilia. Neptune and Ilia had kissed and that led to Weiss finding out the Faunus was actually gay when Neptune asked if she was, to which Ilia had responded, "More than ever." Yang had let out a pun about how Ilia Blue him off that made everyone groan, but she insisted it was funny. Weiss had to agree with Yang as she had let out a small chuckle at the joke.

The first time that the bottle landed on Weiss herself however, was when Nora span it after being dared to kiss Ren by Blake, something Nora didn't seem to mind at all.

"Truth or dare?" Nora beamed happily, clearly excited that she had been the first to get Weiss.

"Truth, I guess," Weiss said, unsure she wanted to take a dare from Nora of all people.

"What is the worst thing you have ever done?"

The room fell silent at the question and everyone turned to face her. Obviously such a question asked towards a Schnee was worthy of listening carefully. Not wanting to disappoint, Weiss racked her brain and easily found what she considered to be the worst thing she'd done.

"I once stabbed my fencing instructor," She replied.

"WHAT!"

The shout had come from pretty much everyone in the room, including Yang.

"That sounds bad," Weiss said quickly, realising she needed to explain further. "My father hired her to tutor me and she purposely tampered with the equipment in an attempt to bribe money out of us
from a potential injury. I felt something was off with my épée, but continued anyway. I had no idea she had messed with her vest too."

"Jesus, Weiss," Yang chuckled.

"Well if she wanted to con my father, all she had to do was ask," Weiss shrugged, the room falling a little more silent at those words.

"Wow," Jaune whistled.

"You really don't like him do you?" Ilia asked.

Weiss found her eyes and straightened her back. She could tell the girl had not simply asked it out of mild interest.

"After everything he has done to ruin my family, my name, and my grandfather's respectable company? No." Weiss replied firmly. However, as the silence continued, Weiss realised she missed the laughter and tried to rectify it. "Well it seems I have ruined the good mood. Sorry."

"Pfft," Yang breathed a second later. "Nah your good, right guys?"

"Yup," Sun said and leaned back, putting his feet up on the table as Blake leaned in closer and ran a hand over his stomach.

"Plus, we have a list of people that need a good cutting," Blake grinned as she cuddled up to her boyfriend. "We'll give you it later."

The joke was finally enough to break the tension as Pyrrha, Nora, Neptune let out a small laugh. Ilia seemed to be looking at her shoes in contemplation, and Weiss hoped that was a good sign as she reached out to take her turn at spinning the bottle. Giving it a hard twist, she watched the green glass spin for a second before coming back to rest on her again. From the movies she knew that meant she had to spin again, but as her hand reached out, Ren's voice cut through the renewed babble.

"Repeat."

Confused, Weiss looked from him to Yang.

"House rules," She chuckled, and pointed at Nora. "If your spin land on you then you have to do a repeat. Essentially Nora gets to ask you another question."

"Oh," Weiss hummed and turned back to the girl who looked even more eager than before. "Go ahead."

Nora took a moment to think, but her question apparently came to her quickly and she slammed the palms of her hands into the table with a wide smile as she leaned in.

"Weiss Schnee!" She said, her voice almost accusing. "Is! There! Anyone that you love?"

Multiple things happened once Nora's question was asked. First, and least important, was that Ren scolded her for prying into private business. Second was that both Pyrrha and Blake turned to look directly at her, interested to see how she answered. Weiss wasn't quite sure what to say honestly. Her and Yang were still a secret, but it didn't feel right to say there wasn't anyone she loved when sitting right next to the person she did love. She knew Yang wouldn't care, that she would understand, but it felt wrong. It felt wrong to deny it, just as it felt wrong they were even hiding.
She didn't know what to say... At first.

The third thing that happened was what made her decide how to answer that question. It was imperceptible, such a minute action that had Weiss not been sitting right next to her then Weiss likely wouldn't have noticed. Yang moved away from her. It was only an inch, barely even that, but Weiss hated it. She'd been hating those little things all night. Not being by her side in conversations, their deflections to questions, Yang's hesitancy to pull her away to talk. She hated all of them. But Yang moving away from her was the final straw, the things Weiss hated beyond all of them. So after taking a deep breath, she decided on her answer.

*May as well take that first step now,* she thought to herself.

"Actually there is," She said, albeit a little nervously.

With a deep breath to steel herself for what she was about to do, she reached her hand out for Yang's. She was aware that people were looking at her hand now, and a few of their eyes widened as she found it. The moment she found it however, confidence filled her and she found her next words were far easier to say.

"Weiss, what ar..." Yang tried to say, her hand seizing up a little from the shock.

"I love Yang."

Everyone simply stared at them for a minute. Pyrrha and Blake were watching with an amused look on their faces since they already knew, but Nora's mouth was hanging so open that her jaw was practically hitting the table. Ren had an eyebrow raised in intrigue, Jaune was choking on his drink, Ilia was unreadable, Neptune also looked like his jaw was about to hit the floor. Before she could look at Sun however, she heard his voice loud and clear.

"Holy Oum! This makes so much more sense," he shouted and pointed at Yang with his tail. "I just thought you had a massive crush on her because you never shut up about her. But thi... Ugh"

He was cut off as Blake dug her fingers into his stomach. However, at the accusation, Yang seemed to find herself.

"Hey! I do not talk about her *that* much!"

"You once spat a whole slice of pie all over Jaune because you were talking about her with your mouth full," Ren countered.

"It was not a whole pie!"

"It sure felt like it."

"Wha... None of you are even surprised?"

"That you love Weiss? No," Neptune replied with a pointed finger that began to wobble between them. "That you're together? I'm pretty sure we're all surprised at that. Though most of my surprise comes from how you got a girl like Weiss."

Neptune didn't dodge in time and took the bottle cap Pyrrha had caught earlier to the forehead. As he flailed and fell back in his failed attempt to stop it, the group laughed at him and the atmosphere switched back to the cheerful one again. As it did, Yang leaned back in the chair and looked down at their hands, which hadn't parted during the whole thing.
"So you two are really a thing?" Jaune asked, seemingly recovered from his coughing fit.

Weiss looked at Yang and saw a sheepish smile spread across her face. She was clearly just as nervous as Weiss was herself, but the longer they looked at each other, the wider the smile grew. Until finally, Yang gave a firm nod.

"We are," She said softly, her lilac eyes gazing openly into Weiss. "And I've never been happier."

"Neither have I," Weiss grinned, finally letting how she really felt paint her face with a loving smile.

"Well, glad that's finally out," Blake groaned and pulled Sun's beer out of his hand to take a drink. "Quicker than I thought honestly."

"Wait, you knew?" Sun asked, receiving a nod from Blake.

"Yup."

"I found out at Ruby's party," Pyrrha admitted and held up her hand.

"Ruby's… How long have you two been together?" Ilia asked.

"That was our second date," Weiss replied with a smile. "But since I couldn't get her out of my head since we met, I'm willing to include the weeks we spent texting before that."

"Me too," Yang grinned, though quickly turned to look at her friend. "I hope you're okay with this, Ilia."

"I guess I'll have to be," Ilia sighed with a shrug. "Besides, could be worse. At least you never dated Cardin."

"That was one date," Pyrrha countered quickly. "And it was before I found out he was a colossal ass."

"Anyway," Yang interrupted them pointedly. "As you can probably tell, we're a secret at the minute."

"How come?" Ren asked.

"Another thing you can probably tell is that my father isn't the most accepting person," Weiss explained, feeling a rush of excitement pulse through her as Yang put an arm around her shoulders and pulled her closer. "He's not going to be happy when he finds out and will do everything to drive us apart."

"Exactly," Yang said with a nod of confirmation. "Before we can go public, Weiss has to take care of some things to make sure she doesn't lose her company. Until then, please don't tell anyone about us."

The whole group looked at each other, with the exception of Nora who was still gawking in their direction, and they seemed to formulate some silent agreement. After a minute, they each gave a nod and Weiss felt herself depress deeper into Yang. It may not have been completely public like she dreamed, but it felt good to be able to do it so openly around people Yang loved.

"We won't te..." Pyrrha started to say, only to be cut off by a squeal that was increasing in volume.

"HolyOumlookatthemRen," Nora said in a single breath, finally having snapped out of her trance.
"They're sooooooooo cuuuuuuuute! And in love! And happy! Just like us!"

"Nora!" Ren said firmly as the very happy ginger hopped up on the boy's lap and threw her arms around his shoulders. "If you tell anyone about this, I won't be cooking you any pancakes for a year."

"Yes, yes, my mouth is zipped," She said with a happy wave of her hand before motioning to them again. "But LOOK at them!"

Feeling an overwhelmingly happy smile take over her face at the girl's actions, Weiss looked up at Yang and saw the woman looking down at her. Before she could say anything, Yang leaned down and kissed her. There was no dare this time, no pretence, just their true feelings. Apparently this was too much for the group, and just like they did with Blake and Sun, they began to make gagging sounds and told them to get a room.

But Weiss didn't care. They were out. They could enjoy themselves in the open for once. It may not be a restaurant or any other public venue, but it was a good first step. So pulling away from the kiss, She whispered an I love you for only Yang to hear and after getting one in return, she turned and melted into her girlfriend.

The night had been a fun one.

After they revealed the relationship to everyone, they continued to play spin the bottle for a little while. Though not for long. Once the game stopped, Jaune had taken the remote control and skimmed through the channels for something to watch. Though he had clearly been aiming for the more action based channels, Pyrrha had stopped him on a cheesy romance film and that had been where it stayed. From the groan that chorused the room and the way Neptune and Sun stood up to explore, this was obviously a regular thing.

They two weren't seen again for roughly forty minutes, the two of them arguing about how many rooms were actually good for partying. After ten minutes of arguing, Ren got involved and decreed that no, the pool did not count as a room since it didn't have walls. With a large sigh, Neptune sullenly paid up what they had bet.

Throughout all the shenanigans that happened through the night, Weiss and Yang had remained exactly where they were; cuddled up on the couch watching the television and talking with everyone. And Weiss loved every minute of it. It felt really good to be open about it, to lean on Yang and let her take charge in the conversations. Thankfully everyone didn't seem to make too big of a deal about it, instead treating them much like they did Blake and Sun, Jaune and Pyrrha, and Nora and Ren. Every time they kissed the group would gag and Yang would throw something at them.

However, the night had come to an end after the movie had finished and by eleven, everyone was making their way back to the elevators. A whole bunch of hugs and goodbyes were shared, Sun even gave her a hug and welcomed her to the group. But finally everyone had left, Blake being last as she was the one hugging Yang the longest, and they were left alone again. With everyone gone and the laughter having died down, it had dawned on Weiss just how incredibly tired she was. Yang clearly felt the same as it wasn't long before she was pulled to the master bedroom where the blonde collapsed onto the bed.

"I had f-fun tonight," Weiss yawned ten minutes later, snuggled up with Yang under the covers.

"So did I," Yang breathed, a happiness to her voice that filled Weiss with just as much warmth as
Yang's body was producing. "You know you didn't have to tell them, right?"

"I did," She replied and twisted in her girlfriend's arms to face her. "I hated hiding us all night, and that you felt you couldn't just ask to talk to me. But when Nora asked that question with you sitting right there, it just felt like it would be wrong to say no. You're not upset I did it, are you?"

"Nope," The woman smiled. "It actually feels good that my friends know."

"Neptune knows too."

A small laugh escaped Yang and Weiss grinned up at her.

"You lot really do give him a hard time."

"Nahh," the beautiful boxer said with a shake of her head. "He knows we love him, and that he can turn to us for anything. He also gives as good as he gets. It's just how our friendship has always been."

"Pretty weird friendship," she chuckled and placed a brief kiss on Yang's lips. "But I like them all."

"Even Ilia?"

"Even Ilia."

"Good," Yang yawned as Weiss turned around again and felt arms pull her close. "Now we should probably get some sleep."

"Mhm."

Nestling back into the walking radiator that was Yang, Weiss closed her eyes and let herself drift off to sleep. The night had been wonderful, and with Yang's friends knowing and Weiss being able to spend more time at the apartment due to how close it was to both the office and Beacon, she was looking forward to more nights like it in the future.

Chapter End Notes

Hello all, I hope you enjoyed part 2 :)

So yeah, the whole gang know now. This is going to allow me to explore a few more interactions and have a little more fun in the series, however its also important for another reason. As you can probably tell, they are quiet tired of hiding, and this is finally this first step to coming into the open. You may see that tiredness growing a lot in coming chapters through actions and steps that are taken, so I hope that tells you how far away we are from them being completely out.

Now, complete honesty, I struggle A LOT with group interactions. Especially groups this large, so please let me know how this felt as I'm rather nervous about it. But the was also a little serious part in the middle there that is part of me exploring the issues between Tai and Yang, and you're going to see a few more of those coming in the future. As I've said in replies to comments, its going to be a slow point that is worked of for a while alongside Raven, so yeah. However, we are rather close to many of the other plot points coming together, so I just hope I can pull that off... there are actually
some clues in here :P

But yeah, that's it from me. I hope you enjoyed this more light-hearted chapter. Just wanted to assure you that while Yang is going through some stuff, she isn't going to be a complete grump and that there is still a lot more fun to be had. But as always, thank you so much for reading. It really does mean the world to me :)

Also, just a last word which is a huge thank you to Toxic. He works really hard and really is the reason these are readable xD So make sure to thank him too as he does read all the comments.
It was finally a warm day, the bright sun bearing down over Vale while a soft breeze stopped it from being too warm. The people were taking full advantage of the renewed sunshine and traffic had been a pain, but after twenty minutes, and a pretty heft taxi fare, Yang and Ruby had finally arrived back at Compass Tower. The taxi driver had laughed when she first told him, thinking they were just messing around, but she was quick to assure him it was the right destination. Even Ruby had been shocked at the destination, her jaw hanging open for the first minute or two of the journey. And as Yang looked back to her sister to help her out of the car, she wasn't surprised to see her jaw was once again hanging so low that she feared it might scrape along the seat.

"Forget flies, you're gonna swallow the building if you keep your mouth like that," She chuckled and offered Ruby her hand.

Quickly correcting herself, the awed redhead accepted it and pulled herself onto the street. They both gave a thank you to the driver as they shut the door and turned back to the building as he took off. Seeing Ruby look up at the massive structure, just as she herself had almost a week ago when Weiss first showed her where she would be staying, Yang placed and arm around her sister's shoulders and rested her weight on the smaller girl.

"The sight never gets old."

"You're really living here?"

"Staying." Yang corrected the girl. Though she wasn't living at home anymore, she was still hesitant to say she was living anywhere else. "Anyway, the inside is way better. Come on."

Yang took a step forward and steered the girl towards the door, which opened to accept them as they triggered the sensors. While she was getting used to walking into the apartment itself, the entryway was something else. It still felt so regal, like she didn't belong, but she quickly shrugged that feeling aside as she knew it was wrong. Approaching the desk, she saw that Yatsu had finally
started his shift.

She liked the man a lot more than the others. Yang had taken to calling him the Gentle Giant to Weiss because it really was a perfect description. He was huge enough to be intimidating to most people, but he always wore a smile and was more than happy to engage in conversation. So as she approached that desk, she fell behind her sister and held her out for the man to see clearly.

"Hey, Yatsu." His eyes brightened at her greeting and he gave her a little wave as his eyes moved to Ruby. "This is my sister, Ruby."

"It's a pleasure to meet you, Little Miss Xiao Lo…"

"Ruby Rose," Yang quickly corrected him. "She's fine with Ruby."

"Oh!" He smiled with a small bow. From what Yang could tell, he was actually from Mistral and had retained certain habits from there. Even a few unfortunate ones, but he was always apologetic and the other tenants, mostly the Faunus, seemed to understand that. "My apologies. Hello, Ruby."

"H-Hi," Ruby said nervously, offering out her hand which he took gently and gave a small shake.

"She has the same permissions as Blake."

"Comes and goes as she pleases, whether you are home or not?" Yang gave a nod. "Understood, I shall relay it to the other guards."

"Thank you, we're gunna head up; but tell me who wins that fight you are listening too, will ya?"

With a small chuckle, the man gave a smile and Yang continued on to the elevator. Yatsu was just as into fighting as she was, though he tended to go for more Mistral-based fighting sports like Karate and Judo. She actually like talking with him about the variations, but had been a little bummed to hear that, despite training, he never competed due to his size and fear of hurting someone. It made sense, she guessed, but she knew those things would make him a natural. However, it wasn't her business to fix, so pushing the disappointment from her mind, she pressed the button and enter the small area, pressing the keycard against the scanner.

Resting her head against her sister's, Yang thought on just how much she missed Ruby over the past week. She always missed her, even when staying at Blake's. While she did miss her dad, despite their falling out, not seeing Ruby every day was probably the most unbearable part about leaving. She couldn't ask how her day was and listen to her ramble about it, she couldn't torment and tease her, she couldn't kill time by mindlessly play games together; none of the things she cherished. Sure they talked on the phone, Yang being careful not to mention where she was staying so she got Ruby's genuine reaction, but it was no replacement for actually being there.

However, she didn't want to sour Ruby's mood with that kind of talk, so she let out a sigh and pulled her in tighter to place a small kiss on the top of her head. It wasn't much, but It was at least something to show she missed her without saying it. Thankfully Ruby understood and Yang felt an arm wrapped around her waist to hug her a little tighter. The silent admission only lasted so long however, as the elevator slowed and Yang gently pulled away and stepped in front of the girl to block her view. She wanted to see her step out first.

Finally, the door opened and she stepped out into the main room. But as she did, something happened that she didn't expect. From the corner of her eye, she saw movement and turned to see Weiss step out from the kitchen and felt her eyes widen at the sight. Her hair was down and the white shirt that she was wearing was definitely Yang's, but its top three buttons were completely
undone and revealed a large portion of her upper chest. The knee high socks that covered her girlfriend's legs were also Yang's, but apart from those two articles of clothing, there was nothing else. Nothing that she could see at least.

"It's about time," She smirked seductively, one hand on her cocked hip and the other on the fourth button of the shirt.

"You didn't tell me Wei-yisshealmostnaked!"

Ruby's words jumbled as Weiss hurriedly ducked back into the kitchen and Yang turned to look at her sister, still half in shock. The younger girl had placed her hands over her eyes and done a full one-eighty spin. Yang's mind only came too as Ruby stepped back into the elevator and the doors began to close.

"Ruby, the doors!"

"Huh?" The blushing redhead spun around and lowered her hands to see they were indeed closing and quickly reached for the panel. "Nononono… Wrong but.."

Too late. The doors were closed and Yang knew they would not open again until the elevator hit the ground floor. Letting out a sigh at just how often Ruby found herself in such a situation, she turned back to Weiss to see the woman's head poking out from the kitchen.

The heiress' blue eyes were alight with restrained laughter and was clearly trying very hard not to let it out. Her pursed lips were squeezed tight in her attempt to not break, and Yang found it so adorable that she felt a huge grin form on her own face.

"That ain't funny," Yang said, holding back her own laughter.

"Not at a-all."

Their eyes connected for second and they both broke. Weiss let out a loud snort and quickly covered her mouth, while Yang let out a mirthful laugh and walked towards the woman. She really did look incredible, and while Yang knew Ruby would be back up in a couple of minutes, she couldn't help herself and wrapped an arm around Weiss' back and pulled her close. Looking down into the beautiful, happy blue eyes of her girlfriend, Yang gave her a wide grin.

"Ruby won't be long."

"I know. It's a shame you don't get to unwrap your present." Yang felt the woman's hands run up the front of her jacket and grab the collar. "Now you will have to wait till Sunday." Feeling the pressure on the back of her neck and Weiss pulled forward, Yang took a step forward and pressed Weiss against the archway, her hand resting on the wall to brace herself so that Weiss couldn't pulled her all the way into the kiss.

"Still so worked up," she said slowly as she grinned down at the gorgeous girl, inching a little closer.

She knew it was true as nothing had happened with them the whole week. With both of them having their time of the month and Weiss only being able to stop by for less than ten minutes at a time, there had been almost no opportunity to enjoy themselves. However, after another couple of seconds, Weiss made it abundantly clear just how she was feeling with a roll of her eyes.

"Just shut up and kiss me already."
The tug she gave the jacket's collar was much harder, and Yang happily let the distance between them close so that their lips came together. Weiss immediately let out a small hum, and Yang tilted her head so that Weiss head was leaned back. She loved kissing the woman like that, as she knew Weiss enjoyed the height difference, and she too loved kissing shorter people. There was something about the control it gave her, the ability to tease that sent a thrill running through her. As she let out another hum, Weiss reach up on her toes as Yang slowly pulled away. Their lips parted for a second and her eyes opened, the pleading look in them too much for Yang to resist.

