

Jaune awoke to soft lips caressing his brow, and the soft, supple skin of a nubile beauty pressed against his own. His eyes fluttered open, greeted by the beautiful face of Weiss Schnee. Her eyeshadow had run a little, as had her mascara, and some of the braids in her hair had loosened, but she looked no less than the goddess she was. Jaune smiled, and she smiled back.

"Morning," he said softly.

"Morning," she returned, pecking him playfully on the nose. Jaune laughed, and returned the gesture, kissing the tip of her nose and making her ears turn red.

They lay together, their legs entwined, one of his arms wound around her slim waist. Her core burned against the thigh she straddled, and despite their vigorous exploration of each other's bodies the previous night, his flaccid cock twitched.

Weiss saw the desire in his eyes, and had to disappoint him.

"I'm much too sore for that," she shot him down immediately, giggling as he pouted. "Don't. That look doesn't suit you."

He wasn't too disappointed. He'd had her, again and again, too many times to count. Weiss was far from the delicate doll her looks would suggest, but it *had* been her first time, and there was no getting around the fact that her body was *tiny*.

Jaune had been... a little too enthusiastic with her. Even though it had all been at her lustful urgings, begging him to fuck her harder, fuck her deeper, their bodies crashing together like the waves of the ocean meeting the shore.

It wasn't any wonder that she was sore. Even Jaune felt it, his cock raw. She was just so damn tight, no matter how gushing wet she got.

"Probably for the best," he agreed quickly, a hand rising to stroke the skin of her shoulder. Weiss shivered. "We went a little hard."

"It's what I wanted," she told him, her eyes filled with affection. It made his heart swell. "Now – if you'll be so kind, I want you to roll over."

It took him a few seconds to realize why she was asking.

He snorted. "You really want to see it, don't you?"

"Of course I do," she said in her haughty voice, sniffing arrogantly. "I wish to see what your womanizer semblance thinks of me."

He shook his head. "You know, if you keep calling it that, maybe it will retaliate and put something strange on my back."

"It better not," she said seriously. "Or I'll remove it from your skin."

That was a little unsettling. He couldn't tell if she was being serious or not, her face completely deadpan.

"Right," he said, untangling their bodies and rolling onto his front, exposing his back.

There was a moment of silence, and then a soft hand touched him, tracing where his new tattoo was undoubtedly located.

“Hmm,” she hummed. “Not unexpected, I suppose... this ability of yours is unnervingly accurate.”

“What does it look like?” he asked.

The bed shifted as she moved away, searching for something on the floor. Glancing over his shoulder, he saw her lovely nude figure bent over as she searched through her woollen top. Apparently it had pockets, a little like a hoodie would, and from within she fished out her scroll. Crawling over to him, he admired her slim, sleek figure and how it moved, sensual and with grace.

She quickly snapped a picture.

“I hope you aren’t posting that online,” he joked, and she slapped him on the ass.

“As if,” she scoffed. “Here, look.”

As with the others, her symbol was positioned in the center, the stylized Schnee snowflake intricately inked into his flesh. Around it were warped faces in the vague shape of people, monstrous visages. On the left, a towering knight with a large greatsword brandished across its front, and on the right, a cracked mirror. Each shard had a different image within, fractured; Jaune thought he could make out her family in one of them, and the face of Nicholas Schnee in another, but the rest was unknown to him.

Just as Blake's and Nora's were undoubtedly symbolic of their past experiences, so was this.

It blended seamlessly with those around it.

"You are running out of room," she said shrewdly. "If Yang ends up here," she tapped where his skin was raised slightly with Yang's burning heart. "Then most of your back will be taken."

She was correct. Maybe another could fit at the very bottom, but then what would happen next? Wait a minute...

"Weiss, I'm not... *planning* on having more."

She rolled her eyes. "I'm sure you weren't planning on any of this but here we are."

She wasn't wrong.

"It's only a matter of time before Yang makes her final strike," Weiss clucked her tongue. "Honestly. This is so ridiculous. How'd I end up in this mess?"

"Weiss..."

She scoffed. "Don't. It's fine. I can't say I'm... enthusiastic about it, but I understand what I've stepped into. My eyes are wide open, Jaune," her expression softened. "That does not make what I feel for you any less true. I love you."

Her words touched his heart. "And I love you."

"And them," she added.

He nodded. "Yes – and them."

"Maybe if you were anyone else but you, I would have doubts," she expressed earnestly. "But you are you, and I trust you, Jaune. More than anyone else. I trust you with my life, my feelings, my very soul."

"And I trust you in return," he rolled over and seized her by the hips, dragging her atop him. She squealed, and he silenced it with a kiss. "You are the best thing that has ever happened to me, Weiss. You, Nora, Blake – I know this isn't normal, or what any of us expected... but it's real to me, and I would do anything to defend it."

She kissed him back, the pair of them making out lazily, not with lust or desire fueling them. No, this was nothing but pure affection, adoration, love.

"So would I," she said, their lips parting, her forehead resting against his. "I... I care for them. Blake is... my best friend," she admitted shyly. "My best friend that isn't you, that is. And Nora... god, I know it's weird but sometimes I feel like she is my sister. My long lost, completely unrelated to me, crazy sister... who annoys me more than anyone else, but I can never fault her for it, not for long, and she drives me up the wall, yet I only love her more for it... she never viewed me as anything other than Weiss. You and her... saw me as just another girl, even if at the time, it may have not sat well with me. When I still clung to the shroud I'd crafted for myself..."

She sagged against him, resting her cheek on his chest, listening to his heartbeat.

