

A Christmas That is More Ruby Than Red

By: The17thStatesman

“Deck the halls with boughs of hmm-hmm, fa la lala la, lala la la~!” Ruby Rose happily muttered a cheerful tune to herself as she zipped about the confines of her team’s dormitory, stringing up rolls upon rolls of lights. *“Tis the season to be hmm-hmm, fa la lala la, lala, la la~!”* In addition to her usual casual attire, she was wearing a red cap with a white pom pom atop her head.

It was Christmas Time at Beacon Academy, and across much of Remnant proper, but perhaps no Kingdom was more in touch with the Holiday spirit than Vale, a fact owed partially to its temperate seasonal climate. The origins of the holiday of Christmas were shrouded in narratively convenient mystery, but it was generally understood to be the result of an amalgamation of the traditions of a wide variety of winter festivals held by different smaller tribes and cultures of humanity before they united into the Kingdoms.

In a world like Remnant, where too much gloom and depression could be a literal death sentence that drew monsters right to your doorstep, a holiday like Christmas made perfect sense. Winter was already the bleakest time of the year between its freezing temperatures, short days, and the isolation that its conditions fostered. Spending some of its darkest, coldest weeks celebrating peace, happiness, family and good will was downright utilitarian!

Ruby Rose loved Christmas, the whole Christmas season, *please* don’t ask why, because she’d tell you the reason, and in the process she might just talk your ears off. “What’s there not to love about Christmas? It puts everything in a good mood, all happy and cheerful and warm! You get to see all your friends and family and pretty decorations all over the place! Oooh, and don’t get me started on the Christmas treats~! Mmmm, it’s the one time of year where everyone appreciates a good cookie the way that I do, I just wish it could last even longer!”

See? And she wasn’t even done yet! “Snowball fights are so much fun! E-even if I’m not allowed to get in any more ever since that incident with the automatic snowball launcher... Look, I’m sorry, but if they wanted to fire the first shot, they can’t blame me for firing the last! Oh, and of course, presents! How could I forget about presents? Of course, Christmas is about sooo much more than just getting stuff, but it’s like, the only chance I get to upgrade my baby, weapon mods aren’t cheap, lemme tell ya, but those doorbuster holiday sales at the military surplus and hardware stores? *Keyaah-jch-jch-nng~!* They are *killer!*”

Ruby’s sister Yang Xiao Long had as much love for Christmas as she did, and the memories of Christmas mornings spent with their Mom and Dad as a family were some of the absolute happiest ones they had together, and a big part of the reason why they’d developed that fondness for the holiday in the first place.

Speaking of their Mom and Dad, with Ruby and Yang now both attending Beacon and their Mom... not around anymore, it meant that their Dad, Taiyang, would be spending his first Christmas without any of his family alongside him. The two sisters agreed that he shouldn’t

have to wake up on Christmas morning alone, so Yang left a couple days ago to visit the Island of Patch and spend the holiday with him. Ruby was welcome to go to, but she wanted to stay on campus for her first Christmas since being enrolled into Beacon and spend it with her other teammates.

Unfortunately for Ruby, neither of her other two teammates, Blake Belladonna or Weiss Schnee, seemed to have anywhere near the amount of Christmas cheer that she and her sister did. Now in Blake's case, Ruby had grown accustomed to her relative non-chalance, and would've been more surprised if she *had* gotten really into the season. Weiss on the other hand, genuinely kind of shocked her. Sure, she didn't really expect her to be all holly and jolly like her, but she figured she'd still at least enjoy it a little!

"*Don we now our gay apparel, fa lala, fa lala, la. la...* Huh." She paused in her decorating, a perplexed expression crossing her face. "Hey, Blake." She called out to her teammate.

"Yeah, what's up?" Blake calmly replied, not really paying full attention as she laid on her bed with her legs crossed reading one of the many novels in her backlog.

"Do you ever '*don your gay apparel*'?" Ruby asked her blithely.

"Wh-*wha*-? Huh!?" Blake sat up, her eyes widened and tearing away from her book as she looked at Ruby with a befuddled frown, "What's that even supposed to mean?"

Ruby shrugged, "Hey, that's what I wanna know, I've heard that song so many dang times since I was like, barely a foot tall, and I've never even thought about the lyrics before! Like, what does 'don' mean?"

Weiss let out a soft, almost silent, sigh as she set down her pen on the desk where she was working. Ever the responsible student, she was using the holiday break between semesters to get a head start on the independent study project that would be due in a couple of weeks when classes started back up. "'Don' just means to put something on, though it's a bit antiquated when used to refer to anything besides armor."

Ruby's face twitched, as if a lightbulb had just gone off in her head, "*Oooh*, so that's what Jaune meant when he asked if I could 'help him with donning his armor' because it was being difficult." She winced, "Aw, shoot, he was asking if I could help him put it on, I- I just thought he was being weird and talking about his armor like it was a person or something."

Blake's eyes gazed up towards the ceiling, as she thought about it for a split second before nodding in agreement, "to be fair, it does kind of sound like something he would do."

The young heiress on the other hand, rolled her eyes, she couldn't believe she had to stand up for Jaune Arc's dignity of all people, but she couldn't let that hypocrisy slide, "Ruby, I've seen

you go to bed with your scythe... *frequently!* You know what they say about people who live in glass houses, don't you?"

Ruby tilted her head and scratched the back of her neck, "Errr, everyone can see them when they're using the bathroom? What's your point?"

"*Haaaaa...*" Weiss let out a distinctly less silent sigh, "you know what, never mind. Can you at least tell me when you're going to be done? You've been zipping around the room like Oobleck for the last fifteen minutes, at least! It's making it more than a little difficult to concentrate over here."

"Yeah, you didn't get hopped up on his coffee or anything, did you?" Blake asked with a bit of cheek.

"*Noooope~!*" Ruby grinned ear to ear, eyes closed, hands behind her back, and bouncing on the tips of her toes, up and down, up and down, "the only thing I'm hopped up on is the *Christmas spirit!*"

"Oh brother, well, we might just have to cut you off at the rate you're going." The faunus snarkily warned her.

"*Whaaaaat~!?*" Ruby brought her fists up to her mouth, agape in horror around with her eyes quivering. "Y-you can't cut me off from the Christmas spirit, why that's- *tha-tha-tha-that's* cruel!"

"What's cruel is you carrying on with your insipid carolling while *some* of us are trying to get work done!" Weiss chided her.

"Hey!" Ruby snapped back defensively, "My carolling is *not* insipid!"

Weiss glared at her, "Do you actually know what insipid means?"

"I mean, I can tell by the way ya said it that it was an insult!" Ruby answered.

"Heh, I'll have to give her the point on that one, Weiss." Blake let out a bemused chuckle.