Her lips crashed back down on her girlfriend's, her tongue coming out to wrestle for dominance. As Weiss took a deep breath from the new vigor and slipped one of the hands from Yang's collar to hook around her neck, Yang used the moment to slip her hand down from the woman's waist to her thigh. Her finger met soft, smooth skin and a gasp escaped the girl as they slowly trailed upwards again, this time pushing under the shirt. Higher and higher it rose with no resistance, and once it reached Weiss hipbone, Yang realised the woman in her hands really was wearing nothing but the shirt and socks. It appeared that, just like Yang's, Weiss time was over, and she had been prepared to take full advantage of that fact.

"I think I would have liked this present," Yang teased, pulling away from the kiss for a short breath. Her hand rose to Weiss' stomach, the woman's eyes still closed in sheer enjoyment while her bottom lip was captured with her teeth. "But since I can't unwrap it right now, maybe I should try and feel what it was?"

A small whimper of desire left Weiss as Yang slipped her hand further down, only her middle finger actually touching her skin as the others grazed lightly along it. Claiming Weiss' lips again, she let her hand dip between her legs but didn't touch anything. She could feel the heat emanating from her privates and suppressed a smirk as her finger touched the inside of her thigh to feel a small bead of moisture. Weiss certainly was raring to go, and while Yang would have loved to pull her away to the bedroom and show her just how much she wanted it too, Ruby would be back any second. Nevertheless, before she pulled away, she couldn't help but let her finger graze along Weiss' lips causing a lustful groan to escape the heiress.

"You are killing me here," Weiss breathed as their lips parted again, her eyes remaining shut as she worked on calming herself down.

"Good," Yang grinned, enjoying the effect she had on Weiss. Placing another short kiss in her girlfriend, she slipped her lips around to the Weiss' ear and whispered softly. "Because I will make you scream my name on Sunday."

At her words, she felt Weiss' body buck down on her fingers and held them firm so that her fingertips were enveloped in a sudden warmth. She'd been a little nervous when she first talked to her in such a way, the morning after their first sleepover, but Weiss seemed to enjoy it if her responses were anything to go by, and Yang had no problem continuing what her girlfriend liked. A soft moan issued around the kitchen as her fingertips entered Weiss, but Yang only kept them there for a second before pulling them out and backing away with a final kiss on her cheek.

She admired her work. The red hint to Weiss' normally pale body, the rapid breathing, the closed eyes, they all looked wonderful on her. She drank it in, enjoying every second of it as she stuck the tip of her juice covered thumb into her mouth before Weiss’ breathing slowed and her lust-filled eyes opened to glare at her.

"You are so going to pay for that!" She breathed heavily, taking a step forward towards the hallway and failing to hide her shaky legs.

"Counting on…"
"Ummm… Is it… safe to open my eyes?"

Weiss' head snapped towards the main room where Ruby's voice came from and her blush deepened. A smirk pulled at Yang lips due to the reaction, and as Weiss quickly took off towards the bedrooms, Yang reached towards her and tapped her behind, causing the snow-haired woman to spin around and stick up her middle finger. The action was rare for Weiss, and even though the heiress was grinning from ear to ear, Yang put a hand to her chest and took a silent gasp at the gesture. The finger was quickly put down however, and replace with a smirk as she rounded the corner and moved out of sight.

"Y-Ya… WOAH!"

"In here, Rubes," she laughed and moved over to the sink to wash her hands.

It took almost a full minute before Ruby's head poked nervously around the archway, her silver eyes taking everything in and likely scanning the room for any scantily dressed girls. Seeing none, she let out an audible sigh of relief and walked into the room properly.

"So? What d'ya think of it?"

"It's huge."

"You ain't even seen half of it," she chuckled and turned the tap off, taking a nearby towel and drying her hands. "You want a soda?"

"Mhm." Pulling open the fridge, which was still rather empty as Yang couldn't afford to fill it, she pulled out a bottle of drink and handed it to her sister. "You two seem happy?"

"It's good having her around more," Yang said honestly, pulling another bottle from the fridge and motion for Ruby to follow. "So how are things at home?"

"Okay, I guess," Ruby shrugged as Yang led her to the same living room she had been using for her entire stay. "Dad is miserable, but putting on his happy face."

"I'm sorry, Rubes," Yang sighed guiltily.

"It's not your fault," Ruby countered quickly. "You need space, we both get that, but he misses you just as much as I do, so please call him."

"I will," Yang agreed quietly. "Soon. I just need to figure some things out first."

"How… How long will that take?"

Yang's hand paused as she reached out for the door knob. She had no idea how to answer that. She didn't want to lie and give Ruby a false time-frame, but she also had no real answer to give. She really had been thinking about it, but she still couldn't get past his admission and how it made her feel.

"I… I dunno, Ruby." It was a weak answer. She knew it was, but she had nothing else to give. "Can we please not talk about dad for today though?"

"You… You do still love him, right?"

Yang turned around to see doubt on her sister's face. It wasn't the first time Ruby had asked that question, in fact she'd asked it every time Yang had left after an argument, but there had never been
doubt in her eyes before. She suspected that it was caused by how she left. Usually it was with shouting and the slamming of a door, but this time had been quiet and with farewells. It was unnerving, to say the least, to know that she was contributing to the doubt with her lack of clear answers; but there was a relief to finally being presented with a question she could answer honestly.

So placing a hand on Ruby's chin and lifted her downcast face up to look into her eyes, she took a deep breath and replied firmly. "Of course I still love dad, Ruby. We're in a rough spot again, but that will never change. It just needs time to work itself out, okay?"

"Okay."

"Good." A false smile pulled across Yang's face to convince Ruby that it everything was fine. "Then let me show you the best view in all of Vale."

A documentary had been started up by the time Weiss re-entered the room, Ruby having snuggled up to Yang on the couch the moment she had finished showed her the view of Vale. Yang wasn't actually keen on the program itself, having never really been into historical battles and the weapons they used, but the fact that her sister was enjoying it was more than enough for Yang to tolerate watching it. Though, feeling Weiss' hand graze along her shoulder as the heiress circled the couch, she pulled her eyes away from the interview and smiled up at her girlfriend.

"Hey, Beautiful." She grinned wicked and threw an arm around Weiss's shoulder as she sat down next to her.

"Shut up," Weiss scolded her as her pale cheeks darkened slightly. "Good afternoon, Ruby. What're you watching?"

"Wow! Ignored by my gir…"

"A documentary on the Siege of Shion," Ruby said happily, her eyes glued to the screen. "Did you know farmers and blacksmiths held off the Vale troops for three months with nothing but swords and scythe?"

"... Oh boy, here we go…."

"... hes? Imagine fighting off an army with a scythe. It's so cool."

"You know they were against us in the war, right?" Yang asked.

"Doesn't stop a scythe being a cool weapon."

"You like scythes?" Weiss asked curiously, the woman's apparent reluctance to acknowledge Yang passing as she rested her head on her shoulder.

"Like is a bit of an understatement," Yang groaned and pressed a kiss against the top of Weiss' head, very happy to be sat between two people she loved. "She once stole one from Oscar's farm."

"I did not!" Ruby said quickly. "I was fixing the tang."

"Yeah, I have no idea what a tang is, but you kept that thing in your room for a week." she countered. "I've never regretted buying you those Soul Eater mangos more."

"Manga!"
"Whatever you say, Sis."

Feeling Weiss chuckle on one side of her, and Ruby shake her head on the other, Yang grinned down at her girlfriend and saw the beautiful blue eyes glance back up, full of humor. It never failed to amaze her just how quickly the sight would render her breathless. Weiss was always beautiful, whether she was stress from work or grumpy for other reason, Yang always considered her to be gorgeous; but to see the usually tense girl smile so happily with a gleam in her eyes was a sight beyond any other. It was even better knowing that she herself was the cause.

So leaning down, Yang kisses her cheek playfully and received a happy eye roll in return.

"So how was school, Ruby?"

"Not bad," Ruby shrugged. "My class is still treating me weird, a girl even asked me how I know you."

"And what did you say?" Yang asked cautiously, not believing Ruby had let anything slip, but knowing the girl had a tendency to do so accidentally.

"Just that you two are friends." Ruby said easily, her eyes still focused on the television. "It's kinda nice not having people laughing when I make a mistake, for once."

Yang looked at her sister and felt her eyebrows furrow. She hated that it was still happening, that she was still being laughed at, but there was nothing more she could do. Yang had been very quick to deal with most of the bullies back when they had been in school together, people who had chased her and teased her, but there was very little she could do about the snickering. If the other stuff ever started again, Yang would be right down there to deal with it, but snickering was a tough one. Even she herself laughed when Ruby did something so unbelievably Ruby, hell Weiss had done so earlier too; but there was a difference between laughing at something funny, and something she couldn't help.

There was also the fact that she knew she couldn't be there for every little thing. While they were still very close, Yang knew Ruby wanted to deal with some things on her own. The girl knew that she could ask for help, and that she would get it without hesitation, but she hadn't asked yet, and Yang was determined to let Ruby handle things where she could.

"Well they are idiots," Weiss said, Yang turning to see the earlier happiness having turned into a scowl. "That's probably why they won't be the ones getting into Beacon."

"I won't be getting into Beacon either," Ruby breathed sadly, a pout forming on her face and the documentary moved away from the farmers and to the blacksmiths.

"Actually, I've been meaning to talk to you about that." Yang said, reminded of what Weiss had revealed days ago. She had been waiting till Ruby had time to visit to tell her, as doing it over the phone felt weird. "Have you talked to your career counselor about Beacon?"

"No?" Ruby asked, looking up with a little confusion. "Why?"

With a small glance to Weiss, who seemed to recognise what conversation was about to happen and sat forward, Yang reached for the controller and muted the television. Ruby's attention was already away from it since the scythes were gone and Beacon had been mentioned.

"Well… Uhh… Weiss? You know more about this stuff. Would you mind?"

"Ruby, do you know what the Encouraging Bright Minds Initiative is?" Weiss asked straight away,
earning a slight shake of the girl's head in return causing Weiss to sigh. "Setting up all these things to give students a better future and not bothering to tell them about it. Sounds like the public school system."

Weiss took a deep breath as Yang raised an eyebrow at that remark. She could hardly argue with that statement, but to hear Weiss, the most studious person she knew outside of Blake, bash a school was a little strange.

"It's a project started by the four major academies with help from the educational board. The board agreed to hand over the files of students who were excelling, so that the schools could give them better consideration on applications and scholarships, or even reach out to them specifically in certain situations. And there is no better indicator of excelling in school than graduating early. Especially by a whole year."

"I'm not sure I understand?" Ruby asked, shuffling back to sit facing them with her legs crossed on the couch.

"Weiss is trying to say that Beacon already know who you are, and that there is a chance you could get in if you apply. You might even be given funding."

"It's not a guarantee, but your odds are definitely more favourable than anyone in your class. Probably more than anyone in your school right now even."

"But it requires something else too," Yang said with a nod. "Volunteer work."

"H-How much?" she asked, thoughts rushing past her eyes.

"I don't know," Weiss answered honestly. Yang loved that she was always honest, even when it was an answer someone didn't want to hear. "Your career adviser could probably tell you a lot more, but I know it is a lot."

"And I will help wherever I can," Yang added, her tone serious so that Ruby knew she was more than willing. "If this is something you really wanna go for, I'll help you look for places and drive you anywhere you need to go, and pick you up whenever. It's up to you."

"I…"

Ruby seemed a little stuck. Yang didn't blame her, as it was a lot to learn you could be accepted into your dream school, and could only imagine what was going through her sisters head. But wanting to provide some reassurance, she reached out and put a hand on her knee and smiled as the silver eyes came up to meet hers.

"C-Can I think about it?"

It wasn't the answer Yang expected, but knowing Ruby likely had her reasons, she nodded. "Take your time. This is your choice."

"I could even talk to the dean and find out what the requirements are, if you want me too?" Weiss said kindly, but receive a firm shake of Ruby's head in return. "Alright."

Ruby looked down at her feet and tapped her fingertips together. As the girl thought things through, Yang turned back to Weiss and received a smile. However, while the smile should have reassured her, it only reminded her that there was another pressing matter that Ruby needed to know about. And since they were informing her on stuff already, there was not really a better time to tell her.
So letting her hand run down Weiss' back and into her hair, something that was oddly comforting, Yang let out a sigh and returned her gaze to her sister.

"There is also something else that me and Weiss need to talk to you about."

Another glance was cast towards Weiss, who seemed just as confused as Ruby, and Yang mouthed a single word. Jacques. Understanding immediately dawned on Weiss' face and she closed her eyes with a gentle nod as she reached out a hand that Yang happily took with her free one.

"You already know that me and Weiss are a secret because Weiss' dad won't like it when he finds out," Yang began and felt Weiss' hand squeeze hers a little tighter. "But I haven't told you what will happen when he does."

"I'm guessing he'll be angry? He doesn't sound like the friendliest person when he's on TV."

"The television paints my father in a much more pleasant light than his actual actions."

Weiss' clearly tried to keep her voice even, but Yang knew her well enough to hear the venom there. "Weiss is right. He is so much worse. When he finds out about us, he's going to do whatever he can to split us up."

"You're not going to let him, right?" Ruby asked quickly, a slight hint of worry in her voice.

"Never."

"But," Yang sighed. "He's a powerful man, Ruby. And vindictive. He's not only going to come after me and Weiss, but the people we love and care about. Which means he will likely come after you too."

"Oh."

"I promise I will do everything in my power to stop that," Weiss said immediately. "I have a plan to get my company out from under him, but there will likely only be so much I can do in the meantime."

"But there will also be the fact that we will be public, and Weiss is very well known," Yang added carefully, knowing this would be the part that might scare the girl. "The press already don't leave her alone, but when we come out, they'll try and get a story however they can. And they're very persistent. I know you still don't like being chased, but that doesn't mean they won't do it."

A flicker of fear ran across Ruby's eyes and it hurt Yang to see it. It had been years since the bullies at school had instilled that fear into the girl, since Yang had almost been expelled for making sure they never did it again; so to know she was going to be putting Ruby in that position again was not something Yang was happy about. But she also loved Weiss, and she couldn't hide their relationship forever. The only other choice would be to end things, and that was also something Yang couldn't see herself ever doing.

However, as she watched the fear switch to acceptance, Yang felt a wave of relief rush through her as her sister nodded.

"I-I can handle it."

"Are you sure?" Weiss asked.

"Yes," Ruby said with a firm nod. "You make Yang happier than I've seen her since Arslan. Even
happier. So I can handle it."

"Alright," Yang smiled and placed a hand on her sister's shoulder. "But you know my Scroll's location is always on, and I will always pick up whenever you call. If someone is bothering you then you ring me and stay where you are, or you come straight to me, okay?"

"I will."

With a nod, Yang pulled her sister in a hug and whispered a quiet thank you. She still hated that she was putting Ruby in that position, but the girl seemed willing to face it. And though it was a little selfish, but with Ruby clearly trying to handle things on her own with Beacon and her dream job, maybe it would be a good thing for Yang to be taking a step back from the protective big sister and simply be there for her when she was needed. Though that didn't mean she wouldn't always be watching for those moments.

After a minute though, Yang felt the controller slip from her lap and the television's sound return. The documentary was interviewing the farmers again and Ruby's head immediately turned towards it.

"The scythes are back." Weiss said simply, leaning back into Yang as everyone returned to their original position.

"You can't stay for like… another hour?" Yang asked with a pout as she looked down at the girl in her arms. The past thirty minutes had been spent happily watching the rest of Ruby's documentary and having lunch, but Weiss had finally declared she needed to go. Just as she had the whole week, Yang had chosen to follow her out of the room to say goodbye at the elevator so that she could have just a couple more minutes with her. "Ninjas of Love is about to start?"

"Why do you think I'm leaving?" Weiss grinned in return, her back against the wall and her eyes looking up into happily into Yang's.

"You enjoyed it last time."

"No. I was afraid my brain was going to leak out my ears from how utterly crass that show is."

"But that's when you start to like it."

A soft chuckle escaped the heiress and a hand came up to stroke Yang's cheek. Lips pressed against her own in a gentle show of happiness that Yang let herself to enjoy for the few seconds she was allowed, before Weiss pulled away.

"I'm sorry, you know I would love to stay longer." She breathed, her finger finding a lock of hair and playing with it. "But I need to get in some more practise before the gala next week, and I can't come tomorrow because I have work right after college. I was only able to stay so long because my final meeting was cancelled."

"Mmm, I can deal till Sunday, I guess." Yang smiled, understanding completely that Weiss' work too precedence. "Shame the day wasn't how you imagined it would be."

"Maybe not, but it was still fun relaxing with you and Ruby." The woman kissed Yang again for a brief moment and then pulled away with a wide grin. "But you are definitely making it up to me on Sunday."

"I look forward to it."
"Good, because there is something I need you to do."

"Oh? Special requests already?" Yang laughed, earning an eye roll from her girlfriend as she reached into her bag.

"No," Weiss grinned and pulled a familiar piece of silver plastic from her bag. As if on instinct, Yang made to pull away, but Weiss' arm that was around her waist tightened and kept her in place. "I need…"

"Weiss…"

"I need..." Weiss interrupted firmly, clearly not caring about Yang's objections. "You to buy yourself something. Because if you don't, then what I have planned for Sunday can't happen."

"What? Why do I need to spend money for us to ha..."

"I want to take you out, you idiot."

"Oh!" Yang looked down at her girlfriend, a little confused by that admission. Their relationship staying a secret was important and couldn't be revealed yet, and going out on a date in public would most definitely reveal them to the world. "But we can't without being seen. What about the press?"

"Trust me. I have a plan, and a place I really want to take you," Weiss said softly. "But you don't exactly have anything here to wear that they would let you in with. So I need you to buy something."

"I can buy it myself, Weiss," Yang breathed, still reluctant to even look at the card. "You don't need to buy me things."

"Yang, I want to." The reply was firm and honest. "I know you don't care about my money, so please stop trying to convince me of that; because this will be something we have to move past at some point anyway. Now I don't care where you buy something from, you can fly to Mistral and buy something from the most expensive fashion shop there, or you can go to the cheapest thrift shop in downtown Vale; just get something to wear. Please?"

The piercing blue eyes took on an almost pleading look, and wanting to get rid of it as soon as possible, Yang finally looked at the card. Weiss was right, she would have to move past it at some point as she couldn't exactly go her whole life refusing to use that money, but it was still something she wasn't keen on. However, knowing that Weiss was not going to let her refuse this time, she let out a sigh and reached up to take it; finding a little relief at the happiness that filled Weiss' eyes.

"Thank you." the snowy-haired girl said with a smile. "Also, and this is not a request, but an order, while you are shopping for that, you can pick up some food. There is no reason I should be eating raman here when my girlfriend is an incredible chef, and more importantly, I don't want to keep eating raman. So fill the cupboards and fridge so that I can have a proper meal. Got it?"

"Yes, Ma'am," Yang groaned in response, realising that since she had already accepted the card, she had no valid reason to not do as Weiss ordered.

"Excellent."

Weiss chuckled and Yang leaned down to kiss her. It only lasted a couple of seconds, but the feeling that rushed through her was at least enough to push out more of her uncertainty about using the money. Finally though, Weiss pulled away and reached out to press the button to call the elevator.
"You're sure about taking me out? That it's not too risky?"

"It's a risk I'm willing to take." She replied simply. "I already told you that I'm tired of us always having to hide away, so I want to have one night where we don't. Not as much as we are normally, anyway."

Yang felt the same way, so gave a nod and pulled away. It would be good to be open for once, and though she was curious as to what Weiss had planned, she was also willing to keep the surprise. So pocketing the card, she gave the heiress a quick, goodbye kiss.

"Then I'm looking forward to it."

As she received a smile, the elevator arrived and Weiss stepped inside. Yang blew a kiss to her just as the doors closed and Weiss disappeared from sight. Letting out a small sigh, since that specific sight was one she still didn't like, she turned back to the hallway and made her way back to the living room where her sister was waiting.

Chapter End Notes

Hello everyone :) So mainly just a small relaxing chapter with some housecleaning of other things. Also a little bit of fun... poor Weiss :P I mainly just wanted to show that Weiss and Yang are getting more comfortable just being around the apartment together and taking the opportunity to have fun. It also sets up some future stuff, so hope you look forward to that.

The next few chapters are going to be Weiss though, as her meeting with Ironwood is drawing much closer; but, the next chapter is the date and without edits is currently at 15k words. I currently have up to chapter 52 written as well.

Also, me and Toxic are working on something new. A fluffy one-shot that has been rather fun to write and allowed me to try my hand at a new style. Not sure when it will be out, but could be out before you get the next chapter of this, or maybe a little after, so keep an eye out for that.

As for the next chapter, that will be up on the 3rd of February.
Weiss Schnee

Weiss was mostly ready for the date. Her make-up was perfect. Her outfit, a white dress that fell just short of mid thigh and decorated with white periwinkles, looked perfect despite her never having worn it before. She wore a bolero jacket over top, the sleeves falling only to her elbows. Covering her feet were a pair of slightly heeled boots of the same color as her dress. Though the outfit was pretty simple, it had an elegance to it that would be more than enough to get her into the place she was taking Yang. The most difficult part though, as always, had been her hair and scar. They were her two most recognisable features after all, and she couldn't count the amount of times people commented on both of them. To keep either would have made her extremely recognisable.

The scar had been simple. Though she no longer hid it from the world, her old practise of covering it up was easy enough to replicate. Her hair on the other hand, was the real pain; however, most of that had come from the fact that she was wearing a wig. As she tried to get it right, it had become clear that not all of her hair could be hidden without it looking rather weird, so she had settled for leaving some of it showing. Because of that, both blue and white hair swept across her shoulder blades twenty minutes later.

She looked in the reflection of the window as she waited for Yang and twisted around to inspect if anyone could recognise her. She still looked very much like herself, though that could have just been the bias of knowing, but it was likely not something that could be picked up unless someone really paid attention to her. She hoped the lack of scar and the shorter looking hair would throw most people off, but there was still one more part of her outfit that she needed to add. Thought that wouldn't happen until Yang came out.

Weiss was actually really excited about the day, and had been more than a little distracted all through her work. It was the first time they would technically be out in public where she would feel eyes on them. People wouldn't, or shouldn't know it was her, but to just take that step and have that moment was one Weiss felt was needed now. Though it wasn't going to be in the next week or two, it would not be long until they actually came out to the world; and when she did, the paparazzi, who had been a little quieter lately, would jump into overdrive and try and get a story where they
could. Their public dates would become even more public by way of magazines, any kiss they
shared would be on the cover, and while Weiss wouldn't care, she wanted to experience a peaceful
date before all of that.

The sound of a door opening pulled her attention away from the window, though not before she
saw a smile grace her face. Both her and Yang had refused to show each other what they were
wearing, though Yang had done it because Weiss refused to tell her where she was taking them, so
she was eager to see what the beautiful blonde has chosen. And as the girl appeared from the
hallway, she was most certainly not disappointed.

Weiss remembered that as she arrived to pick the girl up for their second date that she had expected
to see Yang in a suit. She wasn't sure why, as the girl was rather still rather feminine in many
regards, but with how many shirts the boxer wore and how she often acted, it seemed like a logical
conclusion to make. But she had been surprised that the woman had gone for a definitely female
outfit that still had held a kind of reserved nature. This time however, she had completely foregone
that.

Instead Yang stood before her in a beautiful, Yellow, Mistralian dress. The top of it was tight,
every inch of the fabric clinging to her body and accentuating every curve. It was patterned with
what seemed to be a storyboard of sunflowers rising to meet their namesake. The yellow gradated
from a lemon yellow at the chest, to a pale cream colour over the stomach and long sleeves before
once again darkening at the cuffs and into the dress. The lower portion was just as much a treat.
The long, flowing fabric reaching just past the knees with a pattern of petals that looked to move in
the wind as Yang shifted. A slit ran all the way up the right side of the dress to reveal plenty of leg,
but stopped mid thigh so as to not show anything else.

"Don't suppose you've seen my beautiful girlfriend, have you?" Yang joked, earning an eye roll
from Weiss. "So?" Yang asked with a grin and gave a twirl, the fabric swimming around her.
"How's it look? Worth forcing me to spend your money?"

With a shake of her head, Weiss stepped away from the mirrored window and ran her hand along
the smooth material. "You look incredible, as always."

"I know, just wanted the compliment." The blonde chuckled and lifted up a hand to touch Weiss
hair. "You look beautiful too, though I have to say I still prefer your normal hair. And your scar."

"I know." Weiss said, happy that Yang had included the scar in her statement to show that she
never wanted her to feel the need to hide it. "But unfortunately, this is a necessity for today.
However, there is one more thing."

She saw a small look of confusion etch itself on Yang's face as she reached into her bag and pulled
her glasses from their case and slipped them on. Yang stared at her for a second, then eyebrow
slowly raised and her grin widened. "Now those?" She said seductively and pulled her closer by
wrapping a hand around her waist. "Those I definitely missed."

"Well don't get used to them," Weiss chuckled as Yang's reaction was the same as the first time she
had worn them. She wasn't really in need of glasses, but the optician had said she was a little short-
sighted. "You know I hate them, but they complete the look."

"Mhm, or you're just trying to tease me?"

"Believe me," Weiss leaned up on tiptoes and pressed a short kiss against Yang's lips. "There are
much better ways I can do that."
Yang's eyes were still closed as she pulled away and Weiss knew she wanted another. However, she knew they were already cutting it close, and Hazel was waiting for them downstairs, so she turned away from her girlfriend with a grin, and walked towards the elevators to press the button. She knew it would happen, but just as she pressed the button, Yang spun her around and backed her into the wall. A thrill ran through her as she loved when Yang acted in such a way. While the woman was acting on what she wanted, Weiss always felt safe as she knew the blonde would stop at the slightest word.

"I'm assuming you will do those later?" She grinned down.

Her sultry words caused Weiss to bite her lip and shrug. "I don't know. I quite like you in that dress, so it would be a real shame to take you out of it."

She saw it in Yang's eyes. Desire. Yang had teased her a couple of days prior, nearly bringing her to her knees, and then left her hanging. It was something Weiss had vowed to make her pay for, and she intended to honour that vow. So as Yang lowered herself to reinitiate the kiss, Weiss slipped out and into the elevator. While Yang recovered from the miss, she pressed the close door button and smirked at the blonde with a raised eyebrow as the door shut.

The next time Weiss saw Yang was when the brooding brute stepped out of the elevator on the ground floor. Out of sight of Yatsu, who had unfortunately recognised her, but said nothing, the woman pointed an accusing finger in her direction and Weiss felt a wide smile etch itself across her face. Laughing at the woman as Yang waved goodbye to Yatsu, Weiss led them outside to where Hazel was waiting. As she had requested, he has brought an inconspicuous car that wouldn't be recognised, and they both quickly slipped into the small back seat.

"You're really gonna tease me all night, huh?" Yang asked when the doors were closed.

"Maybe," Weiss replied smugly. "Depends how fun I fi…"

Before she could finish, Yang swooped in and pressed their lips together. Neither of them had to care about Hazel watching them, as neither were stupid enough to not think Hazel had been blind to their relationship, but the kiss was still short-lived. After only a couple of seconds, Yang pulled away and beamed at her.

"Guess I had to sneak one in before a night of torture then."

Chuckling to herself, Weiss leaned back in her chair and fastened her seat belt. Sliding her gaze towards Yang, she saw that she was grinning ear to ear, and found her excitement peaking once again. She was really about to spend the night out with Yang in public, and all it would take was a single command. So taking a deep breath, she smiled at the blonde and took her hand.

"Whenever you are ready, Hazel."

Twenty minutes later, Weiss stepped out of the car with Yang quickly following behind. They were still a couple of streets away from their destination, but after Hazel pointed out some traffic up ahead, she decided that it would be nice for them to walk the rest of the way. Weiss had a small thought that popped into her head when she thought about the inconvenience, but if they were really going to enjoy themselves in public, then she wanted the full experience; and part of that was walking down the street holding her girlfriend's hand. It was a simple thing, but one she really wanted.

The dark street itself was rather quiet. Downtown Vale was normally always busy, but with it being
Sunday, and half the shops that would usually still be open at 6pm being closed, people didn't have much reason to be out. There were still a few people however, people who were making their way to the few open stores or to a nightclub, but they seemed to pass without nary a glance in their direction. Feeling emboldened as it meant her disguise was working, Weiss leaned down to talk to Hazel through the window.

"Thank you for driving us, Hazel." She put as much gratitude into her voice as she could. "I know today was supposed to be your night off."

"It's fine." His voice was gruff, but Weiss could tell he really didn't mind. "Do you need me to pick you up afterwards?"

"No, thank you," Weiss replied with a shake of her head and a quick glance as the picture of a smirking, dark skinned girl with green hair on the dashboard. "I've pulled you away from your niece too much tonight as it is. We can take a taxi back."

"Alright," He said with a nod, starting the car up again. "Have a good night, Miss Schnee."

"Later, Hazel." Yang said with a wave that was returned before the car moved away. Once it was out of sight, Weiss turned back to the blonde and saw that she was still wearing the smile that had painted her face the entire car ride. "So, Beautiful, where we headed?"

A surge of adrenaline ran through her as the blonde held out a hand, and Weiss found she had to take a deep breath. Reaching out, she entwined her fingers with Yang's and waited for a moment. A part of her expected to see camera flashes, to hear whispers or the sudden barrage of questions, but there was none of that. No-one cared, and Weiss felt herself relax. She let herself feel what it was like to have Yang's warm hand in her own as people walked by, and let out a small sigh of happiness.

"You'll see." She grinned at the blonde as she began to walk towards their destination. It felt exhilarating to walk down the street like a normal couple. "Pretty sure you will like it."

"So long as it's with you, that's pretty much a certainty." The blonde grinned, but quickly turned her head with a slightly concerned look. "Unless it's a play, I always fall asleep during plays."

"You are safe," Weiss laughed at the admission. "It's not a play. But didn't you say Arslan was a drama student?"

"Oh she was. Used to bug the hell out of her that I couldn't stay awake."

"Hmm, and if you were to attend a recital I may or may not have in the future, would you fall asleep then?"

"I would staple my eyes open." Yang replied jokingly. "Besides, I stayed awake when you played that day I came over, and when you showed me the audio the other day."

"You mean when you stole my headphones?"

"My headphones… But yes."

Weiss shook her head as they turned a corner at the fact that Yang had indeed stole the headphones and forever claimed them as hers, something Weiss didn't mind at all as she owned another pair anyway. "So what a recital am I invited too?" The blonde asked.

"As much as I would love for you to be at the upcoming gala, I'm afraid none." She breathed.
"Shame. I'm pretty sure I could help woo this Ironwood guy." Yang chuckled. "You know… Bat my eyelids, turn on my charm, kick him in the nuts if he says no."

"And now I know to never invite you to a meeting," Weiss laughed and pressed the traffic light. "Besides, General Ironwood is a family friend… Kind of."

"What do you mean by kind of? Winter said he helped your mom when she asked?"

Weiss let out a low sigh as they waited for the light to turn red. Though she had only met the man a few times at parties her father had thrown, there really was a lot to tell about him.

"Well him and my father don’t exactly see eye to eye on a lot of things. The General likes certain things to remain military use only, while my father prefers to make a profit. He is also a little… overzealous in his actions sometimes."

"In what way?"

"Well, while I do think he is a good man trying to do what he feels is best, I agree with the people of Atlas that the military's more firm involvement in the running of Atlas and Mantle has been a little excessive."

"Oh yeah… Aren't they technically under martial law?"

The light finally turned red and she let out a sigh as they crossed. It was one of the few reservations that still remained about Winter being in the military, that she might be part of what many consider to be an almost oppressive rule. The people still had their freedom and their right to vote, but at the same time, the entire kingdom also had a mandatory curfew.

"Not quite," Weiss explained. "The country still adheres to council law instead of military, and quite a lot of the stories are quite overblown, but they have introduced a few more stringent rules in recent years. And not... everyone... is treated in the best of ways."

"You mean the Faunus?" It was hard not to hear the exasperation in her girlfriend's voice.

"Atlas' Faunus Registry is a bit more extreme than Vale's. All Faunus must register, not just those who were, or are, active in the White Fang. Failure to register your trait has a rather large fine, or even jail time."

"And I thought Ilia had it rough with the registry here. I always knew it was kinda rough there for Faunus, but not that rough." Yang breathed and Weiss moved a little closer. "I thought you said he's a good guy?"

"He is," Weiss reaffirmed her girlfriend. "I don't agree with his registry, or the way he's enforced it, but the extreme side of the White Fang has done a lot to Atlas over the years. He is trying to keep people safe, but I do agree he is going a little too far to do it."

"Still sucks that innocent Faunus are being punished."

"I agree."

Both of them were silent for a minute, Yang mulling over what she had just learned while Weiss let her. She knew how the blonde felt about the mistreatment of Faunus and hoped she hadn't spoiled the mood by bringing it up. Thankfully after the minute passed, Yang gave her a soft smile that Weiss happily returned. They were almost nearing their destination anyway and she couldn't wait to see Yang's reaction.
"Well, at least he isn't tagging them," Yang shuddered, a reaction Weiss shared as she too remembered how Faunus used to be treated in Atlas before the Faunus War. "So how's the prep for your meeting with him going?"

"Pretty well," she replied, glad that Yang had moved them on from that topic. "Dr Polendina and I are still going over a lot of things, and I'm still struggling to get the latter half of the piece I will be playing right, but I should be ready by Thursday."

"But I'm guessing that means you won't be around much?" Yang asked, clearly knowing the answer already.

"Sorry, it's likely that I won't be around at all this week," she replied regretfully.

She really had enjoyed being able to visit Yang almost every day for the past week, and the increased time had led to her feeling much more relaxed and focused at work. Yang also had no issue with her studying or working while she was there, and was more than happy to just watch the television while Weiss cuddled up against her with some coursework.

"It's fine," Yang shrugged with a smile, the humour in her voice telling Weiss that it really was fine. "I like that you put work first, and wouldn't have it any other way. However… maybe as a reward for being so understanding, you'll tell me where we're going?"

"I could…" Weiss hummed playfully. "...Or you could wait thirty more seconds and see for yourself." The blonde squinted at her before rolling her eyes and giving an accepting shrug.

Sure enough, roughly thirty seconds later they rounded a corner and their destination came into view. Though the building itself wasn't especially big, there were quite a few people queuing before it. Most of the face was glass through which bright light poured out, light that was only amplified by the white walls within the building. Even though it was still a little bit of a walk, no more than a minute or two, Weiss could see the misshapen statues and paintings, that cluttered the walls and floor, through the windows. The inside wasn't too busy, and that was because Weiss knew only a certain amount were allowed into the showcase at a time.

She looked to her side and saw Yang eyeing the building, her eyes confused for a moment before widening. Weiss couldn't suppress her chuckle as the lilac orbs filled with excitement and Yang's hand tightened on her own.

"No! Way?" She grinned, happiness filling her voice. "The postmodern art showcase? I've heard horror stories!"

"I saw it last year," Weiss laughed, knowing exactly why Yang had heard such things. "The stories are true. Figured it would give you a laugh tonight."

"I saw it last year," Weiss laughed, knowing exactly why Yang had heard such things. "The stories are true. Figured it would give you a laugh tonight."

"Oh I can't wait. I mean…” Yang coughed and put on a voice so overly artsy that Weiss couldn't help but laugh a little harder. "As an artist, I don't usually judge art by the standards of what society accepts as beautiful," A wide grin crossed her face and her voice returned to normal. "But like… beauty being in the eye of the beholder has its limits. Some stuff is just shit."

"They are pretty b…"

"Nonono! Like actual shit. An artist sold their turds in a can for a hundred thousand."

"How lovely," Weiss groaned, though she was happy to see the smile on Yang's face.

"And I kid you not, there's a museum in Mistral that's for what they call 'non-art,'" the blonde
laughed. "It's just blank walls and they tell you the art is there and that you can buy it."

"And I thought my father was exploitative," She grinned.

"Gods, this is gonna be awesome!"

If there was ever a doubt about having brought Yang to mock some art, then that little outburst had squashed it. Admittedly Weiss would have loved to take her to a more fancy place, like another trip to the Beacon's museum or somewhere of the like, but with it being Sunday, even the name Schnee would do nothing to get them into a building with no employees. Thankfully she had remembered the showcase a couple of days prior, and figured it could at least be something fun for a day out.

As they finally approached the building, which was mostly a standard size two story building with a little more length than the others surrounding it, she felt Yang aim for the queue and pulled her away. Her name may not be able to get her into places that were already closed, but it was more than enough for them to skip the line. Reaching into her small clutch bag as they approached the bouncer, Weiss pulled out a blue letter and held it up, the man quickly moving aside to allow them entry.

"You really have this whole night planned out, huh?" Yang's voice was full of excitement as the usher opened the door for them and let them into the brightly lit room. "I'm guessing you aren't going to tell me what we are doing after this either?"

"How do you know this isn't all I have planned?" Weiss asked facetiously, letting a smug look take over her face. Yang most certainly was right that she had a little more of the night planned, but the blonde was also right in that Weiss wouldn't tell her everything.

"You really think I'm not gonna get kicked out of here in like... thirty minutes for laughing my ass off?" Yang asked, and pointed to something that quite honestly looks like a bunch of randomly connecting blue lines on a black canvas. "Like look at that. What even is it?"

"I don't know," she chuckled and moved closer to hook arm through Yang's since they were in a tighter space. Once again, she felt exhilarated to be so openly affectionate while surrounded by people. "Streaks of day on a night sky?"

"Actually..." A condescending voice from behind them said and Weiss turned to see a woman with long, dark red hair wearing a blue shirt and brown skirt. Her olive eyes scowled at Yang before turning to her. "... the blue represents the random connections of humanity, and the white shows how we become less colourful as we get further apart. At least you took a guess though, unlike your friend... who clearly doesn't understand art."

Weiss saw Yang's face crack into a smirk out of the corner of her eyes as the blonde turned to look at the painting again. So that they could move on before Yang could burst out laughing, something she was clearly about to do, Weiss gave the woman a pleasant smile.

"Yes, well my girlfriend..." A rush went through her at being able to use the word so easily. "... here struggles to find the beauty in most things that are outside of a boxing ring." She had to suppress a grin of her own at that lie as she knew Yang could probably draw something leagues better than that in a couple of seconds.

"I find you beautiful," Yang grinned and stuck out her tongue.

Clearly the woman saw that Yang was unapologetic for her remark and turned on a heel to stalk away, leaving them chuckling to themselves. Turning her attention to whatever Yang was
inspecting on the painting, she leaned it for a closer look. Though she liked art, she wasn't quite sure what she was looking at so cast a sideways glance at the blonde, catching her eye and earning a smile.

Yang reached out a hand and indicated to one of the blue lines. "They're all done with one stroke." She said amusedly, her hand motioning to the middle of one of the lines that was apparently supposed to be white. "She didn't even use an ombré effect to blend in a white, just eased up on the pressure. This thing took five minutes, at most."

Yang shook her head and stood up straight. With one last disapproving look at the scribbles, both of them moved on to the next one. It was just as bad as the first, but the next was worse, just a random assortment of things jammed into a figure that was supposed to reflect societies wasteful nature but just looked hideous. With each one they passed, Yang would comment and explain what made it low effort.

On the sculpture it was the copious amount of glue used to stick it together that completely defeated the message, on one painting it was the clear attempt at something real that had been brushed over for a grotesque drawing of a man's distorted face. There was one that she pointed out had promise, but was too unfocused to represent anything. As they went through the exhibition hall, Weiss actually saw the woman throw a disdainful look at one piece.

The piece itself was stupid and looked like someone had tried to replicate an actual painting and purposely made it ugly, but it was Yang's reaction, which had previously been humorous, that made Weiss ask what was so wrong about it.

"It's mocking actual art," Yang sighed and shook her head as she pulled her away from it. "I know the piece it's copying, and it's actually really well done and thought provoking. The artist actually understood art, and whoever drew that knew what they were doing. It's a brilliant example of why I hate most postmodernism pieces. Some pieces are really well done and touch on actual serious subjects, but most are just either failed projects, attempts to be unique, or attempts to tear things down."

"Is that why you are so happy to criticize it?" Weiss asked, having seen first hand that Yang really enjoyed calling every piece out for what it was. Not that Weiss had disagreed on any of her assessments so far.

Yang gave a small nod of her head as they arrived at another sculpture that actually didn't look too bad, though Yang gave it a non-committal shrug. "That, and the fact that everyone who has a piece here will be leaving with a couple thousand Lien. Art is hard to break into, and getting by on it is tough. I have friends at college who have tried for years to be recognised, and they are some really talented sketchers and animators, but they get nothing. Almost every person here spent less than a day on something that they know they can convince some poor rich guy into paying for. This isn't an art showcase, it's a scam."

Weiss looked at her girlfriend and saw disappointment in her lilac eyes. It was rare that she heard Yang go into the finer points of art, as she usually said it's all too different to really comment on, but she knew it was something the blonde cared about. She knew she really shouldn't have, but during her wait for the blonde a couple of days prior, Weiss had peeked into the sketchbook Yang had shown her before. The memory of what she had seen moments before being shown the tattoo had come on strong, and she hadn't been able to resist the temptation. In truth, a part of her wished she had resisted.