Ruby was in abject disbelief at Weiss' apparent antipathy towards the holiday. "I don't get it, Weiss, how can you of all people not like Christmas?"

Weiss raised an eyebrow, "What do you mean by 'me of all people?'"

"W-well, you're just... y'know?" Ruby twiddled her thumbs, embarrassed to voice her honest opinion. She almost felt like she was stereotyping Weiss, but... She spent all year dressed like a character in a Christmas ballet! She hailed from a winter wonderland! Her *last name* literally meant 'snow' for crying out loud! "So... why *don't* you like Christmas?"

“Christmas...” Weiss muttered disdainfully as she crossed her arms, “Is little more than an excuse for people to laze about stuffing themselves to the point of nausea, getting drunk, and hollering around bonfires like a pack of mangy Beowolfs. Certainly not something to be *celebrated*...” She huffed and looked away, out the dorm’s window, “Father always complains about being forced to give the entire workforce the day off on Christmas, always ends up disrupting quotas and shipments, that one day sets back Dust production for *weeks*.”

“‘The most expensive day of the year,’ he always says.” She snidely recounted, “‘Nobody gives more on Christmas than the Schnees, and we do it under duress.’ It’s something to be over and done with as quickly as possible so that we can get on with what actually matters...”

“But Christmas **is** what-!” Ruby was ready to rebut her, but bit her lip, “Blake, what about you? Don’t *you* like Christmas.”

Blake looked down from her book, there was a lot that she could’ve said, it was plain from the look on her face, but she simply replied, “Eh, it’s just another day on the calendar,” and went back to reading her book. In truth, Blake’s feelings about Christmas were much more complicated, and negative than she let on...

She had nothing against Christmas in theory, as a matter of fact, she approved of the idea wholeheartedly. But what soured her on it was the hypocrisy of it. She’d heard story after story, platitude after platitude about how Christmas was a time for people to “come together” and “celebrate peace on Remnant and good will towards man.” But apparently those feelings didn’t extend to her kind. The discrimination that Faunuses faced never seemed to take a break on Christmas... Cynically, she’d always noted that whenever they said “good will towards man,” it must be with heavy emphasis placed on “*man*” in particular...

“I- I can’t believe it!” Ruby exclaimed in utter dismay, “Am I really teammates with a pair of scrooges? Y- Y’know what? I think I know what the problem is, I bet you two have only ever had lousy Christmases. Well, don’t worry!” She zipped over and grabbed the ends of two cables, one ending with a power plug, and the other with a port. She held them aloft in both of her hands, smiling wide as could be. “I’ll just hafta give you the best Christmas ever! Starting riiight, *now!*” She slammed the two plugs together-

“Aaaaah! My eyes!”
“Holy- Gah-! That’s too bright!”

Ruby had absolutely inundated the room with Christmas lights, to the point that when she turned them on, she basically flashbanged her unprepared friends. “Ruby! You dolt, couldn’t you have warned us first? I’ve gone blind!” Weiss complained as she stood up from her chair, her eyes squeezed shut with her hands held out in front of her. As she stepped out forward, she ended up tripping over her backpack leaned up against the foot of the desk, falling over and sending something tumbling out of the bag and towards Ruby’s feet.

“Oh c’mon! Don’t be so dramatic, it isn’t that bad!” Ruby tried to downplay it, but the truth was that she was just accustomed to it.

“Y-yeah, try saying that when you have sensitive nightvision!” Blake retorted, Ruby wanted to say something, but she had to admit that she had a point, that was a little thoughtless of her.

“O-okay, yeah, that’s fair...” She conceded, “I- I’ll go ahead and turn them off, f-for now at least.” She reached down and unplugged the lights, restoring the level of light in the room to a more reasonable level. But as she was leaning down, she noticed something on the floor, “Huh?” picking it up, she found it to be a vial of- “Dust...” But it wasn’t like any Dust she’d seen before, it seemed almost devoid of color, it was faintly grey but mostly just transparent, like numerous tiny little grains of smoked glass.

“Ooghh...” Weiss groaned as she stood back up, and as soon as she saw what Ruby was examining in her hands her eyes widened, “H-hey! Where did you-? You give that back right now!” She scrambled over to Ruby and hastily snatched the vial from her hands.

“H-hey! I didn’t know it was yours, it was sitting on the floor right at my feet!” Ruby defended herself, “You don’t have to get all prissy with me, I was just looking at it.”

“Just looking at it?” Weiss scoffed, “You don’t even know what it is!”

“Well, it’s *Dust*, obviously.” Ruby replied.

“Yes, of course it’s Dust, but do you have any idea what kind of Dust it is?” Weiss challenged her, “It’s a trick question, by the way. You don’t know because nobody knows outside of the R&D division of SMC and the top COs of the Atlas Military! This new form of Dust is primed to be one of the revolutionary discoveries yet in the endless battle against the Grimm!” She started to rave.

“Our brilliant scientists have devised this special form of Dust to be able to absorb and store the aura of others, more specifically, it can store the emotions that the donor was experiencing at the time and, by exposing others to that Dust, allow them to experience that emotion as well! Think about it, with this Dust, man can overcome even their greatest weakness when it comes to fighting the Grimm!” Weiss tapped her finger to her forehead, “Our own minds! Even the most stalwart and seasoned veteran soldier, or Huntsman for that matter, is susceptible to fear, to doubt, to sorrow... With this Dust, they can be inoculated against these emotions when it counts, allowing them to fight at their best and even evade detection by the Grimm entirely!”

Ruby wasn’t entirely paying attention, she always found it hard to listen to Weiss when she started bloviating like this. But she managed to get the gist of it, and when she did, her eyes lit up like a Christmas tree. “Wait... So it lets you share emotions with others? That’s so cool!”

"Hmph!" Weiss smirked proudly, "Yes. Yes it is!"

Ruby eagerly reached out for it, "You've gotta let me try it!"

"Absolutely not!" Weiss pulled it back, clutching it to her chest protectively.

"Awww, but why not? Look, I- I- I promise I'm going to use it for a good cause!" Ruby tried to convince her teammate, folding her hands and looking at her with the biggest softest puppy dog eyes that she could muster.

But Weiss was adamant in her refusal. "No! For one thing, this is the only sample of it that I have, and the only reason I even have it in the first place is because I'm the future CEO of the SDC. I can't just let you play with this like it's some kind of toy! Do you even understand the ramifications of what this substance is capable of, Ruby? It's potential for good is great, yes, but so is its potential for misuse! It could be abused like- like some sort of *drug*, or used as an instrument of torture!"