What she had seen was horrible. Nightmarish depictions of the sea with horrors crawling out of it that made her skin crawl, saddening pictures that spoke of loss and made her heart ache. Almost
every drawing in that notepad felt like seeing every horrible thing Yang felt growing up, but there were a few that made her smile. There was one of a dragon protecting a garden of roses from a war that raged around it, the picture meant all the more as Yang had once told her about Ruby and Blake calling her as such. Another that made her smile was a drawing of a girl surrounded by darkness, but for some reason it felt comforting. The darkness wasn't drawn like Yang had drawn the sea, there were no harsh lines or small rips in the paper; Instead it was lovingly shaded and two arms wrapped around the girl's shoulder. If Weiss had to guess, she would say it showed how Blake had helped her, but she wouldn't be surprised if she was wrong there.

Having seen the diary, having seen just how much Yang had poured into her art, it was easy to see why she hated art being mocked. "Was bringing you here a bad thing?"

"Huh?" Yang replied and her head turned to stare down at her. After a second in which confusion tinted her eyes, she gave a soft smile. "Oh! No. Sorry." She, her eyes lighting up again. "Most of the pieces here are so blatantly emotionless that I don't care about them. Just that one that annoys me."

"Hmm," Weiss hummed as she raised a hand to her chin. "It would probably just give them the money they want, but I would be more than happy to buy it just so you can destroy it?"

"Pfft!" The scoff earned a short look from one of the other attendees. "Don't waste your money. I would rather take the odds of them getting none than you paying for me to turn it into kindling."

"Up to you," Weiss chuckled, resting her head against Yang arm as they continued to walk among the travesties.

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Yang's prediction of thirty minutes had been almost accurate. They had actually lasted forty-five minutes before leaving on their own accord due to the act of ridiculing the atrocities, that the place called art, getting stale. Weiss hadn't really expected them to stay there long anyway, mostly she had planned for it to be just a fun small outing, and after seeing Yang's eye constantly drifting to the offensive piece, her desire to stay had reduced even more. The place Weiss really wanted to spend the night with Yang was up next.

The street was much quieter than when they had arrived at the art exhibit, the people either having found a place to settle down for the night, or they had given up and gone home. Even the cars that had previously offered some light were gone, leaving the roads empty. Though normally walking with only the faint glow of the old lamppost would have made Weiss uneasy, with Yang at her side, all she felt was safety. Her confidence in Yang to handle anything someone may try to start was absolute, as she had seen first hand just how dangerous the woman could be in a fight.

However, as there was no-one actually around to start anything, Weiss could allow herself to relax and sink into her girlfriend while the blonde talked about her upcoming classes. Even though Yang clearly wasn't the most fond of education, it was clear she was excited to start up a few of her classes again.

"... not really sure what I want to do this year," The woman ended with a small shrug. "I could focus on boxing, or I could try to get a place in a restaurant for some hands on experience."

"You did boxing last year, right?"

"Yeah," Yang replied with a grin. "I mean, I won most of my fights and I loved doing it, but I love cooking too. But it's kinda hard to get a position while still in college, and I would miss working with Blake."
"You would have to leave the café at some point," Weiss reasoned. "Especially if you want to open your own restaurant, like you said."

"I know," the blonde agreed with a small shrug. "It's just… We don't really have many classes together and she's been helping Ilia at the meetings a lot more, and when she isn't, she's been spending time with Sun. Between that and all the time we spend together, which I love, work is really the only place I get to spend time with her these days."

"And that would change if you did boxing?"

"She usually hangs out and reads while I practise. She can't exactly do that if I'm working in a kitchen."

"True," Weiss admitted and altered their path to take another street. "So maybe you should talk to Blake about it?"

"Nahh," Yang chuckled, though Weiss a small bit of dismissal in the word. "I'm just being a little more needy, I guess. I'll still see her, just, it not being as much is what makes me feel weird."

Weiss looked up at her girlfriend and saw some doubt in her eyes. She knew just how it felt to know you wouldn't be seeing someone as much as she herself had struggled with it when Winter left, but she knew now that it was inevitable. She also knew that Blake and Yang would likely stop working together eventually. Yang wanted her own restaurant, and Blake technically already owned her own place, so the two were always going to go their separate ways.

"Well," Weiss said slowly, determined to cheer up the blonde as she figured Yang was likely thinking all of that too. "I know it's not the same, and that I'm not Blake, but after this Thursday, I will be able to come around more once again."

"Hmmm," Yang replied thoughtfully. She raised her free hand to her chin to stroke an imaginary beard. "A best friend I have to blackmail into hugging me, or a girlfriend who will wait for me to get home while wearing nothing but a shirt and socks. I wonder which is more comforting?"

Weiss rolled her eyes and bumped against the brutes shoulder. Had there been anyone around, she would have been a blushing mess, but since they were alone, she simply let out a short laugh. As the memory came back to the forefront of her mind, she slowed her pace until she stopped, and while It took Yang a couple more steps to realise they were no longer walking together, she too eventually came to a stop and turned to see what was up. With a smile on her lips, Weiss stepped forward and wrapped a hand around the woman's waist.

Looking up into the beautiful lilac orbs had to be one of her favourite sights in the whole world. She had never seen them as anything but warm. Sad? anxious? distressed? Certainly; but always warm. They captivated her and never failed to make her stomach do a happy flip, and when Yang smiled, it was like nothing could ever be wrong. It was one of the main reasons she loved being so close to her, pressing against her body and craning her neck back just slightly due to the height, because she knew Yang would always return the embrace and look down at her with the wondrous eyes.

However, as much as she loved those eyes, she loved kissing her more. So leaning up onto her toes, she saw Yang lean down until their lips pressed together. It wasn't heated, but it was certainly passionate. The fact they were kissing in the middle of the street was more than enough for Weiss' heart to soar, even if there was no-one around to see them. The warmth of Yang's lips was all the rest she needed to let out a soft hum. It really was intoxicating, and she never really knew how much time passed during each kiss, but she never really cared. A hand placed itself on the square
of her back, but just as the other went to wrap around the back of her neck, a loud shout interrupted them.

"THINK SHE WANTS TO GO HOME ALREADY, BLONDIE!"

Both of them split apart, and both of them giggled. Falling back to her heels and resting her head against Yang's chest, she turned in time to see the arm that was about to embrace her stretch out to give the couple on the other side of the road the middle finger. Just as she and Yang had, the two laughed and threw a thumbs up before turning the corner out of sight. Once they were gone, the hand finally did wrap around her shoulders and Yang let out another chuckle.

"Yang."

"Mmm?"

"I think…" Weiss paused and let out a happy sigh. "I think you should focus on trying to get into a restaurant. You said it's your dream, and I don't think you should hold off on going for it because you will see less of a friend that you will have for the rest of your life."

"Maybe you're right," Yang sighed herself. "I will think about it. Gonna suck to leave Blake's shop though if I do find somewhere."

"I know," Weiss whispered and pulled back to place a hand on the blonde's cheek. "But I'm sure Blake would fire you the second she knew you were trying to get something else so that you don't feel held back. She would want you to go for it too."

Yang looked down at her for a couple of seconds, thoughts rushing across her eyes before nodding. She took it as a sign that the woman really would think about it and finally pulled away, her hand taking Yang's back. "Anyway, speaking of restaurants, I think it is time that we get something to eat."

"Oh thank god!" Yang groaned in relief and leaned back slightly. "I'm so hungry."

Laughing at the exaggerated gesture, Weiss shook her head and led the blonde to their next destination. Thankfully it wasn't too far away, as Weiss really was quite hungry too.

Ten minutes later, Weiss tapped on a plain looking door set into a plan looking building. There were no windows, no signifiers that the door even led to anything, except a small, unlit sign that read 'Greenville' attached to the wall. She leaned her head against Yang's shoulder as she waited, and after a couple of seconds, the slider at the top opened and a pair of eyes looked out at them. Digging into her purse, she pulled out a green card and held it up so he could see it. After a quick look, the man shut the slider and they heard a bolt open on the other side.

"Because that isn't ominous," Yang grinned, her tone excited as she mimicked what Weiss remembered having said when she was first led up to Blake's apartment. "How many access cards do you have in that bag anyway?"

"More than a card shop, less than a factory," Weiss laughed facetiously as they waited. "Though my ID is normally enough to get me into most places."

"Oooo, Miss Schnee," Yang cooed teasingly. "How powerful you are."

She rolled her eyes and nudged the already grinning blonde as the door was pulled open. What greeted them was a rather plain hallway, its walls painted a dark green while the carpet was a light grey. Weiss knew it was all a facade for what lay beyond the door ahead of them, but she kept her
face straight to as to not ruin the surprise. The man stood aside as they crossed the threshold, and Weiss pulled the skeptical blonde along to the door at the end. Once she was outside, she waited for the bouncer to press a button on his desk to unlock it. Once she heard the telltale buzz, she gave Yang a quick glance and pulled them through the door.

The room they had walked into couldn't be more different to the outside hallway. The immediate change was that the moment the door was cracked open, smooth jazz flowed out to greet them. The sound was pleasant and played to relax. The room itself was actually a lavish lounge.

Dark green walls surrounded the room, each one decorated with paintings and silver light. The floor was made of chocolate brown wood that blended beautifully with the mahogany tables, some of which were surrounded by two chairs, while other, larger ones were set in front of green couches attached to the wall. Quite a number of each were occupied by men and women who had likely finished work for the day. At one end of the room was a bar, filled with all manner of expensive spirits and even standard beers, and to the right of it was the band who filled the room with music. The entire place screamed decadence.

"What! The! Hell?" Yang breathed, looking around the room in shock. "What is this place?"

"This…" Weiss smiled, happy that the surprise had paid off. "... Is Greenville. They have a few locations around Vale. All hidden of course."

"Yeah… You're gonna have to explain to me why that is?" Grinned the blonde.

"Well," She chuckled and pulled her girlfriend through the tables to a free couch. "While being rich comes with a lot of benefits, privacy is not one of them. With the paparazzi, store owners who want things from us, twitter," Weiss couldn't hide her hate of that damn platform. "Having a night of peace outside of our home is a rather difficult thing to do. So that's why these places exist. The employees respect our privacy and get paid well for it, the rich get to have some fun without being harassed. Everyone wins."

"Honestly, sounds a little pretentious," Yang shrugged with a grin.

Weiss let out a small laugh as the finally reached the table and sat down. "I suppose it is. But when we reveal our relationship, you may find yourself seeking a place like this."

"And you would give me your card?"

"No, I would get you your own," Weiss replied with a smirk.

"Well, as pretentious as it is," Yang hummed as she looked around and put an arm around her shoulders. "I could maybe get use… Oh my gods, is that Spruce Willis."

Weiss grabbed Yang's as it raised and put it back down as she muttered an apology to the man who had looked over at them. There were actually a few well known names hovering around the bar and the tables. Spruce Willis, the famous action star. Alicia Sky, a famous author. A few well known businessmen from Vale. She even recognised the man from the film Yang had shown her during their last actual date, Cyan Reynolds. She gave the blonde a sharp look as she had just said people came there for privacy, and Yang's eyes widened slightly and she put a finger to her mouth, the childish action dragging a chuckle from her throat.

"Sooooooo…" Yang smiled, choosing to move on from her slip up by picking up the menu that sat on the table. "You said this place serves food?"

She gave a nod and leaned in a little closer to skim over the menu as well. Quite a bit of what was
on the list were light meals such as salads and easy pasta dishes, but with a lot of rich people actually enjoying eating bad food too, they had a couple of other options too. Yang seemed to mull over it much longer than Weiss did, but after almost five minutes, she finally put down the menu.

"Finally decided?" Weiss grinned at her.

"Hey, I'm a chef and this place is probably super expensive so I wanna get the best thing I can," the blonde replied with a laugh. "So how do we order here?"

"You know you can eat here for breakfast, lunch, and dinner for the rest of your life, right?"

Weiss motioned to Yang's side of the table. where she knew there would be a button, and the beaming boxer looked to see what was down there. Her eyes rolled as she saw what Weiss was motioning too. "Rich people really hate having to actually do stuff, huh?"

"We do enough at work, so yes," Weiss chuckled. "It's why I always have you cook."

"And I'm happy to do it," The blonde pressed the button and turned to face her with an exceptionally wide smile. "For the rest of our lives apparently."

Yang stuck out her tongue and Weiss rolled her eyes while blushing. They had said it a bunch of times already in passing, but never truly addressed it. Staring into the lilac eyes again, she placed a quick kiss on Yang's lips before pulling away to return the grin. "That is what I intend for, yes!"

"Me too."

Before Weiss could steal another kiss, the waiter appeared with a notepad. Each of them gave him their order, Yang choosing a burger and fries while Weiss went for a simple chicken and bacon pasta salad. After Yang heard her order though, she let out a soft "Ooo," and politely asked the waiter to put some bacon on her burger too. Once he gave a nod, they ordered some water and Weiss slipped him a note with a pre-written request. With the order given, he gave yet another nod and walked away.

"What was that?" Yang gazed suspiciously at her.

Weiss simply shrugged and placed her bag aside as she shrugged off her jacket. "I have no idea what you are talking about." She hummed playfully, though actually a little cautious about what she had ordered.

"Mhm." Yang's reply was full of skepticism, but the joyous look painted her pretty feature again as she pulled her closer. "You know there's a pun-ishment for keeping Schnee-crets, right?"

"Oh gods," Weiss groaned, playfully hiding that she actually loved Yang's lame attempts at humour. "Yang on while I go and find you a better sense of humour."

"Okay, that one was just terrible," Yang laughed and kissed the top of her head. "But I love ya for trying to keep up."

She closed her eyes at the words and let out a deep sigh. It didn't matter how often she heard them, she still always felt lucky, even more so since they had just been said in a room full of people. Before she could enjoy it for too long though, the waiter returned holding two glasses; each filled with a clear, beige substance. She immediately felt Yang stiffen as the champagne was placed on the table, not even noticing as the man walked away.

She looked tentatively up as her girlfriend and saw her lilac eyes locked onto the drink. She knew
Yang hadn't been drinking, and she knew why; but she also knew Yang liked to drink. Weiss had talked to Blake about it and then had revealed that, while she did get drunk whenever they went out, Yang was a responsible drinker. She very rarely went all out and was always able to walk at the end of the night.

She also knew that alcohol was one of the things getting between Yang and Tai, as the woman had become a little worried she might end up like that and repeating his mistakes. If they ever wanted to fix that fissure, Yang needed to move past that, and Weiss really wanted to help her.

"Weiss…"

"I know," Weiss cut her off, wanting to explain herself first. "You don't have to drink it, that's why I didn't order a bottle." She reached out and pushed the glasses away from them to the edge of the table. "But, us being out like this is one of those things I would usually celebrate with a drink. So if you want to join me later, you can. If not, then you don't have to."

Yang's face was hard to read for a moment, but after a minute the blonde turned away from it and Weiss took that as the answer. So she nodded and nestled into the blonde's shoulder. She knew Yang was still thinking about it, so pressed her lips against the woman's cheek. "No pressure, Okay?" She whispered.

"I know," Yang hummed understandingly before letting out a frustrated sigh and squeezing her a little tighter into the sidelong hug. "Anyway, how long does the food usually take?"

"About fifteen minutes. Shouldn't be too long for what we ordered."

"Good, 'cause I really am hungry."

"Aren't you always hungry?" Weiss joked.

Having visited Yang more over the last week, she had seen just how much the woman ate. It wasn't uncommon to walk in and see her girlfriend eating one of those horrible instant ramen meals, or just some random junk food. It was also part of the reason she had ordered Yang to use her card to buy some actual food.

"Hey, gotta eat a lot to maintain this figure you love so much," Yang said and Weiss could imagine the grin on the brawler's face.

"Hmm, then it is a good thing you might be working in a restaurant soon then," she jabbed in return.

"Wow, would you even still love me if I didn't have such a great body?" Yang laughed.

"Without a doubt." She replied instantly, making sure Yang could hear how serious she was despite the fact she was chuckling too. "Your body is just a bonus to me."

"Mh-m."

She felt Yang's hum catch in her throat as her lips pressed against the blonde's neck. The words that might have been said turned to a pleasured sigh, and Weiss felt a playful smile pull at her lips as she pulled back. She had been having so much fun just talking and walking around with Yang that she had forgotten her promise to get revenge for what had been done last time they were together.

"Anyway…" Yang coughed, clearly trying to ignore the teasing. "... I don't even know if that's what I'm doing yet. Feels weird to know Ruby has more figured out than me this year."
"I stopped by the store yesterday and Blake said she's decided to go for Beacon?"

"Yeah, also told me she doesn't want my help with it," Yang breathed as Weiss pressed her lips against the skin again. "She's been trying to prove a lot lately."

She knew Yang liked to do things for her sister, and knowing she was likely a little bummed that Ruby had declined help, Weiss pulled back and looked her girlfriend in the eye. "She probably just wants to earn this alone, so that you don't have to worry about her when she moves out for college."

"I guess, but I'm gunna worry anyway." Yang replied, and pulled her into a short lived kiss that sent tingles through Weiss body. "But keep teasing me like that, and I will be taking you to that bathroom over there before we ever get back to the apartment."

Weiss giggled and bit her lip as she raised an eyebrow. "You wouldn't?" She asked, though genuinely would not be surprised.

"Wouldn't be the first time," Yang smirked seductively, the husky sound of her voice sending shivers through her body. "So don't tempt me."

"Hmm," Weiss kissed her again and brushed her fingers along the woman's cheek. "Unfortunately for you, I don't do public stuff."

"Coulda fooled me with how you're munching on my neck," Yang replied and stuck out her tongue. "Or are you just that hungry? 'Cause we could leave right now."

Weiss rolled her eyes and let out a loud laugh as Yang wiggled her eyebrows to make the innuendo even more obvious. On her peripheral, she noticed a couple of people looking curiously in their direction, but happily ignored them. Though she would likely be doing business with a few of them in the future, the only person she cared about in the room currently, was the blonde that she was leaning comfortably against.

That was how they sat for the next twenty minutes, cuddled up to each other on the couch under the soft lamplight. Yang cracked her usual jokes and innuendos, while Weiss talked about work and teased her occasionally. It was nice to simply relax in such a way after a long week at work, and she knew that there would be nothing that could stop her from spending the day with her girlfriend again after her meeting with Ironwood. However, the food finally arrived and Weiss heard Yang's stomach rumble as the girl sat up with an eager groan.

"Sorry for the wait." Both of them waved the apology away as the man set the food and a pitcher of iced water on the table while being careful to avoid the champagne glasses, which were still full. "Enjoy your food." He said politely with a low bow before walking away.

Yang quickly set about organising the food, placing Weiss' plate in front of her first before reaching for her own. She also poured them both a glass of water, and took a sip immediately; though Weiss noticed the woman's eyes darted towards the champagne. A guilty pang went through her at that look, but Weiss shook it away as she knew Yang couldn't be scared of it forever. To distract the blonde, she reached out and stole a fry from her plate and the eyebrow that was raised in return was immediate.

"Oh really? That's how it's gonna be?"

"Maybe," Weiss shrugged with a grin and bit into it to find that, despite preferring lighter things, the fry actually tasted rather good. "You can have some of mine in return."
Yang inspected the salad and upturned her nose. "No thank you," She scoffed and pulled a piece of bacon from her burger. "I'm trying to bulk a little, not turn into a matchstick."

It was Weiss' turn to raise a scornful eyebrow at what Yang had just called her, but she quickly saw the smirk on the woman's face, and realised she was just trying to get a rise out of her. Not wanting to play into whatever game the blonde has planned, as she suspected it wouldn't go well for her, she simply stuck out her tongue and started her meal.

"Oh my Oum! That was so good!" Weiss watched Yang push the empty dessert plate away and wipe her mouth free of chocolate with one of the napkins.

"You can order another if you want?" She asked and pushed her own plate away even though there was still some left on it. After having stolen half of Yang's fries, she'd found herself full before finishing her own dessert.

"I really shouldn't." Yang laughed and took a sip of water. "I'm trying to build up some bulk, not get fat."

"Strange, I've been thinking that was your intention all week."

"WOW!"

Weiss couldn't help but laugh at the exaggerated reaction as Yang crossed her arms and put out her bottom lip. "Well, that is what you get for calling me a matchstick."

"I meant that in a good way," The blonde scowled and moved away as Weiss went in for a kiss. "Nope." She said playfully.

Weiss tried to a few more times, but each time Yang moved away with a smile that grew wider with each dodge, a smile that was also painted on her own face. After the first dodge however, Weiss gave up and pulled herself away from the blonde and off of the couch. That finally elicited a reaction from the pouting brawling and Weiss felt a hand try to pull her back, but before the fingers could close around her own, Weiss slipped hers free and flashed her a playful look.

The last thing she saw before walking away with a flick of her hair, that was much more effective when she wasn't wearing a wig, was Yang place her elbow on the table and resting her chin on her hand; her bottom lip was captured with her teeth and her eyes held curiosity. Shaking her head as she made her way towards the band, she let out a deep breath. The night had been perfect so far. They had talked, they'd laughed, they had eaten and kissed; all while among the prying eyes of the public. She had genuinely loved every moment of the night out, so she could hardly suppress her smile when she gave the band her instructions, to which they gave a polite nod.

Yang grinned as she walked back to her, the wide, toothy smile making her heart flutter a little. The beautiful lilac eyes were scanning her up and down, and Weiss rolled her eyes playfully. "You know, I dunno if I like watching you walk away more, or watching you walk back. They're both fantastic views."

"Well let me know when you decide, and I will be sure to do the other." She responded jokingly and held out her hand. "Come with me."

"Such a tease," Yang laughed and happily took the hand. "Where are we going now? Bathrooms?"

Weiss couldn't stop the snort that escaped her, but easily pulled her girlfriend to her feet. She carefully led the girl through the tables to the back of the room where there was a little more space,
not much more space, but enough for what she wanted to do. The moment they entered it, the band did as she asked and the music slowed, the fun jazz becoming slower and more gentle. Weiss turned around and looked at her girlfriend as realisation passed over the woman's eyes and her face split into a grin.

She let Yang pull her close, the smell of her perfume filling her nostrils, and raised her hands to wrap around the back of Yang's neck, more than happy to let the blonde lead the dance.

"I would prefer we had our first after we came out…"

"Heard that before…"

"But…" Weiss cut off the smiling joker with a sharp look, though inside she was laughing. "... I honestly can't think of a better way to end this outing."

"You enjoyed the night then?" Yang laughed, her arms quickly came to rest around her waist and they began to gently sway in place.

"I enjoy every night with you, but yes." Weiss breathed, closing her eyes and resting her head on the woman's warm shoulder. "Now shut up so I can enjoy this."

After a soft chuckle, Yang fell silent and they began to slowly rotate. Weiss was aware of the eyes on them as it was unusual for such a thing to occur, but she didn't care. As Yang's head fell against hers, she let out a happy sigh and stepped a little closer, the blonde's hands entwining behind her to pull her into an embrace. She wasn't quite sure how long they danced for, but it was by far the happiest she had felt in a long time.

She had always loved dancing. She remembered her grandfather had taught her by resting her on his shoes and prancing her around the room. She was tiny at the time and none of it had sunk in, but it was a memory of him that she cherished, and it had caused her to want to learn as she grew up. That want, had made the lessons her father made her take, so as to not embarrass him at galas, one of the easier orders of his to follow; but even then, she had worried that those lessons would only ever be used at such events. So to be able to use it for something that made her heart swell with love was something she was extremely grateful for.

"I like this." Yang's words were said in a low whisper to guarantee that only she heard them, and held a sincerity that made Weiss smile with joy. "No pressure, no hiding. Just us. It feels so simple."

Weiss felt a thumb stroking her back and let out a content hum. "Me too. I wish this could be everyday."

"It will be one day. We'll make sure of that."

Weiss nodded and felt Yang's head move. Without even opening her eyes, she knew what the woman wanted, she was unsurprised when lips pressed gently against her own. The kiss was full of love, and happiness, and the warmth that rushed through her system was immense. She felt herself pull towards it, determined to revel in the warmth for as long as she could. This time she made sure to count the seconds. Twenty. Twenty seconds of pure bliss, followed by a second of pure sadness as the lips pulled away. That second was brief though, as Weiss' body settled and her senses picked up the other things.

The gentle stroking of her back, the breath that was tickling her ear, the way Yang would shiver slightly as her fingers grazed her neck while playing with her hair. They all sent a wave of desire
and want through her for more, and Weiss knew it was finally time for their date to end. She had loved the art showcase, loved the dinner and the short dance; but the only thing she wanted now was to return home and show the woman just how much she loved her. So pulling away slowly, she opened her eyes and gazed into the lovely lilac orbs of the woman who brought her so much happiness with a smile.

"Let's go home." She said resolutely, Yang understood instantly and gave a short nod.

"Okay."

The two of them broke apart and made their way back to the table to get their things. Weiss quickly threw her bolero back on and grabbed her clutch bag, but as she turned to see if Yang was ready, she found her staring at the glasses of champagne. After only a second, the blonde let out a small breath and reached down to pick them up.

"You don…" Weiss began.

"Special occasions," Yang cut her off firmly, offering one of the glasses out.

Understanding that the woman had finally made up her mind, she gave an accepting smile and took the drink and raised it. "To a perfect night."

"I can definitely drink to that," Yang chuckled.

The glasses were clinked together and they both drank the bubbly liquid. Once it was all gone, she saw Yang let out a breath of relief at her own empty glass.

"Do you feel the need for more?"

Yang shook her head and her face split into a small grin. "No."

"See, I told you that isn't you." Weiss cooed and raised a hand to stroke her girlfriend's cheek lovingly as her other hand pulled her Scroll from her clutch and held it up. "Now. Call us a taxi, a block away from here, and take me home. You have a promise to keep."

"And I fully intend to keep it," Yang grinned, inputting the password and calling a taxi.

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"Hey, Yatsu!"

"Miss Xiao Long."

"Good evening."

"Miss Schnee."

"Later, Yatsu."

Weiss laughed at the greetings as Yang pulled her past the security desk and towards the elevator. In less than a second, the button was pressed and after waiting for a minute for it to arrive, they slipped inside. Weiss barely had time to tap her key card against the sensor before Yang's hand wrapped around her waist and pushed her against the wall of the elevator. Lips crashed into hers, the desire that had been growing during the entire taxi ride finally being unleashed, and Weiss immediately responded in kind as the taste of chocolate and bacon exploded in her mouth.

Heat and excitement ran through her as her arms wrapped around her girlfriend's neck to pull her
deeper into the kiss. Her fingers were instantly lost in the main of golden hair, and she felt a warmth settle in her stomach as their tongues came out to meet each other. The blonde's hands trailed up her side, and her skin tingled in anticipation despite the fabric between them, but that was nothing compared to the shiver that ran through her as Yang's hand grazed over her breast. It lingered for a moment, the stronger fingers kneading the soft flesh and causing a slight moan to escape her, before moving to the bolero jacket she was wearing.

Weiss knew the elevator had a camera, but she didn't really care. The fact that Yang wanted her so badly that she couldn't wait the minute it took for them to get to the apartment was more than a huge turn on for her, and she happily let the woman pull the jacket away. From the lack of metal clinking, she guessed Yang was still in control enough to know not to drop it to the ground. As the hand holding the jacket came to a rest at her waist, she felt the other clasp around her back of her neck; the thumb hooking under her jaw to tilt her head up a little more and give Yang better access.

Finally though, the elevator arrived and the door opened, but Yang didn't move. In fact she stepped closer, and her body pressed against Weiss'.

"Mmm," She hummed at the heat that was billowing off of the girl, the intensity of it being felt through both layers of fabric. "Ya-ang…" She breathed when the woman gave her a second, her eyes opening to see the lilac ones before her full of desire. Before she could say another word, the delectable lips were back on hers, but she placed a hand on her girlfriend's chest and pushed her away long enough to breathe her concern. "The doors."

She didn't know if Yang had heard her or not at first, but a couple of seconds later, when the doors did indeed begin to close, a loud slam echoed around the box. Yang's hand had left her neck and caught the door to keep it from closing, the force of the action making the elevator shake a little and bringing a smile to Weiss' face. The hand on her hip slipped a little lower and snaked a little further around, and Weiss understood. So leaning against the wall as Yang got a good hold, she raised her legs and wrapped them around the woman's waist, Yang's strength easily keeping her secure as they exited the lift.

The first thing she heard was the sound of metal buttons hitting wood as the fingers on her butt moved. When they returned to their place, she could feel them much better and figured Yang had finally decided she was done holding the jacket. Just as well too, because Weiss was tired of holding her bag and the keycard, both of which clattered to the floor and were quickly forgotten.

She had no idea where Yang was going to take her at first, but it quickly became clear that the blonde wasn't interested in going very far since she felt herself being set down on the back of the couch in the main room. Her legs unlocked to feel more secure on the precarious ledge and she ran her hands down the strong arms, each bump of firm muscle under the fabric making her head spin just a little more. Once she arrived at Yang's hands, she guided them to the hem of her dress, before she returned her hands to the woman's hair.

"Someone is…"

"No more teasing," Weiss instructed, her patience having already come to an end as her body already craved Yang more than ever.

"Yes ma'am." Yang grinned. Clearly she had no issues with the order, and instead did as she was told.

Weiss lifted her arms and the dress was quickly pulled over her head, leaving her in nothing but her white thong and her boots. Yang took a little more care with the dress and draped it over the back of the couch, but once it was discarded, her lilac eyes looked her up and down hungrily. Her eyes
lingered on her breasts for a while, and Weiss placed her hands on the back of the chair while she bit her bottom lip seductively. "See something you like?"

Yang's gaze flicked back up to meet her own and a grin spread across her face. "Thought you said no more teasing?"

"Who's teasing?" Weiss shrugged without a single care that she didn't have enough for her breasts to jiggle since Yang's eyes shot down to them anyway. She reached out to take Yang's hand and quickly pulled her back in. The warm fingers instantly spread heat through her. "I'm pretty sure I've made it clear that you can do whatever you want," Desire flashed across the blonde's face and Weiss felt her stomach flip. "So what do you want?"

Yang only took a split second to decide, but a restrained kiss was placed on Weiss. The hand on her chest moved to cup her breast and a thumb flicked across her nipple, sending a pulse of pleasure through her body as the blonde pulled her lips away. "Wig off, glasses stay," She growled.

She smirked and raised her hands to release the clips that held it, and her hair in place. She instantly felt her hair fall free and splay over the couch behind her, and pulled the wig free. She didn't have to do anything since Yang's hand shot out to grab it and threw it far away. Before it landed, Weiss grabbed the front of her girlfriend's dress and hungrily pulled her back into the kiss. With everything Yang wanted being clear, it was time to get what she wanted, and at that very moment it was for the dress to be gone. So while she revelled in the renewed make-out session, she slipped her hand along Yang's chest to her back and pulled down the zipper.

Along the way, she felt the clasp of a bra and wasted no time in unhooking it before dragging the metal all the way to the bottom. She felt a thrill run through her once the back fell open at the fact she was about to see the glorious form that was her girlfriend's body. She had only seen it properly twice. Once during their first time, and the proceeding morning, and the second time where she had walked in on her getting changed a couple of days ago. Unfortunately, she hadn't had the time to take advantage of it then, but she certainly did this time. So while still enjoying the kiss, she took each side in hand, along with the sides of the bra, Weiss pulled them forward.

The material quickly came away and fell to the woman's waist, but not satisfied with leaving it there, Weiss quickly pushed it down. She felt another piece of fabric as she did, and throwing all restraint out the windows, pushed that down too. She supposed that was the good thing about a dress that was removed by pulling it down instead of up, she could strip her girlfriend completely with nothing more than one fluid motion. As the dress fell to her ankles, Yang broke the kiss and stepped back out of it, flicking her shoes aside and placing a hand cockily on her hip.

Weiss felt her breathing deepen as she looked at the toned muscle, the large but firm breasts, the golden hair that framed the beautiful face. Her body was already reacting, and she felt her legs quiver at the fact she would be enjoying it a lot more in less than a minute.

"I think you're drooling already."

She rolled her eyes happily and rose to her feet. "Not quite yet. So shut up, and get to it."

The grin that spread across Yang's face was devilishly wicked, but it sent a rush of excitement through her. The blonde took a confident step forward and, after one last quick look down her body, reached up to pull them back together. Weiss felt her head tilted back as Yang guided them around the room while peppering her with kisses. Before long, her legs hit the wide couch and she let herself fall into it. Yang followed along to make sure not to break contact.

A rush of exhilaration went through her as she leaned back and Yang climbed on top of her, the
blonde's knees either side of her waist. Fingers roamed up her sides, the nails gently scratching her skin and left what felt like trails the lava in their wake. The hard breaths that Yang let out were letting her know that Yang was enjoying the exploration too, as did the flutter of her stomach against her hand. Of course her own had quickly found the toned stomach that she loved so much, but as Yang's kisses transitioned to her neck, she let one of her hands trail down the naked muscle and between the legs that straddled her.

The heat between them was intense, and Yang was clearly extremely aroused, not like she needed her hand where it was to know that. She could feel it beating down on her hand, but was genuinely unsure if the sticky feeling was her hand beginning to sweat, or Yang's fluids. After her next action though, she was certain what it was. She raised a finger and ran it through the blonde's lips to find that she was soaked, and heard Yang inhale sharply. Weiss doubted she would be any different as she could feel her own thighs sticking together, and it made sense as they had both been teasing each other for days, but Yang had yet to touch her outside of a hand moving to her breast. But if Yang wanted to be first, Weiss had absolutely no issue with that since the woman clearly needed it, and she would take immense pleasure doing it. So she ran a finger through the slit again to find the clt and circled it, her finger applying a little pressure.

"Mmm." The moan that was let out into her ear was divine, and Weiss went to repeat her action, only to feel Yang's hand wrap around her wrist and pull it away. Teeth captured her earlobe, and Weiss let out a soft breath as it was let go and a kiss was placed just below it. "You first." Yang breathed huskily.

Weiss felt a groan vibrate her throat, and the hand on her breast squeezed her nipple sending tingles through her entire body. Yang's lips were already beginning to trail their way down her collarbone and Weiss' eyes were squeezed shut. The other hand brushed along her stomach, its intended path clear; but nonetheless, Weiss couldn't suppress her moan as it slipped into her underwear and teased her hole. She was right about being soaked too, and she could feel it on the woman's fingers immediately.

However, just as she thought Yang might tease her a little more, she felt the beautiful boxer's mouth close over her nipple and gently sucked it between her teeth. At the same time, two fingers were pushed inside of her.

"Ugh!" The grunt left Weiss at the sudden entry as the feeling of having something inside her coursed an intense wave of pleasure to course through her body. As opposed to their first time though, Yang wasn't being anywhere near as gentle, and the finger buried themselves up to the knuckle and curled to stroke her walls. "Uhh!"

Somewhere in the back of her mind, she was aware of the grin she could feel on Yang's lips, but as the fingers curled inside her and a thumb was pressed against her clt, Weiss was more concerned with the pleasure that tore through her. Weiss was very aware of how short her fuse was, and though climaxing felt amazing and Yang hadn't seemed to care about it last time, she didn't want it to end so soon. However, with the constant teasing, and having left herself alone all week, she was already struggling.

She had almost cum on the initial entry, but with the curling of the fingers and the fact that Yang's tongue was now lashing against the nipple held lightly between her teeth, she really wasn't sure she was going to last too much longer. Her mind was already going blank, but just as she felt her walls begin to pulse, the fingers pulled out and Yang's mouth left her breast. Her eyes flew open and she saw Yang watching her with an intrigued grin. Before she could say anything, Yang kissed her again and the hand in her underwear flipped to grab the edge of the material.
After a couple of seconds, the kisses were being trailed down her neck again, though this time Yang seemed to be going slower, but Weiss knew where she was going. As the lips trailed between her breasts, Yang slowly began to remove the white lace thong while her knees moved back. By the time the lips arrived at her stomach and the fabric arrived at her knees, Yang was already off the couch and knelt between her legs. With a flourish, she slipped them the rest of the way off and threw the soaked material aside.

"Ready to scream?" She heard Yang say mischievously.

"Not going to... oly f..." Pleasure shot though Weiss as Yang placed a kiss on her clitoris. She didn't scream, but her voice was definitely louder than normal. Another wave rocked her as the blonde's slick tongue ran through her fold, and Weiss' hand shot into the mess of hair on it own accord while her throat let out a whimper. "Hmm!"

As Yang slowly lapped at her wet hole, Weiss felt hands grab behind her knees and pull her a little further down the couch. Once she was practically laying flat with her butt laying off the end, the repositioning stopped and Yang took full advantage of the better access. With each stroke, her tongue would press deeper and cause Weiss to moan louder. It curled and twirled, the tip flicked against her clit and after she did each three times, she would place a kiss on the small nub and suckle on it.

The pleasure was like torture, albeit the good kind; but Yang's actions seemed to be specifically done to not let her cum. They felt amazing, and her body was already shaking with a thin layer of sweat and she played with her breast, but she could feel Yang was up to something. However, just as she was about to urge Yang further, the blonde seemed to kick it up a notch and her tongue pushed past her entrance.

"Ahh," Weiss gasped, her hip coming down as her hand pushed Yang's head harder into her. If Yang had any complaints, none were given and Weiss continued. Yang tongue was deeper now, and the tip was gliding along her quivering walls as it wiggled back and forth. Despite her making it clear she wanted it to stay inside her though, Yang pulled the appendage back into her mouth and sucked Weiss' swollen lips into her mouth for a second. They were quickly let go and replaced with her clit, the tongue lashing over it like it had the nipple earlier and Weiss felt her back arch. Yang finally seemed serious and Weiss already felt herself nearing climax. Though she was a little displeased at Yang using her strength to pull away again, her displeasure quickly turned back to pleasure at the words that were spoken.

"Go ahead, Weiss," Yang whispered lovingly in a heavy voice before placing another kiss on her clit again. "Cum for me. Loudly."

Yang used the first syllable of the last word to run her tongue back through Weiss' soaked pussy. As she did, two fingers were pushed back into her, they tips curling again. "A... lil... more." she choked, so very close to that wave cresting. Seemingly happy to oblige her, Yang's lips closed back around the sensitive nub and hummed. Her fingers curled a little more and finally hit a place that lit Weiss' entire body on fire and caused her orgasm to crash down upon her.

"Gods, Yaaang!"

She wasn't sure if it was a scream or not; but then again, she wasn't sure of much in that moment. What she was sure of was that her body was revelling in more pleasure than ever before. She was aware of every part of her body. Her rapid heartbeat, her curled toes that were still covered in her boots, the fact that her hand had a death grip on Yang's hair as the woman continued to lap at her hole. She was in heaven, every inch of her flooded with pleasure, and the only thing she could do
ride it out. How long that took, she had no idea, but Yang's tongue worked her the whole time, coaxing out more moans and extending the orgasm by a good minute. Finally though, just as she became convinced it would never end, her body began to slowly calm down. Obviously sensing it was over, Yang finally stopped eating her out and instead kissed her way back up her body.

It was another minute before her eyes opened, but the moment they did, she saw that Yang was straddling her again and her beautiful, lilac eyes were gazing down at her.

"Not quite a scream, but definitely a promise kept." The blonde chuckled, clearly very happy at how deeply Weiss was breathing. "You really like the dirty talk though, huh?"

Weiss couldn't deny it due to her lack of breath, but also because it was true. She didn't know what it was, whether she just found it arousing, or because it was a crude form of talking that was so different from how she was raised, but it definitely did something for her. None of her partner's had done it before, maybe because of the power difference and not wanting to do something that might annoy her, but Yang's had no problem with doing it. And Weiss was very happy about that.

"Yes…" She breathed after a minute, her breathing finally evening out. "Give me a minute… and I will return the favour."

"Hmm." Yang hummed and leaned forward. Weiss was happy to meet her, the kiss a more loving one than the desire fueled ones they had shared since returning to the apartment. "Just a minute? I thought I blew your mind more than that." Yang chuckled.

"You did," Weiss laughed as her hand trailed up the blonde's stomach and grazing over the magnificent breast. As she flicked her thumb over the hard nipple, she saw Yang bite her bottom lip. "I just recover quickly."

"Good," The woman grinned, and Weiss felt a wave of excitement go through her as she knew that grin meant she was up to something. "Cause if I won't be seeing you for a week, I intend to make full use of tonight."

Weiss knew exactly what that meant, and she felt her body heat up again as her body realised that orgasm wasn't going to be the last of the night. However, with her breath back and her legs no longer feeling like jelly, she knew it was time to return the favour for the first. So placing a hand on Yang's hip, she pulled herself up and kissed the blonde. As she did, Yang let out an eager hum and moved aside to lay back on the coach, Weiss following her. He hand squeezed the breast she was holding playfully, and with a grin, she began her mission to make Yang feel just as good as the brawler had made her feel.

But first, she pulled back from the kiss for a brief second to smirk at her gorgeous girlfriend. "So do I."

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**Yang Xiao Long**

Yang breathed heavily as Weiss crawled out from under the quilt, her body still tingling with the pleasure that Weiss had just given her. It took her a second for it to calm down, but as it wasn't her first orgasm of the night, it faded a little faster. Finally, as the pleasure dissipated enough to were she could finally think straight, she looked to her side to see the snowy-haired beauty grinning at her and running her thumb along her chin to clean the mess she had made.