"Or, an instrument of compliance..." Weiss continued, as Ruby just stared at her indignantly, "Imagine how this could be misused by some tyrant, sedating the population into an artificially happy daze, creating a society of unthinking puppets where all sedition is smothered into dull blissful indifference! It's too powerful and too dangerous in its unrefined state like this, we need to adjust its strength so that it can't be used for- *are you listening to me!?*"

"H-huh!? What?" Ruby jumped, "I mean, of course I'm listening to you! I heard every single word that you said!" She claimed.

"Oh yeah? What did I just say?" Weiss called her obvious bluff.

"Tsk!" Ruby grimaced, "You were... saying something about a- a puppet show?"

Weiss glared daggers at her, in her anger she absent mindedly slammed the vial desk down on the table with her right hand, thankfully not hard enough to crack or break it. She then pointed at Ruby with that same hand, practically sticking her finger in her face, "You are such a child sometimes!"

"What? I am not!" Ruby angrily replied.

"Oooh, yes, you are!" Weiss insisted bitterly.

"Are you forgetting who the leader of this team is?" Ruby stood her ground, pulling rank on Weiss. "Because last I checked, it was still me!"

But Weiss dug her heels in just as deep in response, “Yes, the leader of our team, who is also a *child*! With your- your childish attitude, and your childish obsession with your stupid childish holiday! And your-!”

WHAM!

Weiss and Ruby were both startled out of their argument by the sound of Blake loudly slamming her book shut in both of her hands, with a sour and agitated expression on her face, she hopped off her bed and made her way out of the room, pushing her way between her two teammates, who both looked at her worried. As she opened the door, she muttered, “Can’t even read a book in peace around here...”

As she took off down the hallway, Ruby and Weiss just stared at the open door, before Weiss turned her attention back to the black haired Christmas enthusiast. “Way to go, team leader...” She sarcastically congratulated her before she started walking off after her.

“Wha-!? Are you ser-? You were the one who was yelling when she decided to-!” Ruby tried to defend herself, but Weiss was already gone. She stomped her foot on the ground and let out a frustrated, “*D’aaaah-!*” Before shutting the door loudly and leaning on it, folding her arms and pouting with a huff as she slowly slid down onto the floor.

“I... I can’t believe that my teammates are a pair of scrooges!” Ruby lamented, “I mean, they didn’t even give me a *chance* to share my Christmas spirit with them! All I wanted was to bring them something great, why does nothing ever work out like it sh-?” As she continued to pout, she noticed the glint of the glass vial containing the experimental Dust that Weiss had left behind in her anger and frustration. “Oh... Wait a minute... I still can~!”

Ruby tapped the tips of her fingers together as a mischievous smile spread on her face, wider and wider, until suddenly it vanished, “Wait! Hold on... Can I really do this?” She asked herself, pinching her chin between her thumb and index finger.

Suddenly, with a sparkly white cloud of smoke, a tiny little Ruby, in an oddly chibi style, popped into existence on her left shoulder, wearing a white gown, with feathery wings and a golden halo above her head. “Ruby~!” She spoke in a gentle, lilting voice, “That vial is Weiss’s property, using it for your own ends would be wrong, and you know it!”

In response, a smoggy red cloud puffed up on her left shoulder, and leaning against a red pitchfork wearing a full body red suit with a pair of little horns atop her head was another chibi Ruby. “Aaah, c’moon! It’s for a good cause, after all, like you said, those two are scrooges! They’re in real need of some Christmas spirit, doncha think?” She tempted her as she poked her elbow against Ruby’s neck.

“Um, e-excuse me? Miss, er, Evil Ruby?” The angelic Ruby cleared her throat and leaned over to address her counterpart, “If you’re the Shoulder Devil, then shouldn’t you be *against* spreading Christmas spirit?”

The devil Ruby shrugged, “I dunno, if *you’re* the Shoulder Angel, then shouldn’t you be *supporting* spreading Christmas spirit?”

“I- Well, hmm...” The angel leaned back, scratching her cheek in contemplation, “Touche...”

“So in summation, we’re all in agreement that spreading Christmas spirit is a *good* thing, right?” The real Ruby addressed her two mini anthropomorphic personifications of her internal conflict of conscience.

“Yes, it would appear so.”

“Yep, sounds about right.”

Ruby clapped her hands together, “Perfect! That sounds like unanimous consent to be! Let’s do this!” She declared as the two chibis vanished. She hopped up onto her feet and scampered over her desk, giggling as she picked up the vial.

“*Oohoo-hoo-hoo~!*” She laughed as she held it in the palm of her hands. “So all I’ve gotta do is pour some of my aura into it. No sweat! Ooh, I can’t wait to see the looks on their faces when they light up with that Christmas magic, they’ll finally understand what I was trying to tell them! They’ll apologize and tell me how right I was, and they’ll get down on their hands and knees and kiss my holly-jolly boots! *Ttsssk-chee-ymm-hehehe~!*” She clutched the vial tightly in her fingers, rapidly stomping her feet in place as she smiled.

“Okay, okay! Woah, woah, woah! Careful.” She pulled the veil away from herself, not wanting to have her feelings of vindication “poison” the Dust. “Don’t get ahead of yourself, Ruby, after all, Weiss said that there’s only one of these, so I’ve gotta make sure I do this right!” She dug through her cabinet, “Starting with the right clothes...” She might’ve had her red cap on, but she could get so much more Christmas-y! Thankfully, she had just the right outfit in mind!

She pulled out a pair of red fuzzy pajama pants covered in little Christmas trees, along with a white sweater with designs of different Christmas cookies all over it. Ruby still remembered how she felt when she’d found it in a clothing store on clearance sale, “*Oh my gosh, the cookies look like they’re floating in milk because it’s white, that’s so cute, I’ve gotta have it!*” Last but not least she had a pair of brown reindeer themed slippers that she put on, they had little felt horns and even little jingling bells on them! After changing into her comfier, even more festive clothes, she grabbed her headphones along with pocketing her Scroll.

“Oh, speaking of cookies!” She exclaimed as she snatched the bag of gingerbread men that she’d bought a couple of days ago and hopped up on her bed with it. “Awww, man...” She frowned, “Am I really gonna get my bed all crummy?” She took a deep breath and pressed her

fist against her heart, stiffening her lips as she girded her resolve, "It's for a good cause, Ruby, it's for Christmas!"

She opened the bag, grabbed one of the cookies inside and started eating it, first the four limbs, then the head, then the body... Which when she stopped and thought about it was a bit messed up, but that just felt like the right way to eat gingerbread men. "Mmm, *aaaahh~! Shooo goood, mmmm!*" She talked with her mouth full, wriggling in place before swallowing, "Okay! The last ingredient to this recipe for maximum Holiday cheer!"