She wasn't exactly sure how long it had been since they had returned from their night out, but it had to have been at least two hours. And in those two hours, neither of them had made any attempt to
move away from the oversized couch. The very most Yang had done was get them a drink and run upstairs for a quilt, which was brought right back down. In honesty, she had thought they were done then, but the lull only lasted so long before they both found themselves in the mood again. Not that Yang was complaining at all. Either way, as Weiss cuddled back up to her and fell into her arms, it seemed decided that they were spending the night exactly where they were.

"That one took a while," Weiss breathed happily and Yang felt a hand rest on her stomach, the fingers scratching idly along her skin.

"Ha," She laughed and looked down at the hand. The quilt was bunched around their waists and left the upper bodies exposed, so she had a magnificent view of Weiss' perfect body. "Hope your jaw isn't hurting just yet?"

"Please," Weiss scoffed. "I spend hours talking in meetings. It will take a lot more than that. I was..." Weiss cut herself off and Yang looked back up to see curiosity in her girlfriend's blue eyes. "I mean... is there anything you do to... you know... stop yourself?"

Yang understood what was being asked as she had definitely noticed it the first time. Weiss' short fuse was incredibly fun to play with from time to time, but it had seemed to be even shorter during their first time of the night. She had barely begun when she felt Weiss' walls convulse around her fingers, but she'd also felt the girl trying to resist her climax, so chose to slow it down a little after that.

"Hmm." She hummed, putting an arm under her girlfriend's neck and pulling her close. "Not really. I can just last a while." The response was exactly as she suspected, a deep sigh. "What's up?"

"I just..." Weiss let out a groan and the fingers on her stomach bug in a little. "You like going down on me, right?"

"A bit of an understatement, but yes," She chuckled.

"And you would like it to last a little longer. Right?"

"Are you worried I'm not enjoying that you cum quickly?" Yang asked, receiving a small shrug in return. With a small chuckle at such a stupid thought, she gave the woman a soft kiss and looked her in the eyes. "Trust me, Weiss, I am very happy. But-" She kissed her again and let out a soft hum. "- If you wanna work on that, then I am more than willing to do..." Yang placed her hand on Weiss' stomach and slowly walked her fingers downwards. "... whatever I have to do to teach you."

"Mmm." A soft moan escaped Weiss as Yang pushed her fingers between the woman's legs and felt that Weiss' hole was still quite wet, her middle finger finding the clit to gently circle it, causing the heiress' eyes to flutter.

Yang grinned to herself at the reaction and kissed Weiss' cheek. She pulled her head back and gazed at her girlfriend lovingly, the woman's eyes stopping their fluttering and locking onto hers. "Thank you for today, by the way." She breathed, really wanting to express her gratitude since she hadn't got the chance to earlier. "I loved every second of it."

She felt a hand come up to gently caress her cheek and Weiss' face split into a happy smile. "Me too. And I can't wait until we get to do that without the wig, since you clearly didn't like it."

"It was fine," Yang laughed. "But I prefer your actual hair more. I'm just happy I got to spend some more time with you before this week."

"I feel the s... ame," Weiss' voice caught as Yang pushed her finger lower to stroke through the
soaked folds with a grin on her face. "I love you more that I can proba.. Ahh… bly say."

Weiss' eyes screwed shut, but Yang kept the pressure of her fingers light. "I know," she whispered and moved in a little closer until she felt their breasts rub together. "I love you too." She felt her stiff nipples graze over Weiss' and suppressed a gasp of her own. "Now," She grinned wickedly despite Weiss not being able to see it. "I'm going to have fun making you last twice as long as I just did."

The moan that Weiss let out was cut off as Yang planted a firm kiss on her girlfriend and gently teased her lower lips. She had meant every word she had just said about the night, how she felt, but she had also meant what she had just said about making Weiss last longer than ever. So pulling away from the kiss, she licked her lips eagerly and prepared to give her girlfriend an orgasm she would never forget.

Chapter End Notes

Hello everyone. So that was a big date chapter for you since its been quite some time. I wanted to have this little moment for the two, the really show how much they want to be out, so I hope that came across. And I hope you enjoyed. There are a couple of things in here that are mentioned that work into future plot lines, so if you spotted them, congrats. Also to touch on the smut, I don't intend for it to be a huge part of this story, and not even a large part, so don't worry about this story becoming that because they are spending a lot more time together. I simply like doing it on the rare occasion because it shows another aspect of their relationship, and I want to be showing all of the different angles.

I will acknowledge that the tensing feels a little off this chapter. All I can say is I'm sorry, but due to the size of the chapter and how long that will take to fix, I will have to simply let that be since if I try to fix that then it will take a few more days to get this too you. Around this chapter was when I kinda hit a block and was struggling to write, and while that has passed now, it did persist for a few chapters of both this and HIF. Thankfully they are much smaller and I should be able to sort those by upload.

But that's it from me. I hope you all enjoyed and I hope to see you all on the 13th :)
Weiss took a deep breath as she stood in front of the white door. She was a little unsure about what she was about to do, as while her relationship with Whitley was better than it had been in years, they were still not especially close. The boy was still very guarded around pretty much everyone, and it seemed very much like his snarky attitude was something that would not be changing any time soon. But it was enough for Weiss to know that the boy was not completely lost, that their father had not completely corrupted him in the time she'd left him alone.

In her hand was her laptop and a couple of files for work, though those things had been with her every waking moment for the past three days. There was less than twenty-four hours until the gala and her meeting with Ironwood, and while she thought, or more accurately hoped, that she was ready, more preparation never hurt. Unfortunately for her, she was unable to study in her room at that current time, and while she could have chosen any room in the house, she did want to see how her brother was doing since they hadn't really talked for over a week. So after another deep breath, she raised her hand and tapped on the door to her brother's room.

She heard nothing. After twenty seconds, she tapped on the door again, and once again received no reply. She knew he was in there, so for a third time, she reached out to knock a little harder and heard a groan come from behind it. A couple of seconds later, it was thrown open and Whitley stood before her wearing a white shirt and dark blue pants. His white hair was a little unkempt, but she knew it was likely because he was relaxing.

"What do you want, Sister?" He asked impatiently as his hand brushed a strand of hair from his eyes.

"The cleaners are doing the room next to mine," she said politely and held up her work. "It's making it rather difficult to focus. I was hoping I could sit in here with you for a while. Just until they're done."

"This house has fifty-six other rooms you could use." His tone was full of suspicion as he scowled at her. "Why do you want to come into mine?"

Her eyes locked onto the blue eyes of her brother and she let a kind smile pull at her face. "I also thought we could catch up while I work. I've been so busy lately that we haven't had time."
"I do not need you to try and reassure me that you are around."

"I know," She said with a nod. The boy had been the same the last time she had approached him after the meeting with their father, but she knew he would let her in eventually. "I just want to spend some time with my brother for a whil..."

PING!

The loud sound of a scroll receiving a message cut her off and Whitley looked over his shoulder to the glowing device that sat on his bed next to some textbooks. He seemed contemplative for a second, like he was unsure as to what to do, but after a minute he closed his eyes and let out a deep sigh. With a small step to the side, he held out his arm to motion towards the desk.

"Fine," he breathed as she walked past. "But I am working too."

"Understood." She said with a smile and placed her laptop and files on the desk.

As Weiss organised her stuff, she watched her brother out of the corner of her eye. Despite his claim of working, the first thing he went for when he returned to his bed was his Scroll. His fingers nimbly typed out a message, but she noticed that his thumb hovered for a split second over the send button before pressing it. She recognised the action, as she herself had done it months prior when she first began to text Yang, and deduced that whoever he was talking to was still a rather new acquaintance.

She looked away from him, as he had chosen to glance over at her, and pulled her laptop open. She typed in the password as she sat down and spread out a few of the paper she was working on. They were full of numbers and ideas she likely wouldn't need, but it was better to know Dr Polendina's thoughts than not know them; they also served as a good excuse to take sneak peeks at her brother as she referenced them.

The fact that his papers were even on his bed was something she took note of. Though she hadn't really taken much notice of him in the past, she'd always just assumed that he was like her, and the rest of the family, and preferred to study at his desk; however, from the way he slumped into a seemingly familiar position, that clearly wasn't the case. She racked her brain for any other times she'd seen her brother be so informal in his presentation, and couldn't remember any; other than when his hand was hurting. He was always proper, always neat; but then again, she had never bothered to see him behind closed doors. She knew that her surprise at his more relaxed nature was entirely her own fault.

It still pained her that she had let him feel that way, even unknowingly. Their relationship may have been mistrustful, but she had never actually hated him. Though she had avoided him for fear of believing he was turning into her father, she had thought those things with a heavy heart. Again, that was her fault, and she couldn't change any of what she had done, she could never take back that fact that she had made him feel alone; but what she could do was make sure that he knew that was no longer the case.

So as she opened a new document on her laptop, she let out a small cough and tried for a little casual conversation. "So..." She said hesitantly while keeping her eyes on her laptop so that he didn't feel like she was expecting anything. "Your retake was yesterday?"

Just as she suspected, she received no reply. Weiss knew Whitley only talked on his own terms, and she didn't want to pressure him, so she let the silence hang there. The tapping of keys filled the air and Weiss fell back into her work, however, just as she thought he wouldn't answer, she heard him speak.
"It was."

Her head almost turned to face him, but she stopped it and continued her work.

"And how did it go?"

"Full…" PING! "... marks. It's far easier to write when your main hand can actually hold a pen."

"I would assume so," Weiss hummed.

She was happy that her brother's hand had fully healed. Just as Yang said, it only took just over a week before the boy's hand had finally healed, and all that remained was a scar across one of his knuckles. Unfortunately, with their fair skin, it stuck out rather prominently.

"Were my notes helpful, at least?" She asked.

"Very," He sighed, clearly bored of the conversation already. "Far more than the book Klein suggested to me. Though I suspect that was his intention."

"Suspect?" Weiss smiled since she knew that it was absolutely Klein's intention to give him a useless book. "I thought you knew everyone's moti..." PING! "... vations in this house?"

"Klein is difficult to read." Whitley sighed, the fact that he couldn't accurately guess someone's intentions clearly something that caused him annoyance. "You, on the other hand, are not, Sister."

Weiss turned to look at her brother and gave him a confused look. She wasn't quite sure what he was getting at, but his suspicious blue eyes were on her. "What have you been doing around Father's office?"

Weiss was silent for a moment. Of course the boy was still using the staff to inform himself, and, though she had tried, she couldn't figure out which ones reported to him. But he was right, she had been snooping around her father's office for a few days ever since she figured out a plan for the information Ciel had found. However, the plan was exceptionally risky, and she needed to have solid evidence before she went ahead. Unfortunately she had been unable to find anything since the man's computer was locked.

"You know what I was doing there," she replied cautiously. "Trying to find something that could help me and Yang."

"I highly doubt Father has an answer to your specific dilemma in his drawer, Sister," he said with an arrogant raise of an eyebrow. "You know, I could help. All that is needed is for you to ask."

"You said you won't help me."

"With your girlfriend," He shrugged as his Scroll went off again and his hand quickly flew to reply. "But I suspect what you are attempting in there is more about the company than anything to do with your surreptitious relationship."

While he appeared to be more engrossed in replying to whoever messaged him, Weiss could tell that she had the majority of his attention. The issue was that she didn't quite trust the boy just yet. She was working on it, and it wasn't affecting her promise of trying to be there for him, but the fact that he was still a loose cannon that was serving his own goals gave her pause to actually go into detail with him. Nevertheless, he did know a lot, and that knowledge could certainly be useful.

So she took a breath that caught his attention and looked him square in the eyes as she spoke. Yang was very much right when she said it felt like he could see inside of her. "I need access to Father's
computer, but it's locked."

"Why?"

"I have my reasons."

"That you can't trust me with?"

"Correct." A small grin pulled at her brother's features as his eyes bore into hers. "I don't suppose you know the password, do you?"

"Unfortunately…" Whitley breathed and returned to his work. Clearly he had been seeking the answer to something himself and seemed to have found it. "I have yet to figure out what the password is either."

Despite having known it was a long shot, Weiss couldn't help but be a little disappointed at her brother's answer. If there was anyone who knew it then it would be him, but since he didn't, she was back to square one. So with a sigh, she turned back to her work and pulled open her email to see one from Aweburn Fletch. She quickly opened it to see yet another dismissive message from him, just as she expected; though they had become less so lately since she had dropped the businesswoman approach as much as she could.

As she was replying to the email, she heard Whitley's Scroll ring again. "You sure get a lot of messages. Anyone interesting?" she asked before she could stop herself, though she was sure she knew who it was already.

"Just an acquaintance," he said, his tone just as dismissive as the email she was replying to.

"I don't suppose this acquaintance happens to live on a farm?"

"That is none of your business, Sister."

His voice had hardened immediately and Weiss knew not to push further. Even though they were in a better place, she still wasn't close enough to play the teasing sister like Yang could with Ruby. So giving a nod, that she was certain he saw, she returned to her email and let the boy keep his friendship with Oscar to himself.

The gentle sound of music flowed around the room and filled Weiss's ears as her fingers danced across the piano. It was her final practice before her performance the next day, and she finally felt comfortable with playing the piece she had chosen. It was a nice and gentle piece that spoke of love and peace, a piece she knew would go over well at a gala held at a museum full of art that was beloved for its beauty. The only issue was that she was struggling a little with the final stretch. It wasn't that she was tired, because she wasn't, nor that the piece was too difficult, though it was rather complex; but that something just felt off.

She wasn't sure what it was, but as she neared the end, the passion seemed to fade from the notes. They felt empty and hollow. Like they were played for the sake of being played. But she needed to play, she needed to make sure that the piece was perfect, so she had been pushing past the frustration to make it so. However, as her ears picked up a particularly dull note, she couldn't put it aside any longer, and let out a loud groan as her hands dropped from the keys.

"Your heart is fading, Daughter."

The voice caught Weiss off guard as she hadn't even heard the door open, but she looked to her
side and saw her mother standing in the open doorway. She'd been looking very good lately. Her
clothes were neater, the white shirt and light purple jacket stain free, and her hair was brushed into
a neat ponytail that hung over one shoulder. Her posture seemed better too, and her blue eyes shone
brighter. Despite that though, Weiss couldn't help but tense at the sight of the glass in her mother's
hand, a glass that was filled halfway with clear liquid.

Her tenseness didn't stop however as the woman showed just how perceptive she was by following
her gaze down to the glass. She tilted it from side to side, the liquid sloshing audibly. "It's just
water." She said carefully, still not having taken a step into the room.

Weiss gave the woman a small nod. "What do you mean my heart is fading?"

The woman still didn't move, so Weiss turned her head back to the piano, making sure that the
gesture for her to enter was clear enough. It took a couple of seconds, but heels finally clicked
against the floor tiles as her mother made her way towards the piano stool.

"It has been so lovely to hear you play these past weeks." The woman said slowly as she sat down
and cradled the water in her hands. "Your music has held so much love." Her head dropped slightly
to look at her drink. "A love I feared you had lost. But I do not hear that in your playing as of late.
It feels hollow, and obligatory. That is not how this piece is supposed to be played."

She looked at her mother and registered everything she had just said. She'd been listening? For how
long? And even drunk, she had been able to tell just how happy she was while playing. But she was
right, that feeling was missing in her playing, and even she had noted it herself.

"That's because it is being played out of obligation," She sighed and folded her hands in her lap. "I
would rather not be playing tomorrow."

"I can tell," Willow remarked and reached up to place the drink on top of the instrument. "But you
should always play with your heart, Weiss. Is music anything more than noise if there is no
feeling?"

"I… suppose that is true," Weiss replied and gazed at the keys. "But how do I add feeling to
something I don't want to play?"

"Hmm," The soft hum was contemplative; and to Weiss' surprise, her mother raised a hand to the
keys and effortlessly played a delicate tune. It was the first she'd heard her mother play in almost a
decade, and the notes and memories caused Weiss to close her eyes in an attempt to cherish them
just a little longer. "I would say," the sound of her playing stopped and a heavy breath left the older
woman. "Stop trying to play for the crowd. Play for the person who has shone such sunlight on
your life."

Weiss' eyes snapped open as she turned to her mother, and worry pulsed through her at the very
specific words the woman had chosen. She had been listening to her music, but had she still been
able to understand it while drunk? It certainly seemed so. And Yang had mentioned that she
believed the woman had not had a drink in almost a month. Weiss knew she had definitely played
while thinking of her girlfriend in that time, and had the woman been listening while sober, there
was no doubt in her mind that she would have heard that.

"I don't…"

"I'm not asking you to tell me." Willow interrupted her attempt to lie and reached for her drink
again. "I don't think I even have the right to ask. But whoever it is clearly makes you extremely
happy. Your music speaks of joy and delight. Of mindless days spent enjoying the embrace of
someone who loves you back. Do not exclude them from your music, especially not from this piece."

Weiss looked at her mother with wondrous eyes as she described the music she'd heard, but quickly let them fall back to her hands. "But how can I play in such a way in front of Father? Would he not hear it?"

"Your father…" Her voice cut out and Weiss glanced to see a darkness in the older Schnee's icy blue eyes. "... Does not hear music. He does not have such a capacity. He hears noise that pleases him, sounds that are either played in the proper order, or are not. He cares not for what those notes are saying."

Weiss mulled over those words and found they actually made a lot of sense. Her father barely cared about his art, using it only to show off his wealth. "That certainly does sound like father." Weiss agreed.

"So forget about him. And play for yourself."

Weiss let out a loud sigh and gave her mother a nod. She closed her eyes and raised a hand to the keys, gently pressing down and hearing the notes around her. She let the memory of the recent date spring to the front of her mind, and found her fingers effortlessly playing out the song. A small smile pulled at her face as she opened her eyes and let it trail off. She turned to see her mother smiling too.

"Thank you, Mom."

"You needn't thank me, Weiss," Willow replied sadly, her smile faltering as she stared down at her feet. "This lesson was long past due." Her thumb stroked the side of the glass that was cradled in her hands and a look of remorse flickered over her blue eyes. "I… I'm sorry. For not being around."

Weiss had dreamed about the day her mother sorted herself out, about the days she would finally get the mother she had lost when she was ten years old back; and every time she imagined it, that apology had been present. It always felt like what people should do, admitting their faults and asking for forgiveness. But after hearing it, after seeing the regret in her mother's eyes, Weiss realised just how childish that notion was.

Her mother had nothing to apologise for. She was a victim of the same man that made the lives of every relative she loved miserable. Her actions, though still her own, were only to relieve herself of the horrors that came with living with such a man. So with a caring smile, Weiss rested her hand on her mother's shoulder and gently shook her head.

"There is nothing you need to apologise to me for," she said softly, hoping that the older woman could hear the assurance. "I don't blame you."

"You sh-should," Her mother's voice caught on her words and a tear dropped into her lap as her voice turned into a whisper. "I left you. All of you. I p-promised to keep you safe from him, and I f-failed. The th-things you have suf-fered, they are all my f-fault."

"They are no more your fault than they are mine," Weiss said firmly as one of her mother's hands came up to hide her face; the action not making the sight any less painful. "Which is none. The blame there lies with Father, and him alone."

"But I…"

"Did nothing that you cannot change," Weiss breathed and slipped the hand that was resting on her
mother's shoulder around to hug her. "I was hurt when you shut us out, but I now understand what happened. And I forgive you."

Willow's hand dropped from her face to reveal trails of tears down her pale cheeks. "R-Really?"

"Yes," Weiss replied with a warm smile.

"Ok-ay." The woman sniffled and wiped her eyes with the sleeve of her jacket as she took a moment to find her voice. "But I promise. Those days are over."

"I'm glad to hear that." Weiss thought about what she was about to say and finally let out a low breath. "However, It isn't me who needs to hear that. It's Whitley."

Willow's face dropped again at the mention of her son's name. Shame filled her already sad eyes and her eyes dropped to the keys while a finger raised to nervously stroke one. While she wasn't crying anymore, the sight made Weiss' heart hurt even more as it was clearly a look of self-loathing. And when she spoke, Weiss had never heard a more ashamed voice in her life.

"I…" Her whisper of a voice cracked as her finger pushed down on the key to produce a sound that was so full of pain, a sound that Weiss wished to never hear again. "I don't know how. My d-darling boy, and I don't even know him."

"It's not too late, Mom," Weiss tried to reassure the older woman, only to receive a shake of her head in return.

"He doesn't even know me as his mother. I'm just the drunk he sees around the house. What could I even say to make up for that?" Her voice fell to an almost inaudible whisper and her head hung low. "He wouldn't even care."

"I think…" Weiss said slowly and placed a hand on her mother's. "That Whitley might just surprise you. He's rough, and certainly has some issues that I don't think will change, but he is far more receptive than he lets on." She let her hand slide off Willow's to glide along the keys, her fingers playing a gentle melody as they went. "I cannot say it will be easy, nor that it won't take some time, but if you reach out to him, and try to mend those fences, I do believe he will listen."

"But where do I begin?" She mumbled. "And do I even deserve to be a part of his life?"

Weiss let out a deep sigh as she continued playing keys at random to produce a careful melody as she thought. She couldn't imagine how her mother could be feeling at that moment. The knowledge that she'd let her son grow up without her, or even worse, that she had been someone that he grew to hate, must have been hurting her immeasurably. But the only thing Weiss could do was keep playing. Minutes passed and she heard a few sniffles from the older woman, and once it was clear she had calmed down, Weiss gave her a kind smile.

"Start by showing him that you care," she said slowly. "I think that is what he cares about the most, that we are actually there for him; because he feels alone. Take it slow though, he doesn't like being pushed. Just let him know that he can come to you. That's how I started with him."

"You didn't hurt him like I did."

"No, I hurt him worse." Weiss countered. "It is true that all he knows of you is a drunk, but now you can break that image and replace it with a better one. I broke his original image of me and turned it into something ugly, now I have to rebuild it. You may even have an easier time than I will."
Another minute passed with nothing said, and Weiss saw her mother watching her fingers flit across keys. Her eyes were deep in thought, but she finally let out a sad sigh. "Do you really think I can reach him?"

"I do."

Weiss kept her answer short, and once again, Willow fell silent to think. With the song she was playing coming to an end, Weiss slowed her pace until it was done and let her hands fall away. Her mother still hadn't spoken, but instead sat stroking the glass in her hand. She realised that the woman clearly needed some time to think, so gently rose from the stool to leave and placed a hand on the woman's shoulder for a moment as she passed.

However, as she neared the door and began to pull it open, she heard her mother's voice again, though the sadness had been replaced with fear. The sound caused a pulse of worry to run through her.

"You are preparing to fight him." The woman said. "Aren't you?"

Weiss halted with her hand on the doorknob. Though it was posed as a question, the knowing tone that crept into the scared voice let her know it wasn't. She turned around and saw the blue eyes boring into hers, and unable to lie, Weiss gave a small nod.

"I am." She said firmly in the hope that the certainty in her own voice would reassure her mother. "I won't let him continue as he has been any more."

"That is a dangerous war you are waging, Daughter." Willow replied, and a pleading look entered her eyes. "I won't ask you not to fight it, but I know more than most what that vile man is capable of. So please, be careful."

"I will." Weiss replied and went to make her way out of the room, only to stop when an idea came to mind. It was as much a long shot as it was with Whitley, but she turned back to face her. "Mom, do you know the password to Father's computer?"

Willow looked at her suspiciously for a couple of seconds. She kept eye contact and waited patiently, but could stop her hope from growing. If her mother didn't know the password, surely she would have said so straight away. The longer it took, Weiss wondered if the woman was contemplating the ramifications of aiding her in the war that was about to take place; but thankfully, after almost a minute, the woman let out a deep breath and nodded.

"Eleventh of May, 1993." She said sadly, the date clearly caused her pain. "The day he first met my father."

Weiss let a smile pull at her lips. Finally, she had almost everything she needed to enact her plan. "Thank you." She whispered. However, the fear in her mother's eyes was still very much there, so she let her smile drop and put on a serious look as she addressed her. "Mom, can I ask you to do something for me?"

"I believe, with everything I haven't done, it would be wrong for me to say no to whatever you ask, Weiss."

"Okay." Weiss took in a deep breath to prepare for what she was about to ask. "When you have fixed things with Whitley… I want you to take him away from this house."

Willow seemed taken aback at first, as if what Weiss had just suggested was the most terrifying thing imaginable. That feeling was confirmed when she spoke, the shakiness returning to her voice.
"B-but that would m-mean…" She stood up as the realisation hit her. "Weiss, I will not leave you alone with that monster again."

She gave her mother a confident look and straightened her back. "I'm not scared of him any more, Mom." She lied, but did everything she could to keep her from seeing the truth. "But you and Whitley, you've faced enough. I don't want you caught in the crossfire for what I am about to do." Before her mother could reply, Weiss turned around and opened the door. "I can't force you to; but please, save yourselves from this."

Without another word, she left the room behind. She hated the fact that she had just told her mother to leave, but she hoped the woman would. She would get the last piece of information that would confirm her suspicions tomorrow, and if they were confirmed then the fallout of what she was going to do would be huge. She doubted her mother could mend fences with her son in a couple of days, but she wanted her family around as little as possible for what was to come.

So with a heavy sigh to herself, she pulled out her Scroll and made a note of the password to her father's computer. If she got the confirmation she needed, she could start her plan while Jacques was busy at the party.

Chapter End Notes

Hello everyone, so I know the last chapter said that the next update would be on the 13th, but somehow I screwed up the schedule so I've released this a day early to get it back on track. Don't say I never treat you :P The next chapter will be up on the 22nd.

You'll also see that I have decided against the name header this time. There were concerns about them ruining immersion, and they were only there because I was unsure the characters read differently enough when I started the series, so this will be the norm going forth.

Now, as for this chapter. There has been a lot of Yang family issues lately, so I wanted to touch upon Weiss' side a little more. That meant expanding on Whitley and Willow a little more. I have to be honest, I really love writing Whitley. There is something about sarcastic, disinterested characters that appeals to me... no idea why. Willow is cool to write too, in a different way though. Regretful vs Resistant is fun to balance in a chapter and provide unique challenges xD

But that's it for me today. I hope you enjoyed this chapter, and how I'm progressing Willow and Whitley. They're slow, but I personally like their progress. Let me know what you think.

The next chapter is going to be a big one, not in words but in context, so I hope you're looking forward to that as things start coming to a head rather quickly after that. If my laptop lasts that long... Toxic is genuinely very worried its going to just die due to it blue-screening everyday xD
The sounds of ringing filled Weiss' left ear as she held her Scroll to it. Behind her was the sound of a hundred people talking and mingling, the clinking of glasses and the occasional bark of laughter. Weiss didn't have a single care about what was happening in the room behind her though. The party may have been in full swing, but she was about to perform, and to do that, she needed a certain someone to drag her out of her sour mood that was produced by almost two hours spent standing next to her father discussing business. Just hearing him talk about her company had made her skin crawl.

"Come on, come on." She muttered impatiently to herself in the little alcove she found off to the side of the main room. She only had a couple of minutes.

She shifted from one foot to the other as she waited. In truth, she was a little nervous and really hoped Yang would pick up. The Scroll rang a few more times, and just as she started to think she would have to go on without talking to her girlfriend, the call was answered; though the voice that picked up wasn't what she was expecting.

"Hey, Snow Queen." A male voice said breathlessly, like they had been running. But there was a hint of humor to his gentle tone "What's…

"Fucker!"

There was a loud crash on the other end of the line, following what she knew to be Yang's voice, that made Weiss pull the device away from her ear. After what sounded like some scuffling, and some laughter in the background, Yang's deep breaths rang clear as day. "Hey, Beautiful."

"Hey, Snow Queen." A male voice said breathlessly, like they had been running. But there was a hint of humor to his gentle tone "What's…

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"Yang? What was that crash?" She asked, a little worried.

"Just Banana Breath meeting his old friend, The Wall." Yang panted, clearly taking a moment to get her breath back. "What's up?"

"Oh," Weiss breathed a sigh of relief, putting together the pieces and realising why Yang had taken so long to answer. "I'm just about to go on. I wanted to call you first."
"Crap, didn't realise it was that time already. One sec." The sound of a door closing quietened the laughter. "You nervous?"

She sat down on a nearby chair and let out a soft sigh as she nodded, but quickly realised Yang couldn't see that. "A little." She breathed.

"I'm sure you will do great. You sounded amazing the other day."

Remembering the piano session where Yang had been listening from a previous call, she felt a smile force its way onto her face. But that wasn't the part she was actually worried about.

"It's less the recital, and more the other thing," Weiss replied quietly and fiddled with her off-centre ponytail to make sure it was positioned correctly. "If I don't get this promise of future funding, I lose my project."

"You've been studying this for two weeks," Yang chuckled on the other end of the call. "And you're probably the smartest person I know. You have this in the bag."

"But what if I screw up?"

"I'm sure Ironwood won't care too much." Yang said in a reassuring voice. "Plus, isn't he a family friend? Winter said he accepted her into the military at your mom's request."

"I know, but I don't want his funding for anything more than the merit of my project."

Weiss sighed and straightened out her white dress. She knew her mother could easily put in a good word like she did with Winter, but that was not how she wanted to conduct business just yet. In the future it would likely become inevitable that some partnerships and investments were made on the basis of trust and friendship, her grandfather had done as much after all, but she wanted her current project to all be through confidence that they would succeed. Even if it was only to prove to herself that she didn't need to know the right people to succeed.

"And you will, so just relax a little. Last time you were too tense, you made no progress with that Fletch guy."

"You're right," Weiss said and took a deep breath, slowly letting it out and feeling her nerves quell a little. "Kind of hard to not be nervous though."

"Eh," Yang said dismissively, the sound of springs in the background from what Weiss assumed was a bed. A bed she wished she had been occupying for the last couple of nights. "Nerves are good. It shows you care."

"Mmm, I guess."

"Good. So what're you gonna do when you get the promise?"

"If…"

"When."

Weiss felt her smile widen at the certainty of her girlfriend's voice and continued. "... I get the deal, I might take a few of my vacation days."

"Mmm, gonna whisk me away somewhere exotic, are you?"

"One day," she laughed. "But no. I was thinking that I could say I'm going on a spa retreat, but
maybe spend the weekend at the apartment instead?"

"Are you asking me for permission?" Yang asked in amusement. "Because you ain't gonna hear me say no to that."

"I know," Weiss replied and stood up. "I just wanted to check you weren't busy."

"Never too busy for you, Gorgeous."

"Good," Weiss grinned and pulled the Scroll away from her ear to check the time to see she was to play in less than two minutes. "But I have to go. I'm about to play."

"Break a leg, Beautiful. Love you."

"Love you too."

As she heard the sound of a kiss being blown, Weiss hung up the phone with a wide smile on her face. Yang never failed to put her nerves at ease, so, feeling emboldened by the brief conversation, she took a deep breath and made her way back to the crowded room. With the conversation fresh in her mind, and the incentive to spend a weekend with Yang, she didn't doubt that she could give the audience quite a show.

The sound of music that had been filling the giant room for the last five minutes slowly began to die down, the remnants of her last notes slowly fading out. It had gone better than she expected, a few missed notes for sure; but after almost five years without playing, and only the few sparse sessions since regaining her passion, it certainly could have been worse. Thankfully, the song had felt right, and the entire time she played, she'd held Yang in the forefront of her mind, and felt her in every note she produced.

As those sunny notes finally dissipated, it was replaced by a slow, harsh clapping. As more people joined in and the sound grew in volume, Weiss stood from her stool and turned to face the audience. They all seemed to be smiling and happy, so Weiss took it as a good sign and gave them all a little curtsy. She felt oddly happy that people had enjoyed her performance so much, but not wanting to revel in the applause too much, she gave the guests a small wave and made her way back towards the crowd.

As she weaved her way back through the crowd, she received praise and congratulations from the guests, and happily replied by saying it was simply her pleasure to play. That was a lie, of course, since while she had enjoyed it, she would have preferred to have been able to focus exclusively on the meeting. But nonetheless, she smiled and waved until she reached her father.

He was already deep in conversation with an older man who had his silver hair tied back in a ponytail. Deep lines were etched on his face, and his body was rather slim; however, the man was clearly in great shape since he didn't require a walking stick or any assistance, and was moving around quite animatedly. Weiss knew he was a shareholder by the name of Edward Caspian, in fact, he was one of the oldest shareholders, and was a friend of her grandfather's before he had passed.

As she approached, they both turned to her and smiled, and the difference was night and day. Edwards was warm and friendly, inspiring comfort and a genuine feeling like he was happy to see her. Her father's, on the other hand, was clearly fake. It was cold and practised, nothing more than a show for those around him.

"Welcome back, Daughter." He said politely, but there was no warmth in his voice.
"Hello, Father. Edward."

"It's good to see you again, Weiss." The man replied, his voice filled with actual warmth as he held out his hand. She shook it happily. "Your playing was beautiful. Right, Jacques?"

"A few missed notes," The elder Schnee remarked offhandedly, though Weiss knew it was only supposed to appear that way. "But yes. Even without playing for years, she shows skill befitting a Schnee."

"Oh come now, Jacques." Edward said with a chuckle. "It would hardly kill you to compliment your daughter on her talents."

"Thank you, Edward," Weiss chuckled at the man's jab, but quickly let the humor fade and replaced it with a respect that made her stomach churn. "But my father is right, there were some off notes. I will be more practised next time."

"Then I expect an invite."

"Naturally." She smiled. "Forgive me, but I don't suppose you have seen General Ironwood around?"

"Haha, eager to work on the man huh?" Edward laughed heartily. "With your drive, I suspect you will have that promise in record time. But alas, I believe he is taking a call right now; so why don't you join us for a little talk to satiate your business appetite? Your father was just telling me about his upcoming trip to Mistral in two weeks to check on our offices overseas."

Weiss looked towards the doors to a side room and saw a female atlesian guard standing next to it. The white and blue uniform accentuated her brown skin, and the sides of her hair were shaved short, the middle left slightly longer and two tufts of white standing out at the front. Though she looked rather relaxed as she leaned against the wall, her purple eyes scanned the room, keenly alert for any dangers the room may hold. It was very clear she wouldn't be getting through to see the General anytime soon, so she turned back to Edward with a smile and gave a nod.

"Great," The man said happily. "Please continue, Jacques."

"Well, as I was saying, productivity of the mines has been down lately." He said dryly, returning to his usual business voice. "Talks of strikes, and unfair wages. Preposterous ramblings, of course, we pay them all the same."

"Ahh, that we do." Caspien hummed. "But given the recent dip in Mistral's economy, it's hardly surprising that the people are worried. Surely you can see their side of the argument?"

"What I see is my employees complaining about things that we had no part in, instead of their own government." Jacques replied coldly, though the older man seemed unfazed. "Why should we be paying more because their kingdom is unable to keep it's finances in order."

"Hmm, not untrue, though a little heartless." Edward said before he turned in her direction. "What are your thoughts, Weiss?"

"I don't think this is my call to make."

"Oh come now. You are the heiress, destined to take over one day. I would love to hear your opinion of this situation."

"Well…" Weiss hummed thoughtfully, not daring to look her father in the eye. "They are our
employees, and while it is true that we aren't obligated to raise their wages, they would hardly be productive if they are homeless and hungry."

"So you think their wages should be raised?"

"I think everyone should be able to afford the necessities." Weiss corrected him, feeling her father's eyes bore into the side of her head. "A roof over their head, food in their fridge. The basics. It isn't, however, our place to pay for the unnecessary."

"I agree."

"And where do both of you propose this money come from?" Jacques said tiredly.

"We are the world's most profitable company," Weiss retorted, earning a nod of confirmation from Edward. "I'm sure we could afford to raise our wages to suit a certain standard of living. Unless all those controversies have affected our stocks more than I'm aware of?"

Weiss couldn't help but take the small jab, which caused her father to immediately glare at her in response. The controversies had certainly affected the company, but it was still more than capable of increasing wages a little. So to hear her father try and use the excuse about how it wasn't the company's job to make sure their employees' personal lives were stable, at the very least, when in reality he simply wanted to save money, rubbed her the wrong way.

"Fortunately not. Though there have been a few too many," Edward said pointedly. "I also don't believe we are in such a position where we cannot be open to discussing their wages. Perhaps this is something that we should discuss further. Before your trip."

"Fine, but I still do not see how this is our issue."

*You never do,* Weiss thought to herself. Thankfully, Edward seemed to be on her side as well. Weiss was happy that at least a few of her grandfather's friends were still involved in the company. Unfortunately, there really were only a few.

"I know you don't, but it is something the board should discuss." he said, and Weiss detected a little edge to his voice. "Have you considered joining him for this trip, Weiss?"

"I'm not sure what use I would be if Father is already there." Weiss replied with a forced chuckle. "I'm sure there is a lot that a bright young woman such as yourself could do."

"I couldn't agree more, Ed."

Weiss turned to see who had spoken and was surprised to see Ironwood was standing right behind her. She hadn't seen a picture of him in some time, so she was surprised that he looked so tired. Though still kind, his blue eyes had started to betray his age, as did the wrinkles around them. A black beard covered his face, only having received the barest trimming to at least straighten it out, and his hair was very much in the same dishevelled state. Though, in stark contrast, his clothes were pristine.

The blue shirt and red tie stood out vibrantly underneath the white vest. Over all of them he wore a long white coat, with pressed blue pants and black boots. On his hip, just peeking out from the open coat was a holster, in which a pair of guns sat either side of his hip. The look exuded an aura of authority that put any thought of the man being past his prime to bed, as there was no doubt the man before her was still a force to be reckoned with.
The thing that surprised her most however, was that she caught a familiar face in the corner of her eye, and turned to see her sister standing behind the General. She was dressed in more formal attire, but it was still quite militaristic. A white collared shirt was beneath her white coat with pale blue embroidery on the shoulders, and around her neck was a silver brooch with a ruby in its center that Weiss knew once belonged to their grandmother. Just like her boss, blue pants and boots completed her look. But as she gazed into her sister's eyes, one of the woman's eyebrows raised in disapproval and she immediately returned her gaze to General Ironwood.

"Such kind words, General Ironwood." She replied with a smile, happy that he had at least sought her out first.

"You're a family friend, call me James." He replied with a smile that made him look younger by a considerable amount.

"It's good to see you again, James." Edwards said with a smile, the two men shaking hands. "You're looking old, my friend."

"You still have me beat on the silver hair though, Ed." Ironwood chuckled as stroked his own grey patch and turned to look at the other white-haired man. "Jacques." He said in a dull voice.

"James." Everyone knew that the two men didn't exactly get along. In fact, if it weren't for the fact they had to do business together, Weiss doubted they would ever talk. However, Jacques eyes roamed over to Winter "And my ungrateful daughter has come home. Again."

"I would say hello, but I'm busy doing my job," Winter scowled in return. "Thankf…"

"Winter!" Ironwood cut her off sternly, and the woman immediately fell silent. It was odd for Weiss to see the woman that she had always seen as the epitome of disobedience fall in line so quickly. "No arguments today, please."

"My apologies, Sir."

Ironwood let out a low sigh that really did betray just how tired he was. But after running a hand over his face, he looked back up with a smile. "Anyway, I cannot stay long. There is business back in Atlas that I must attend to."

"What a shame." Jacques replied, and though he was trying to appear genuine, the sarcasm was obvious.

"Quite," Weiss added, purposely letting her smile falter. "I was hoping I could talk to you. Mother recently divulged a few stories of her college days, and I would love to hear more from an old school friend."

Out the corner of her eyes, she saw the almost imperceptible shaking of Winter's head; but Ironwood simply smiled. "Well I do have another forty minutes before I leave, and I am always happy to talk about Willow; though this place is a little too loud for any real discussion. Would you care to accompany me on a stroll around Beacon's campus?"

"I would be more than happy to join you." Weiss said with a happy smile and turned back to Caspian. "I'm sorry to leave you so soon, Edward."

"Oh please, I know the allure of learning a parent's secrets; though you should always be careful with what private things you find out. Not all are pleasant." He said with a wink, though Weiss was certain she saw his eye dart to Jacques first. "But please give some thought to my suggestion of you visiting Mistral."
There was an insistence in his voice that made it clear he wanted her to go. Edward was a good man, and she knew he was on board with giving the Mistral worker's their wage increase, so was he hoping she could do something to convince her father? That certainly wasn't going to happen since it was clear the man's mind was already made up. However, a sudden surge of inspiration came to her, and if she timed it right, she could certainly find a way to make everyone but her father happy. And that was something Weiss was always willing to do.

So as she walked to Ironwood's side, she nodded to the shareholder and received a delighted smile in return before returning to his conversation with her father. She looked up at the General, as he was quite a tall man, too so him mimic the same smile down at her and turn to address Winter, as well as the dark-skinned woman that stood beside her.

"Winter. Harriet. You may stay here."

"Are you sure, Sir?"

"I hardly doubt your sister is going to try and assassinate me." He chuckled. "Take a break, and say hello to your brother. He looks bored." Weiss looked over at Whitley to see that he did indeed look quite bored as he absentmindedly inspected a painting. "And make sure Harriet doesn't spill anything."

"I can't promise anything."

"Hey!" The girl said, the insult in her voice obvious. "Is that any way to talk about your best friend?"