She placed her headphones over her ears and took out her scroll, looking for the right video, "Okie-dokie... Let's see, let's see... Oh! 10 hour Christmas classics compilation, perfect! Let's just put that on at double speed and maximum volume, and yeeeeesss~!" Ruby clutched her vibrating headphones with both hands as her ears were blasted with deafeningly loud carols, "Ooooh, I can feel it now, I can feel the pure undiluted *power* of Christmas flowing through *MeEeEeeEee~!*" She squealed as she kicked her feet on her bed, causing the little bells on her slippers to chime relentlessly!

"I'm so comfy-cozy, this is perfect!" She took out the vial once again and cradled it to her chest, curling up into a little ball around it as she hummed and focused on the sheer Christmas euphoria that she was feeling, mentally projecting all of it into the Dust. She started to roll around up and down, back and forth, and in circles on her mattress, giggling and muttering giddily to herself as she felt the power of her aura begin to pour into it!

"Yesss, it's workiiing!" she squealed as she pulled out another gingerbread man and started to gnaw him down. Ruby knew she couldn't feel safe with just a little bit of her aura inside, she needed to make sure there was absolutely, positively no way that Weiss and Blake wouldn't be overcome with the Christmas spirit!

"Mooore, *moore~!*" She gripped the vial and curled up tighter, "Christmas, *Christmas!* Just think about Christmas, nothing but Christmas and how much I */ooooove* Christmas! The most wonderful time of the yeeaaar!" Ruby started to drool as she dumped more and more of herself and her holiday obsession into the vial.

Gradually, the dust inside was turning faintly green and red, but with each passing second, it was getting brighter and more garish. If you saw it, you would even say it glowed, like a lightbulb. "Can't leave it up to chance! Gotta make sure there's enough!" Ruby mumbled as she squeezed more and more aura into the dust, more than it was ever meant to contain, essentially super saturating it. As she pushed it further and further into dangerous levels of aura infusion, her own aura began to flicker and the poor girl began to feel extremely lightheaded...

She lost track of time, but eventually she flopped onto her pillow, gasping for breath, pulling off her headphones to give her poor ringing ears a break, and looked at the vial. The scintillating contents were glowing like a nuclear fuel rod, and it seemed to be making a constant jingling

noise, (It was a little hard for her to tell at the moment) even when perfectly still. “O-okay, that oughta... d-do it.”

She gave the vial a little shake, almost like she was shaking up a snowglobe, and as soon as she did, it started to shake on its own, *violently*. “Woah! Hey, hey!” It glowed even brighter as Ruby was forced to grip it with both hands and squeeze down on the cork to keep it from popping off. “N-not yet! Not yet!” She cried out, as the overactive, over-energized Dust finally settled down. “Phew, wow! Hehe, welp, I guess I at least know that I used e- *Haaaaahh!*” Ruby let out a loud yawn as the fatigue from expending so much of her Aura caught up with her, “-enough. This stuff is as excited to spread the spirit of the season as I am.”

Carefully climbing down off of the bed, she tried to figure out her next course of action, hopefully before she fell over and passed out on the spot. “Okay, I gotta, g-get Blake and Weiss back here. Th-then I gotta hide somewhere, like- *oh*, under the bed, th-that should work, yeah, I’m... sure they won’t... f-find me t-theere...” Ruby’s eyelids fluttered as she swayed on her feet, Ooh, slee- No!” She shook her head, smacking her cheeks, “Focus! Okay, lemme just text them.”

She opened the messaging app on her scroll and sent a text out to both Blake and Weiss, quickly spinning up an apology about how bad she felt that they started arguing and that she really wants to make it up to them, and that she won’t force them to enjoy Christmas with her if they don’t want to. “Technically it’s not lying... **I’m** not going to force them to enjoy anything.” She grinned smugly, “The *Dust* is, ehehehe~! Aaand send!”

Now she just had to set up her trap and get into her hiding spot. Fortunately with how unstable the Dust had become from her Aura infusion, all she needed to do was remove the cork and lean it very carefully against the door. When Blake and Weiss came back, they’d knock it over, and the jolt from the fall would certainly cause it to envelop the room and ensure that those two scrooges both got the massive dose of holiday spirit that they so desperately needed!

“Okay now just stay... *riiiight* there!” She delicately set her trap in place, slowly backing away as the crawled under Weiss’s bed eagerly lied in wait. “Hehe, alright, any second now, those two are gonna come back and- *Haaaawm...*” She let out another yawn, her eyes feeling as heavy as bricks as her vision became blurry and her mind even blurrier. “Any second now. A-any... second nooow...” Eventually, try as she might, she just couldn’t hold out any longer, “Any... s-sec-*hmmmmnn*.”

Her face flopped forward onto the ground as she fainted dead away... She quietly and incoherently began to mumble to herself as she was completely gone. Nothing short of a Nevermore dive bombing through the window was going to wake her up, and even that was only around a coin flip’s odds.

But as she took her unwanted and impromptu nap, her two teammates were walking together up the hallway, Blake’s face showed signs of regret while Weiss remained firm in her

convictions, her expression steely and cold. “Y’know, we might’ve been too hard on her.” The black haired faunus broke the silence between them as they approached their dorm room.

“Too hard on her? Frankly, I don’t think we were anywhere near hard enough.” Weiss tersely replied.

“Don’t you feel bad at all? I mean... She was just trying to do something nice. Even if I’m not a Christmas person like she is, I can tell she meant well.” Blake continued to play devil’s advocate, clearly remorseful for how she stormed out of the room the way she did.

“Meaning well doesn’t excuse her behavior... She never once asked if we wanted to be involved in her ridiculous festivities. She just assumed that we’d go along with it! Like it was a given we’d be interested in this obnoxious holiday!” The heiress vented her frustrations, it was obvious that this ran just a bit deeper than being just about Christmas.

Blake shrugged, “Well, to be fair. It was a pretty safe assumption to make, I mean. The two of us? We’re kinda the odd ones out here, you know? Most people *do* like Christmas. Why wouldn’t she assume we did too?”

Weiss paused as she reached out towards the door to their room. “That- *haah...*” She let out a sigh, “That’s a fair point.” She finally conceded, her tone softening gently, “Maybe I did overreact a little bit.”

“You didn’t have to call her a kid. You know how much it bothers her.” Blake chastised her in a calm, mature tone.

“Well!?” Weiss folded her arms and stuck up her nose, “She didn’t have to *behave* like a kid! You know that she was!”

“Even so, what good did it do? You weren’t trying to make any real point, you just wanted to get back at her because you thought she was trying to steal from you.” Blake remained even toned in her assessment.

Weiss’s arms fell back by her side as she pursed her lips and gently shook her head, “Nothing gets past you, doesn’t it?”

Blake allowed herself the softest hint of a smirk, “I may not always look like I’m listening, but I am.” She then reached out in front of Weiss and took the liberty of opening the dorm room door.

“Okay, Ruby, we’re back... Sorry about the-” As Blake pushed open the door and she and Weiss walked in, the vial of aura-infused Dust fell over and rolled across the floor, spilling out some of its contents as it did. “Ruby? Where are you-?” The two girls barely had a chance to notice the bright neon glow intensifying on the ground right at their feet before it burst into a twinkling, room-filling green and red cloud.

"What in the world!?" Weiss exclaimed in confusion as her and Blake both unwittingly inhaled the strange particulate matter swirling around them. "W-what is this?"

Blake sniffed at the air, "Smells like... Cinnamon? And... nutmeg. Pine needles?" She took another deep breath, "A- okay, I know how sappy this is going to sound but it literally smells like 'Christmas' in here."

"Is this some kind of *prank* of hers or something!?" Weiss started to get increasingly irate, "What did she set up some kind of scented dust bomb?" She hadn't made any connection between the Dust she was inhaling and the experimental Dust she'd unknowingly left behind on the desk. "I can't believe this! The absolute *nerve* of that little *brat*!" Weiss scowled, stomping her foot on the floor as she threw her fists down at her sides. "That's what I get for giving her the benefit of the doubt-! See if I ever-!"

"W-weiss, *Weiss*!" Blake shut the door behind her before she ended up causing a scene, "Calm down, okay? Look, maybe we should at least give her a chance to explain herself, okay? She might've just... I don't know, ran to the bathroom?"

Weiss looked at her like she was insane, "The bathroom!? Blake, be serious! It's obvious that she..." Then, just as suddenly as her anger exploded, it seemed to dissipate. "On second thought, you're right."

Blake blinked at her, "I am?" She remarked incredulously, "I mean, yeah, I am. I just didn't expect you to agree with me, honestly." She brushed her hair out of her face. Something seemed a little off, when Weiss flew off the handle like that, it usually took a lot more than that to cool her off.

"Well, normally I might not, but... I suppose I'm feeling a bit generous right now, I mean, friends shouldn't fight during Christmas after all." Weiss explained herself, and as Blake nodded along, what she'd just said quite nearly slipped by her.

"Wait, what did you just say?" Blake asked as she could feel a strange giddiness bubbling up inside of her from the bottom of her heart. "Weiss, why would you say something like that? You don't care about Christmas!" Every moment that passed, it got harder for her to think of why she was even making a big deal about this.

"Don't care about...?" Weiss muttered, looking confused, "Oh. Well, I guess that now that I've had a bit of time to think about it, Ruby has made some decent points about the holiday."

"Nice to see you being a bit more open minded for a change, hehe-*hnk~!*" Blake giggled, ending with a little squeak that wasn't much like her, but *was* very much like their leader. "I guess maybe Christmas *can* bring out the best in people." That burgeoning giddiness inside of her continued to build, a tingling in her toes and fingers, a sort of lightness.

Both Blake and Weiss were so caught up in the strange but magical moment that neither of them could remember what they'd been made about in the first place, nor did they notice the tips of their hair starting to turn a certain familiar shade of red. "What *is* this feeling?" Blake thought aloud, "I don't think I've ever felt anything like it before in my life."

"There is a certain something in the air, isn't there?" Weiss concurred as she took another deep breath, "*Aaahh...* Well, I may not know if Ruby was responsible for it, but I feel like it's coming from this lovely fragrance. It's almost as if..." Weiss seemed to be on the verge of figuring something out, but as Blake watched her, she saw her eyes glaze over as she seemed to completely lose her train of thought.

After a few moments, Blake got increasingly concerned, "Um, Weiss?" She walked over and poked her teammate on the shoulder, her hands having become smaller and more cute and dainty. "It's almost as if what...?"

"What?" Weiss flinched and responded in a tone that didn't sound like her own, "Oh, I'm... Hmm, I'm not sure actually, I suppose it couldn't have been that important... I was just admiring the work that Ruby did stringing up all of these lights~!"

Blake looked around with her, "Yeah, she... really did a good job." She couldn't help but grin, "I didn't even notice all of the other little decorations she put up too. The little wreaths and ornaments. I kinda feel bad that we made her turn them all off now."

Weiss put her hands on her hips, in a distinctly Ruby-esque way. "Well we can fix that, can't we!" She cheerfully remarked, a bit *too* cheerfully, as she walked towards the plug and socket that would power the entire daisy chain of lights. "Just have to w-*wooaahh!*" She found herself slipping her ankle as she tripped and fell onto the floor with a thud. By sheer happenstance, she just barely managed to avoid catching sight of the still unconscious Ruby lying underneath her bed.

"Weiss, are you alright? What was that?" Blake ran over to help her up.

"Y-yes, I'm fine, I just- I'm not sure." Weiss shook her head, genuinely perplexed. "It's as my- all of a sudden my feet don't feel quite right in my boots, it's like they're too small?"

"What?" Blake balked, "How could your feet be too small for the boots you've been wearing since we met? Last I checked, feet don't usually get smaller." Something felt weird, but she couldn't put her finger on it. She nervously twiddled one of her fingers through her hair, not noticing that it had gotten quite a few inches shorter.

Nor did she notice a similar change in Weiss's hair as she slipped her feet out of her boots and looked at them with a conflicted expression, "They look like they've always looked but... I just." Her mind seemed to go blank again.

"Weiss, hey, snap out of it! C'mon!" The Faunus snapped her fingers in her friend's face, "You keep spacing out on me, what's the matter?"

"Oh, my apologies." Weiss grinned bashfully and scratched the back of her neck, "I just keep thinking about how I haven't actually made any plans yet to do anything for Christmas. I-it's not like me to let the holiday sneak up on me like this!"

Blake's eyes widened, something about Weiss's words managed to trigger something in her brain, "Wait! Wait, Weiss, that's- that's not right. You've never cared about Christmas, you just told me that, not even an hour ago!" Every word felt like she was trying to push her way through a thick mental fog.

Weiss looked at her with an expression of confusion and seeming *offense*, "Blake! How could you say that, I- I've always I-" Then, it hit her as well, her jaw dropped, "No, no, y-you're right, I-" Weiss coughed, "I haven't ever cared about-" She did a double take, looking closely at Blake's face before her skin went pale. "Blake?"

"What? What's up? You're looking at me funny." Blake felt nervous, but less nervous than it seemed like she should.

"What color are your eyes?" Weiss asked cryptically as, now barefoot, she stood back up.