"Vine isn't here."

"Pfft, whatever. I bet I can go all night without spilling anything."

"You know what?" Winter said with a raised eyebrow as she turned to the other woman, who seemed more alive. "As your competitive nature will likely mean less babysitting for me, I will take that bet."

"Yes, well... Enjoy yourselves." Ironwood replied with a shake of his head, the action telling Weiss that the interaction that had just happened wasn't too far out of the norm. "Shall we go, Weiss?"

She gave a small nod and Ironwood set off at a slow pace towards the door, Weiss quickly falling into step with him. As they made their way towards the entrance, a few more people waved hello to her, and she politely waved back; as did General Ironwood. At one point a faunus waiter tried to offer them a beverage, but they both turned it away. But finally, they reached the entrance and James pushed the twin doors open to reveal the darkening sky.

The smell of seawater and the roar of the nearby waterfall reached her immediately once they stepped out, a stark difference to the smell of mingled perfume and food from inside the museum. If she was honest, she liked it more. So as Ironwood stepped leisurely down the steps, Weiss was happy to see he make a beeline for the low wall that stopped people from falling off the cliff and into the ocean.

"So how much did your mother tell you of our college days?" He said in interest once they reached the wall, the beautiful view of Vale still visible in what little light remained.

"She told me you were close friends." Weiss replied with a smile. "So much so that she squared things away with the dean when you were caught sneaking beer onto the campus."
"Ahhh yes, our rebel days," He chuckled fondly. "I remember the parties well, though with quite a bit of embarrassment too."

"It's hard to imagine you were ever a party boy, nor that my mother was."

"We were not always so old," He grinned, causing a little of the youth he was remembering to return to his face. "It was good to get away from the stress of Atlas Academy on occasion. The level of education is great, but the rules are a little... stifling."

"Part of the reason I decided on Beacon. Plus, it's a lot smaller so I doubt I would get stuck if I decided to climb it." Weiss chuckled as Ironwood's eyes widened slightly. "How does someone get stuck on the side of a building?"

"Your mother really told you that?" He replied with a bark of laughter, the sounds quite pleasant. "I suppose she neglected to tell you that it was her challenge that led to that... predicament."

Weiss gave the man a surprised look. "She didn't mention that, no."

"Well it was," Ironwood said, the laughter fading and a more gentle fondness overtaking his face. "Your mother was an exceptional woman. Smart, beautiful, driven, and a more fierce friend I have never known; but she was also quite mischievous in her youth. You remind me of her quite a bit, though she had less of a penchant for lying."

Weiss looked up at him as they circled the campus, the few students that were running the risk of breaking curfew to spend a couple of extra minutes outside glancing curiously towards them. There was a knowing look in the man's eyes as his smile widened. She knew the game was up, and let out a sigh at the fact that she hadn't been able to convince him for very long.

"Who told you?"

"Your father usually only invites me to these things when he wishes to discuss business?" Ironwood said, though there was no loss of warmth from his tone. "But he has barely even acknowledged me. You, on the other hand..."

"My apologies, James," Weiss said sincerely, letting her head return to watch where they were walking. "I shouldn't have misled you."

"You are hardly the first," He shook his head in amusement and came to a stop. His hands came to a rest on the wall and Weiss heard a distinctive metal clink as he set the left one down. "I assume you want to talk about that chip of yours? I must admit that the project does intrigue me."

"It really is a great project," Weiss replied, ditching the pretence and stopping beside him, resting on her elbows as she leant onto the wall too. "I really want to succeed."

"And I want it to succeed too." Ironwood said in a measured tone as his eyes scanned Vale's skyline. "I have known many proud soldiers who had to be discharged due to nerve damage, despite still having plenty of fight left in them. But I am sure you understand why I am hesitant to back a project with no real results. A project that my own advisers say will not work."

"Your advisers are clearly underestimating Dr Polendina." Weiss replied.

"Maybe."

"But your concerns are valid. Research has only just begun, and we are years away from any kind of trials. I can't promise you anything if you invest now."
"Not a very compelling argument there, Weiss." Ironwood chuckled and shook his head.

"Yes. Well I don't intend to be like my father, making up whatever false promises I have to so that I can get your money."

"And I appreciate that, but I am afraid that even your honesty cannot get me to offer you funding today."

"I know, that is why I'm not seeking it." Weiss let out a deep breath. "That is why I wish to make you an offer."

Weiss kept her focus on the city, but she knew Ironwood had turned to look at her. She had never fooled herself into thinking that she could convince the General of anything, because as it was, it was very true that they had nothing to really bargain. Even as she looked over everything that had been compiled so far, she hadn't seen anything that gave an absolute that the project would work. All she had so far was the confidence of Dr Polendina's belief that it would be scientifically possible, and a hope that it would succeed. But that was all she needed. Polendina was a genius and understood the body better than anyone else on Remnant. If he said it was possible, then just like her grandfather would have, she was willing to take that risk.

"You have me intrigued." Ironwood said slowly, his gaze returning to the water and his eyes following a boat that was skimming across the water. "What kind of offer?"

"An extra ten precent." She stated simply. "I don't expect you to invest today, but I do want to go back into that museum with a promise that, if we can show you definitive results in the next two years, you will offer us funding. In return, I am willing to shave another ten percent off your purchase price when the chip is ready, totally forty percent. You won't find a better rate than that."

"Surely those are your father's decisions to make? What assurance do I have that you will uphold your end of the bargain?"

Weiss stayed silent for a moment, not sure exactly how much she wanted to divulge. But he was right. Though it was her project, the board had final sign off on the pricing of all development, and she didn't know any other way to convince him but to tell him the truth. So taking a deep breath, she looked ahead and let confidence overcome her features, as she knew he was likely inspecting her for any fault.

"Father will not be making any decisions very soon." She said, unable to keep the bitterness from her voice. "His time as CEO of the STC is coming to an end. I will be seeing to that personally."

"Hmm," Ironwood hummed thoughtfully, his hand curling into a fist. "I guess your sister was being honest about your coup then." Weiss couldn't stop her mask from slipping as she turned to him in surprise, but he merely chuckled in return. "Yes, she told me. And for what it's worth, I am in full support."

"You are?" Weiss asked, expecting Ironwood to be a little more put off by the idea of what was basically insubordination.

Something shifted in the man's blue eyes, a darkness that made him look far older. It tainted the rest of his features, and sent a shiver of fear through Weiss as she immediately recognised it as hate.

"That man is a foul human being," His tone was dark and foreboding. "I warned your mother the first time I met him, but she didn't listen. She was blinded by his silver tongue, and now all I see
are the scars of everything he has done. Your mother, a brilliant woman, defeated and crushed. Your sister, haunted and scarred far more than she lets on. Even the Faunus of Mantle, emboldened by the White Fang due to his treatment of them. I would not cry a single tear should he be stripped of every bit of Lien he owns and thrown to the streets."

"Which is why I want him out." Weiss agreed with a nod. "He has done far too much damage to everyone with my grandfather's company. I wish to take it in a new direction. One that is better for everyone on Remnant. Where we don't just make televisions and Scrolls, but change the very existence of people for the better. This project is my first step to that goal."

"And as much as I admire that goal, it does not change that you have no proof of concept for me." Ironwood said with a heavy sigh.

"Then It is good that I am asking for nothing more than a promise that will only come into effect if I can provide you some down the line."

Another silence fell over them and Weiss let it continue as she knew the man was thinking the proposal over. As she waited, she looked toward the twin towers in the distance, where she knew Yang as likely hoping that she succeeded. She wanted to make it happen so that she could make their relationship public sooner too, but even if it didn't, there were other things in the works that would guarantee that happened anyway.

"Perhaps if you moved the proje…"

"I can't." Weiss cut him off. She knew what his demand would be, but she had already set her terms, it was time to take control of the conversation.

"We could offer you more than the RMRF if you did."

"You could, but not more than both you and them combined." She said firmly. "I do not want this to be a military product, James. I want this in the hands of everyone who needs it, and to do that I need it to be as cheap as I can possibly make it for people. Funding from both of you is what I need for that to happen, and I will lose the RMRF completely if this project is moved to Atlas."

Ironwood let out another sigh and stood up straight. From his desire to have the project moved, she knew she had him, but she had to hold firm in her offer. Thankfully, a second sigh soon followed, a more resigned one that confirmed the battle was hers.

"Forty-five." He said, his own voice as firm as hers as he turned towards her and his blue eyes looked into her own.

Weiss turned to him and thought about it for a second. She could compromise a little. "Forty-two. Final offer, James."

A small smirk pulled at the older man's lips, and after a second, he held out his hand with a nod. "I can do that."

Joy exploded inside Weiss and a smile broke out on her face, but she kept it under control. With an enormous amount of effort, she suppressed her shaking and reached out to shake his hand.

"If you are able to show me results in the next two years, then I promise that you will have the funding of the Atlesian military. But my promise is with you, and you alone."

"Understood, General. In return, the Schnee Tech Company will give the Atlas military, and all personnel, a forty-two percent investor's discount when the project is complete."
"Good," The man said with a happy smile. "I really do hope that your project succeeds, Weiss."

"I doubt you would waste your time with such a promise if you didn't have faith."

"You are right there," He chuckled and stepped away from the wall. "I learned at a young age never to underestimate a Schnee's determination, and I have yet to ever be proven wrong."

"Good." She mimicked with a smirk as they both set off as a slow pace towards the museum again.

Weiss was glad for the short silence that overcame them as they walked, since it allowed her to process what had just happened. She had received the promise. She was keeping her project. Should they produce results, then she was one step closer to making her mark on the world. But the thing that was most important to her at the very moment was that she was one step closer to being able to reveal her relationship with Yang.

With Ironwood's promise being tied to her directly, her removal from the company meant the promise went with it. It was a form of leverage that her father couldn't deny, and one that she doubted he would risk as it wouldn't be available again for some time. And though it wasn't enough to secure her position just yet, it was certainly a good thing to have in her corner. However, there was still more to her plan, and still more that she needed from the General himself.

"There is something else I would like to ask you, if you don't mind?" She broke the silence cautiously and James looked towards her with interest.

"Not another project you want me to invest in, I hope?" He asked in return, and gave a short chuckle when she shook her head. "Then feel free."

"Well, with your recent... enforcement... of new laws in Atlas, I believe I would be correct in assuming you work closely with the council?"

"I do. And I take it from your hesitance to call my actions what they are that you don't agree with them?"

"I don't, bu..."

"It's fine, Weiss." Ironwood sighed heavily. "I am used to my decisions being questioned, and people are right to do so. I don't like the registry either, but it is saving lives."

Weiss stopped and placed a hand on the man's arm to get his attention. "That is not my question, James." She corrected him with a look into his eyes. It was clear from the sadness behind them that his words were genuine, and that the lengths he was going to weighed heavily on him too. "I understand you have your reasons for doing what you must, even if I don't agree with how you're doing them. Hopefully my company can help lessen that burden in the future."

"I hope so too," He said quietly, but shook his head and looked up. "So what is it you wanted to ask me?"

"Well, since you work closely with the council," Weiss elaborated as they began to walk again. "I was wondering if you could give me some information on a couple of people?"

"So long as it isn't confidential, I don't think that will be an issue. What are their names?"

"Carmine Esclados and Bertilak Celadon."

It was subtle, but Weiss saw his eyes dart suspiciously to her. Clearly the names were familiar to
"Those are two rather specific names." He remarked, confirming her suspicions.

"I take that to mean that you know them?"

"Unfortunately." James replied, her gaze returning to the path ahead of them. "They were inspectors for the council, but both were let go after allegations that they took money to falsify a report. There was never any proof, but the building burned down a week after they passed it. I'm guessing that this is something to do with your coup?"

"Yes. And you just helped immensely." Weiss confirmed, feeling no need to hide it from him. He had just given her all the confirmation she needed that her father had been engaged in bribery, and because of that, she was finally ready to put her plan into action. "Would it be possible for you to send those files to me?"

"They are unreleased as of right now." Ironwood hummed. "But considering the cause, I'm sure I can get them to you."

"Thank you."

"Is that all?" He chuckled, clearly knowing it wasn't.

"Almost."

They came to a stop at the door of the museum, the thick wood keeping a majority of the noise out. Weiss didn't want to go back inside, but she knew she had to. She had to keep up appearances, right up until the very end.

"I need a way out of this party. A way that doesn't make people suspicious. Namely my father."

"Hmm." He raised a hand and stroked his chin as he thought for a second, but the idea visibly formed behind his eyes and he gave a short nod. "I can organise that. I will give you ten minutes."

"Thank you, James." She breathed, glad to have a military general on her side. "For everything."

"It's no problem. Our goals align after all."

Weiss placed her hand on the door and prepared to pull it open, but before she did, she looked back at the older man with an understanding smile. "By the way, my mother isn't crushed. She has been working hard lately to fight off what my father has done. But I am sure she could use a friend again, so maybe you should call her."

His eyes seemed happy at her words, and he gave a short, understanding nod. With that, Weiss smiled and pulled the door open, walking back into the loud party to once again be met with the smell of perfume and food. Walking back through the crowd, she spotted her father talking to yet another shareholder a small distance away, and as their eyes made contact, she gave him a subtle nod to show that she had succeeded in her task. She also held back bile as she stared into the cold eyes of the man. His face was impassive at first, but a greedy grin broke out on his face as he turned back to the other woman.

Since she didn't want to face him, she made her way over to one of the new paintings that hung on the walls and inspected it, as she did with the next as well, and the next; all while counting the minutes in her head. Ironwood said he would have her out in ten minutes, and given his line of work, she knew that would be exactly when it happened. However, just as she counted the third minute in her head, the tall form of her sister sidled up beside her.
"It appears you won the General over." She stated simply, her eyes roaming over the art too.

"Mhm." Weiss hummed, suspicious about what Winter was doing as she realised that Ironwood hadn't actually filled her in on the plan. "I'm just happy it went well." She said, unable to keep the relief from her voice.

"Yes, well I did say that General Ironwood was excited to meet you." The woman chuckled as they moved to the next painting. "So, how is the apartment serving you?"

"It's... okay." Weiss replied. "Still taking a little while to adjust."

"Mmm. I can understand why." Winter placed her hands behind her back and a softer tone entered her voice. "I hope it works out. I will also be signing it over to you tomorrow before I leave, after all."

"Wh-what?"

Weiss couldn't help but be shocked at those words. She knew her sister hated the apartment, that the use of it had been very sparse in general, but for it to be given away like it meant nothing was a bit of a surprise.

"I don't use it, and I never intend to." Winter explained carefully. "You have found more use in it during the last two weeks than I have in years, and quite honestly, I'm tired of paying for water and power that I do not use. So you either accept, or I sell it once you are done with it."

"I... Are you sure?" Winter gave a short nod and came to a stop against an empty space of the wall. After a second of thought on how good it would be to actually own her own place for when everything went down, Weiss finally gave a short nod. "Fine, but I want to at least give you half the value back."

"I am assuming you won't take no for an answer?" Weiss shook her head, and Winter gave her a smirk. "Very well. Though now, I now don't feel quite as bad for this."

"Huh? For wh..."

Before Weiss could even finish her sentence, a small yelp of surprise came from behind her, followed by a loud clanging of metal on wood. She didn't even have time to turn around when a flood of tepid liquid splashed against her back and over her shoulder. In less than a second, her white dress was stained red from the wine, and from the wet sensation on her head, she knew it was in her hair as well. She quickly spun around to find the culprit and was greeted by Ironwood's other guard, Harriet, holding up a Faunus waiter and apologising profusely.

"Harriet!" Winter half-shouted as she took a step forward, all eyes in the room on them. "How many times must we tell you to be careful?"

"I'm sorry," The girl said frantically, though Weiss could see her eyes were just as alive as when she had accepted the challenge earlier and realisation dawned on her. "Ironwood sent me to get you and he was in a hurry and I didn't see the wai..." She cut off her rambling and her eyes darted to Weiss to scan her up and down. "Shit. It went all over you."

"That is not an apology!" Winter almost bellowed, the people nearby shrinking back slightly as Winter stood up to her full height.

"I..." Harriet looked between the two and quickly stood up straight herself, though her smaller frame was nowhere near as intimidating as Winter's. "You're right. Weiss, I sincerely apologise for
Weiss looked at her, unsure what to do for a second. She knew it was just a ploy, and that she herself had requested it, but being covered in liquid that was turning sticky rather quickly and making the fabric of her dress uncomfortable would make anyone a little grumpy. Despite that though, she didn't want to be too harsh.

"Yes," She sighed as she shook her hand free of the wine that was dripping down it. "Accidents happen. Though I expect you will take responsibility for the cleaning bill?"

"Of course." Harriet replied immediately.

"Just be grateful that my sis…"

"That's enough."

Ironwood's voice wasn't raised, nor was it aggressive; but there was something to it that sent a shiver of worry down Weiss' soaked back. Though she knew it was fake, that didn't change how steeped in authority his voice was, and even had the other two girls next to her not been in on the plan, Weiss doubted they would act any different. The argument stopped instantly, and they both snapped to attention as he approached.

"You," He motioned to the waiter who was trying to quietly clean up as much of the red wine as he could. "Leave it. Bring Harriet a mop and she will clean up her own mess." The man stood up with a nod and James' attention turned to Winter. "What did I say about causing a scene today, Schnee?"

"Do not make one, Sir. My apologies, General Ironwood."

His eyes bore into Winter's for a moment, but Weiss was close enough that she saw the corner of his lips twitch. Finally though, he let out a sigh and turned to look at her instead. "I apologise for my operatives' clumsiness, Miss Schnee."

"It's fine, James," Weiss replied with a shake of her head. "I think I should head home and shower though."

"Of course. Would you like my driver to take you?"

"No thank you, I have my own." Weiss smiled as she shook off another bead of wine. "You could tell my father that I must go though, if you don't mind?"

"It's the least I can do."

With a small nod of gratitude to the man, which she hoped he understood, Weiss walked past him to the door, very aware that all eyes were on her. As she approached them, she signalled for one of the greeters to fetch her bag, and it only took him a couple seconds to disappear into the side room and reappear with her clutch. Taking it from him with her non-wine soaked hand, she slung it over her shoulder and pulled out her Scroll and sent a message to Hazel who she had ordered to wait nearby, and pushed the doors open.

The wind had grown a little stronger in the few minutes she had been inside, though that could have been due to the liquid on her skin that was slowly getting colder. And as she waited for Hazel to arrive, she couldn't help but wish Ironwood had chosen a more comfortable way to free her from the party.
Weiss was greeted by the empty atrium of Schnee manor, the cold wind outside incomparable to the chilled air of the mansion. With the tiled floor and walls, and metal armor that stood on the sides, it wasn't hard to imagine why it was perpetually cold. She knew it would be empty of course, as she'd called Klein ahead of her arrival to make sure of it. However, not wanting to be seen, she closed the door and made her way straight for her father's office.

It was less than a minute until she pushed her way into the even colder office, and not wasting a single moment, she moved along to the home computer; not daring to sit down for fear of leaving a stain. Her Scroll was opened and she typed in the password her mother had told her, and Weiss let out a breath of relief as she finally got past the lock screen she had been stumped at all week. Happiness rushed through her, and she brought up all the other names and dates she had stored on a document on her personal device and quickly began to search through the computer.

It took almost half an hour. Half an hour of trying numerous things such as the name of the inspectors, the name of the mine they had examined. Half an hour of finding nothing. But then it hit her. She had tried a date, the date of the inspection, and a file came up. But that wasn't the only one. Four more dates of other inspections that she had noted down brought up a file each, all of them zipped and locked with a passcode. Thankfully, the man was arrogant enough that he'd used the same code as his login, and Weiss quickly read through what was in the files. There wasn't as much as she'd hoped for, but each one caused her grin to widen significantly, and as she copied them over to her Scroll, she couldn't help but vocalise her happiness.

"Got you, you bastard." She muttered to herself.

Chapter End Notes

Hello everyone. Actually feeling a little under-the-weather at the minute, so forgive me if this is a little shorter than usual. I really hope you enjoyed what is the end of the arc, and are eager for what is to come. Toxic has already read the plan that Weiss has devised, and is actually nervous about how it will go xD So hopefully you are eager for that too.

This chapter I mainly wanted to focus on the meeting with Ironwood, but I will admit that there is a lot in this chapter, even some stuff that isn't obvious, that will come into play. As I said though, this is the end of this arc. The next one starts soon, and will be the penultimate one. That means there are only 2 arcs left to go ;-; But don't worry, there are still plenty of chapters left. This story is planned to be around 75-80. So there is still plenty left.

The next chapter will be up on the 3rd of March.

But yeah, that's it from me. I would write more, but I feel like garbage and I haven't been sleeping well xD I hope you all enjoyed, and a huge thank you again to everyone for the kind words :)