Then it was Blake's turn to feel slightly offended, how long had they been rooming together and she couldn't remember her *eye color*? It wasn't like it was a common color, either! "My eyes? What do you mean, Weiss? They're amber, just like they've always-"

Weiss shook her head, though oddly, the concerned frown on her face was near constantly threatening to twitch up into a grin from the looks of things. "I'd suggest you look in the mirror before you make that claim again!"

"Look in the-?" Blake cut herself off, there was no sense questioning it, she just had to see for herself, she turned towards the mirror, and couldn't believe what she was seeing at first. "Hunh?" She ran closer and leaned in, bringing her hand up to run her fingers under her large, round and very much *silver* eyes. "M-my eyes...!" She muttered, she knew that she should've been freaking out about this, her eyes had changed color! No, not just color, they'd changed shape too! That wasn't possible, at least, it wasn't supposed to be! But even though she knew she should be panicking, she just... couldn't, it was as if something was making her unable to-

"B-blake!" A shuddering cry from Weiss tore her attention away from the matter of her eyes. She looked to see her hand over her heart, "I think that something's wrong with us, do you feel that?"

"I don't know, maybe, what exactly are *you* feeling?" A bead of nervous sweat ran down Blake's cheek as she had to fight the urge for her mouth to twitch up into a big smile. She felt this

irrepressible joy building up inside of her, like some kind of hilarious joke that she couldn't stop thinking about.

"I... I feel so happy, Blake! *Ahehehe!*" Weiss breathlessly remarked before breaking out into a giggle fit. Her mouth was wide with bliss but her eyes showed fear, "I feel like everything is going to be okay, b-better than okay even, everything is going to be wonderful! Like I just want to- to give you a big hug, haha, and sit around a campfire and s-s-sing together!" Blake watched the words pour out of her mouth, as if Weiss was powerless to stop them.

"Weiss! H-hey, Weiss! Keep it togeth-*aaah!*" As Blake rushed to help the white haired- well, no, actually her hair was mostly *black* now, with red tips- as she rushed to help her friend, she found herself nearly succumbing to the same fate she just had, stumbling forward as her heels suddenly felt like a total mismatch for her feet. Fortunately, she managed to catch herself, but it only made it more obvious to her that something was wrong... So why didn't she **feel** like something was wrong! Why was her mind more preoccupied with the fact that the dorm didn't have a proper Christmas tree than the fact her eyes had changed color and her leader was nowhere to be found?

"Weiss..." Blake managed to get her hands on Weiss's shoulders, but she seemed to be completely out of it, her head swaying back and forth in a daze.

"*We wish you a merry Christmas, we wish you a merry Christmas~!*" She sang to herself as her hair shrank down, her crown shaped hairpin falling out as her ponytail receded back into her scalp. "Blake, help me~?" She begged, though the massive, cheerful grin on her face and carefree tone in her voice made it hard to tell that she was being serious.

"Snap out of it, Schnee! I don't know what's happening but I think it's this- this *feeling* is tied to it! Try to calm yourself down, the stronger you let it get, the more we're going to change!" Blake tried to reason with her, but she could barely understand what was happening and why she should be afraid, let alone how to fix it... Oh, if only Ruby were here right now! She'd know what to do! She was so smart and kind and cute and- why was she thinking that way about Ruby...?

"I know you're right, Blake, but it's just..." Weiss squeezed her eyes shut, her body shaking like she was experiencing some kind of inner turmoil, when her eyes opened again, they were the same color and round adorable shape as Blake's, and as *Ruby's*! "It's so hard! It feels so good, I- I love how it feels! *Ooooh*, all my life, I've never known the joy of Christmas and now it's filling me up so much and I- I don't want it to stop!"

"But you have to stop! Because it's turning you into-" That's when it hit her, Blake looked at her hands, and then at Weiss's hands, then her hair as the red highlights crept into their tips deeper, and the eyes, how had she not figured it out sooner? Who else did they know that had silver eyes besides- "Ruby! Holy-! W-weiss, w-we're turning into Ruby!"

"I knooooow." Weiss cooed, her voice taking on more of Ruby's little inflections as her tone started to shift, "Doesn't it feel soooo goood?"

Blake wanted to deny it, but as she felt the bliss of Christmas and Ruby's innocent childlike joy for the holiday raging through her mind and body like a jolly inferno, she just couldn't! So instead she said, "I- I know, but we can't let ourselves be changed like this... We're our own people, y-you don't want to just stop being Weiss, do you? C'mon, Weiss, you love being you! If there's a single thing I know about you, it's that!"

"Blake, I know that you're right, but... *Hmhm-Eeeee!*" Blake watched Weiss stand up on the tips of her toes and let out an adorable squeal as she objected, "being Ruby just feels like it would be so much better... Ahhh, this pure joy rolling through me, this feeling of Christmas cheer! I can't stop it! I don't *want* to stop feeling this! I won't stop feeling thisss~!" She reached out and wrapped her arms suddenly around Blake, "don't try and fight it, Blake, don't you get it yet? This is the power of Christmas, it's utterly *irresistible~!*"

"Weiss, are you-? *Ahem!*" Blake cleared her throat as she felt her pitch shifting up, she could feel a pinching in her throat, like it was being grasped and squeezed by invisible hands, not choking but molding it to a new shape. "Are you hearing yourself? You sound ridiculous!" She tried to play to her sense of shame and pride.

"I- I know..." She remarked, in a moment of lucidity, "it's so humiliating, I- I sound just like her!" She brought her hands up to her cheeks, "But it's..." As she pressed her fingers into her skin, her face seemed to shift right before Blake's eyes, "it's so much more *fun* that way! W-why should I have to care? Why can't I just be myself?"

"Grrrr-!" Blake started to lose her cool, "Because it's not yourself, aren't you listening to me?" She shouted, swinging her arms up and down in a frenzy until it occurred to her what she was doing. "O-oh no!"

"*Tchshsh!*" Weiss grinned at her smugly, but not her typical brand of smugness, a much more *childish* kind of smug, as she noted, "Maybe not yet, but it will be soon, and the same goes for you by the look of it."

Blake felt a wave of vertigo as she realized that the ground was getting *closer*. She was shrinking, her long legs shortening to match Ruby's height. She had every right to be terrified, but she just felt so darn happy! Nobody could feel blue around Christmas! "My head...!" She groaned, "*Ahahahaaa...* What's going on? Mmmm, it's like there- there's a million *teeny-tiny* little Ruby's flying around in my soul!"

"Oooh, that's it! That's exactly it, very well put, Ruby!" Weiss addressed her, and it came out so naturally that Blake wasn't even sure if it was an accident or not.

But she sure knew that it had an effect, a *pulse* rocked through her body, but it felt strongest in her chest and in her waist, a deep throbbing pleasure as something tried to press its way out. It was in her mind too, the heavy waves crashing against her mind, trying to pull it into the red sea of Christmas cheer, weapon knowledge, and awkward, *but adorable*, dorkiness... “N-nooooo, W-Wei-, *Nnng!* Don’t do that!”

“Huuuh? Do what, *Ru-by?*” Seeing that her words had had an effect, Weiss played dumb, but it was obvious know that whether or not the first time had been an accident, now she was doing it on purpose! “What do you not want me to do, *Ru-byyy?*”

“*Aaaahhhwww~!*” Blake let out a moan; a cute, high pitched moan as she felt her body continuing to thrum and her mind continuing to fragment, “Don’t c-call me *that!*” She managed to force out, “Don’t call me Ruby, *R-ruby!*” She snapped, before covering her mouth.

“*Aaaawww...!*” Weiss experienced the same effect as her, it was obvious from how her clothes were straining, rather than trying to hold it in or hold it back, she let the pleasure roll over her completely. “Oooh, I get it now! Sorry, Ruby, *oops*, I mean- *Ruby!* Whoops!”

“Noooo, stoop~!” Blake wailed in pleasure, an ecstatic smile on her face as she fell to her knees, her thighs and chest jiggling like a bowl full of jelly as they bubbled and *grew*, her ass in particular getting wider and softer as her hips thinned. But this wasn’t how Ruby really looked, was it...? Has she just never looked at her body that closely or-?

“Remember, we *are* both two years older than her, after all! Don’t it make sense we’d be a little more developed~?” Weiss leaned down and winked, “C’moon, just give in, what you’re feeling, what we’re both feeling, that’s the Ruby inside wanting to come out, let’s both just let her out... Please, call me her name again.”

“*Hehehe, nngg-! B-but, W- Wi- Ruby?*” Blake was trying to force herself not to call her teammate by their leader’s name, but it was getting to the point she could barely remember it anymore, in fact, she can hardly remember her own name!

“*Gaaauuwh, yeeessh, that’s aweeesommee~!*” Blake her Weiss squeal in her ears as her body underwent a similar transformation, her hips and breasts widening out as her body shrank down to nearly perfectly match Ruby’s height.

She knew she couldn’t trust the little voices telling her that *of course she knew her name, she was Ruby Rose!* “What if there’s, y’know, no more *us*...? That wouldn’t be very good, would it?” She asked, her voice now the spitting image of Ruby’s.

“Would it?” The increasingly Ruby-fied Weiss asked her with a raised eyebrow, “Getting harder to think of a reason why not, ain’t it? Hehe, it’s because you’re already thinking like her. Face it, we’re already more Ruby than not! Let’s just embrace it! Think of it like... the *bestest Christmas present ever!*”

"T-the bestest-?" Blake's eye twitched, "I *dooooo* love Christmas p-present's-!" her mind locked in a stalemate as her will refused to fully break the way that Weiss's had. "B-but, I don't... I don't wanna-?"

"Yoo-hoo~! Ruby, I know just what'll have ya seeing things through Rose-colored glasses like meeee~!" Weiss, though other than her outfit there weren't many ways to tell her apart from the original Ruby, as she was an almost perfect copy baring her enhanced figure.

Shooka-shooka-shooka!

The sound of a rustling bag echoed in Blake's ears as they twitched at the sound, "Wh-whaaa?" She looked up to see Weiss holding a bag of *cookies* in her hand! The same cookies that Ruby had been eating earlier, as she opened the bag and pulled one out, her face was the epitome of bliss as she slowly gnawed it down. "A-are those...?"

"Gingerbread cookies~? They *suuure aaare~!*" Weiss purred in satisfaction as she took out another one, holding the head of the treat in the tip of her fingers as she dangled it above her like a dog treat, "Oooh, they taste fantastic too, don't *you* want one, Ruby?"

Blake found herself drooling as her eyes locked on the cookie, one of her cute little hands reached up to take it, eyes twinkling like the star atop a Christmas tree, "Y-yeeahh..." She moaned, but she leapt back up to her feet, "Gimmeee!"

"Unh-unh-uuunh!" But Weiss was faster, pulling the cookie up and just out of Blake's reach while hiding the bag behind her back. "If you want it, you have to admit that you and I are both Ruby! That you wanna be her more than anything!"

"I... I have to-?" Blake grit her teeth, she knew that she shouldn't do this! She knew that if she gave in, she'd be dooming her *and* W- W-? Whats-her-name to both becoming Ruby forever and ever, in body, mind and soul! Of course... That was already inevitable at this point, the sheer mass of aura that Ruby had put into that experimental Dust was so overwhelming that with how much the two girls had inhaled of it, it was going to completely assimilate their own auras. There was nothing they, or anyone, could do to stop it... But Blake didn't know that.

So from her perspective, was she really going to doom herself, and one of her friends, just to get a cookie...?

"Yesss! Yes, yeees! Ruby! I'm Ruby~! A-and you're Ruby! We're Ruby! Ruby! Ruby! It's a Christmas miracle! Now c'mon, stop being such a meanie, and gimme that cookie already!"

"Atta girl! Here you go!" Weiss tossed the cookie down to her as Blake completely capitulated. The Ruby in both of the girl's minds reached a critical mass and started to overwrite them... Blake didn't even notice as her cat-like pair of second ears sank into her head, marking her shift

into a human, she was too busy scarfing down on the delicious cookie. The two girls pulled each other into their arms and shared a joyful cry of-

“Merry Christmaaas!”

As they were fully reborn. Their outfits became enveloped in a blinding green and red glow, the very same one emitted by the Dust that'd sealed their fates. As the blinding glow filled the room, the two girls' identities were swallowed and remade. The memories of their lives as Blake Belladonna and Weiss Schnee beginning to melt away into their new lives as Ruby Rose and Ruby Rose.

It was a consequence of their aura's becoming perfect copies of Ruby's own... After all, memories were at the core of what made a person who they were, they couldn't truly **be** Ruby without sharing those memories. They were so thoroughly Ruby that they didn't even feel like there was any distinction between them, and there was no need to reconcile the fact that there were now three Ruby Roses when there should've only been one.

As far as they were concerned, they were just both Ruby, and the third Ruby, who should've at least been their “little sister,” seeing as how she was born two years later... Well, that didn't matter either! She was just also Ruby, a bit younger, but still every bit just as much of **the** Ruby Rose as the two of them were. They still remembered Blake and Weiss, but not as their former selves, rather as friends of theirs, as friends of Ruby's.

Even the fact that their team would've been more like team RRRWBY, or Maybe R³WBY, their brains didn't process their team as having six members instead of the usual four because they were all simply **Ruby**. In the same way that 3 over 3 would denominate down to 1. No matter how many of them there were, there was still just Ruby.

It didn't really occur to them to think that they'd never actually see Blake and Weiss again, because they no longer technically existed, at least, not in any way that would allow them to be restored. Bringing them back would've required an intact sample of their auras, but the experimental Dust had done a truly thorough job of scouring every last trace of them. But it was fine, they were sure that they were... *around, y'know, somewhere...*

But perhaps the one and only thing, besides their age, that really set them apart from the original Ruby was their even greater devotion to Christmas. Ruby was a certified Christmas Fanatic, but these two were more like Christmas *Crusaders*. As far as they were concerned, Christmas never ended, because for them, frozen in the moment that Ruby had preserved in the Dust before it transformed the two, it really never did.

They took the oft-expressed sentiment to “make the feeling last all year” truly to heart in a literal sense. Neither of them found anything strange about it. After all, if Christmas was such a powerful tool at repelling the Grimm, why shouldn't every day be Christmas? It was a sentiment

that even the original Ruby had felt at times, so it was hardly a stretch. The Holiday spirit that Ruby had infused into the Dust was a part of their DNA, and they couldn't have been happier...

As the light began to fade, the two girls' outfits were replaced with much more fittingly, if a bit risque, Christmas-y ones. Atop their heads were the very same red cap with white fur trim and a white pom-pom that Ruby had been wearing. Around their necks and running all the way down to their ankles were red capes with fluffy red hoods rimmed with the same white fur trim.

Underneath, they were wearing a red, strapless one-piece leotard that covered their pelvis while leaving their thighs full exposed, it had a low slightly v-necked top with more white fur covering their modesty, and a pair of smaller, decorative white balls of fluff, almost like buttons, running down the center. Finally their legs were covered in a pair of red thigh-high stockings, the same kind you might hang over the fireplace, only longer, one more ring of that white fluff around their mouths.

The two Rubys happily rubbed their foreheads together, giggling as their hearts were brimming with love and holiday cheer. "Oooh, Ruby~!" Ruby sighed happily towards Ruby as the two wrapped their arms around each other under their cloaks. "Where do you think Ruby is?"

"I dunno!" Ruby shrugged, "Oh, wait! Maybe I'm helping get ready for Christmas! It's coming up soon!"

"But every day is Christmas, Ruby! I know that!" Ruby remarked with a tilt of her head.

Ruby rolled her eyes and clarified, "Yeah, but I know what I mean, the most *Christmas-y* Christmas! The Christmas that everyone else already celebrates!"

"Oh, right! Hehe, it always gets here so fast!" Ruby beamed.

"Never fast enough though, Ruby, and I know that I know what fast is~!" Ruby replied with a wink.

Ruby looked around the room, "I really did a nice job with the dorm, huh?"

Ruby nodded, "Yes, I did! I could do more, but that can wait until after I've gotten back..." She smirked and leered at Ruby, "Until theen... I kinda wanna~?"

Ruby traced a finger in little circles on Ruby's collarbone, "Cuddle up with myself on my bed~?"

"Hehehe~! I read my mind!" Ruby giggled as they both hopped onto the bed that'd formerly belonged to Weiss. The room was filled with the sound of squeaks and squeals, both from the springs of the mattress, and from the two adorable Christmas loving Ruby's sprawled out on top of it as they hugged and nuzzled up to each other, running their hands across each other's skin and squeezing their soft and lovable bodies.

But no matter how intimate they got, it never turned sexual. It was almost like they were trying to get as close to each other as possible, as if their real goal was to somehow smooch their bodies together and literally, rather than figuratively, “become one.”

As the mattress shook in its frame right above her head, Ruby finally began to stir, “Uugghh...” She groaned, she raised her head, only for it to thump against the wooden slats of the bed frame a scant few inches above her, “Ouch!” She grumbled, rubbing her head, “What happened? W-wait! My plan, where’s-? Huh?” She noticed the sound coming from above her, particularly the happy giggling and cooing, something felt a bit overly familiar about it to her, but she didn’t think to suspect something was off at first. Why would she, considering just how strange the truth was?

Then, she managed to spot that the vial was no longer leaning against the door, so it was easy for her to put two and two together, her brilliant plan must’ve worked, even with her unconscious! “Hehehe~!” She rubbed her hands with a smug smile on her face as she started to crawl out from under the bed, “*Well, well, well~! Looks like someone started feeling the Christmas spirit.*” She thought. She just wished she could’ve been awake to see the looks on Weiss and Blake’s faces when their sad hearts were introduced to the wonder of the holiday season!

“Suuurrrr-**prise!**” Ruby exclaimed as she leapt up onto her feet. “So~? How’d you two enjoy your little g-?” Ruby’s delight was interrupted as her brain caught up with her eyes and she realized that rather than her two teammates, she was looking at... Two more of her? The two other pairs of silver eyes locked on hers, as she rubbed her own, not believing what she was seeing. “Gift...? A-am I dreaming or some-”

“**Ruby!**”

“**Ruby!**”

“There I am!” Ruby exclaimed as she and Ruby both grabbed hold of one of Ruby’s wrists, “C’mere, me! I know I just don’t feel whole without me! Especially at Christmas time?”

“Wha-wha-wait a minute! What do you mean I? I mean me? I mean *whaaat!?* I mean-**woooaah!**” Ruby’s frazzled mind had no chance to recover before she was yanked into bed by the other two Rubys, who quickly and seamlessly incorporated her into their cuddly love-pile. “W-who are you two!?”

“That’s a silly question, Ruby! I’m me!” Ruby pointed to herself, “And so am I!” She said, pointing to the other older Ruby, before pointing to the younger one, “and me too!”

Ruby scratched her head, “I- I, uh, I don’t get it, b-but this feels *really nice*...” She admitted as the other two Rubys squeezed her between them, “Maybe I put a little too much aura into that

Dust.” She admitted under her breath as the other Rubys were too pre-occupied with each other and their revelries to hear her.

“W-well, at least you two are definitely in the Christmas spirit now!” She nervously commented, looking for the silver lining, “M-might as well enjoy this while it lasts, until that Dust wears off!” She smiled, thinking to herself, “*D-did Weiss mention when that Dust would wear off...?*” It would be quite some time before she figured out that the Dust wasn’t going to wear off, and that her two “other selves” would be sticking around for the long haul. Her’s was the gift that would truly keep on giving...

Ruby had wanted to be able to share in the joy of Christmas with her two new teammates, and it turns out she got her Christmas wish! Too bad she didn’t realize that said wish was being made on a Monkey’s Paw. Now she’d have a chance to truly see how much Christmas she could handle. Because unlike this story, her Christmas would now truly never-

END