"I may get jealous," she told him. "I'm not good at sharing. But I'll share you with them. Because I know it doesn't lessen how you feel about me, how important you are to me, and how important I am to you."

They lay there for some time, basking in the feeling of their bodies pressed together. Her soft, gentle breath tickled his chest, her warmth seeping deep into his bones. Jaune felt as if he were about to drift off to sleep again, comforted by her soft skin and gentle curves.

"I need to go before someone discovers me here," she murmured lazily. It was clear she didn't want to, peeling away from him with great reluctance. "Klein will fetch me discreetly, and then... I'll send a car to come pick you up."

"Sounds like a plan," he watched as she slipped from the bed, her graceful movements stilted slightly by a small limp. He couldn't get enough of watching the artwork that was her body, lithe muscle stretching as she gathered her clothes and started pulling them on. "We should invite Pyrrha to hang out with us. Your brother also wanted to ride horses together."

Weiss shot him a look over her shoulder, eyebrow arched. "Really now?"

"It's been awhile since I've ridden, I miss it," he said.

She rolled her eyes, though her lips were pulled into a smile. "Then we'll go riding," she paused. "Or maybe I will simply watch. I don't think getting in a saddle right now will benefit me."

Jaune grinned as he pulled upon his semblance, remembering what happened with Nora. Weiss let out a gasp as power flooded her body, aura surging as the enhanced amplification rushed through her. She staggered, catching herself with a hand against the bed, her eyes wide.

“What...?” her voice trembled, a healthy flush coating her cheeks. “Jaune!”

“Do you feel better?” he asked.

After a moment, she nodded.

“The ache has abated,” she stared at her hand in wonder, skin shrouded in light blue. “I feel... incredible. Like I could fight every Grimm on the planet and win.”

She straightened, dressed in nothing more than her tights, her bare breasts shaking as she waved her arms around quickly, the air blurring at the speed in which she moved.

“This is amazing, it’s so much more potent,” she shot him a look of wonder. “This is how you defeated that Grimm.”

Jaune nodded. “This is it.”

“No wonder you two defeated it. I...” she trailed off, thinking. Then before he could react, she crouched, placing her hands on the floor.

“Weiss?”

A massive white glyph appeared, the light blinding. Jaune shielded his eyes, blinking rapidly, and when the light lessened, he looked.

What he saw left him gaping.

A large knight in white shining armor stood beside her, towering over her by several feet. The head nearly touched the ceiling, and held before him in a two-handed grasp was a massive greatsword, the point aimed towards the floor. It was the same knight that was inked onto his back, radiating pure aura.

“Woah,” he muttered.

Weiss beamed happily.

“I did it!” she cheered, and wasn’t she a sight? Shirtless, her small tits bared for the world to see, she pumped her arm up and down. “My first summon!”

So this was the vaunted summoning technique of the Schnee family semblance. Just by looking at it, Jaune knew it was powerful. One swing of that sword would be enough to cleave through several Grimm without fail, its armor plating thick and durable.

So much for training to help her unlock it. All it had taken was his enhanced semblance and there it was, effortlessly called forth.

Weiss stared up at it in satisfaction.



“This was my most challenging enemy,” she said, her voice filled with joy. “This armor was all that stood between me and my freedom. The final test my father pitted against me, in an effort to see me fail.”

Her smile then turned feral, a look Jaune had never seen on her face before.

“Now it is at *my* command. I have made it my own strength. This knight will slay my foes and defend me with its life, if need be. A potent weapon.”

Then with a wave of her hand, it evaporated into motes of light.

“Thank you,” she said. “Thank you, Jaune. For everything.”

For being my friend. For believing in me. For standing up for me. For not giving up on me.

For loving me.

Jaune gazed at her with tender eyes. “You’re welcome, Weiss.”

She left once Klein arrived, sneaking away under the cover of her blue cloak. Jaune showered, washing away the evidence of their nightly activities. The red welts she left behind on his skin had already vanished when he’d activated his semblance, leaving his skin blemish free. He dried off and brushed his teeth before picking out a practical outfit for riding. Some sturdy black trousers and a nice cream colored polo shirt.

His stomach then reminded him that he was ridiculously starving.

He had used up a lot of energy the previous night.

Jaune called room service and had them bring him something. What arrived was a healthy stack of blueberry pancakes, caramelized banana with a maple syrup dispenser, a side of butter, and a bowl of freshly diced fruit; honeydew, cantaloupe, strawberries, mango, grapes and pineapple. A jug of ice water accompanied it.

“Thank you,” he said as a young woman wheeled the food in on a trolley.

She bowed. “No problem, sir. Cleaners will be here shortly, unless you do not wish to be disturbed?”

“No, send them in,” he said, thinking of the bedroom. The sheets and blanket would need changing, his cheeks heating up slightly. There would be no mistaking what had occurred in that room.

“Certainly, sir. Enjoy your meal.”

The pancakes were still nice and warm, the butter melting quickly as he applied it before giving the stack a healthy drizzle of maple syrup. He groaned as he dug in, the pancakes soft and fluffy, the blueberry flavor mixing nicely with the sweet syrup. The banana melted in his mouth, soft and sweet with a strong flavor of its own. He devoured the stack as only a hungry teenage boy could, and then emptied the bowl of fruit in a similar manner.

Sipping at his water, he sat by the window and admired the city skyline in the morning light. Such an alien view, for someone like Jaune who grew up surrounded by green fields and thick forests. While he'd gotten used to city life a little bit since attending Beacon, it would always be somewhat strange to him.

His scroll dinged, and when he checked the message, he saw that it was from Weiss.

*Weiss Schnee: A car will be waiting for you downstairs.*

Jaune grabbed one of his jackets and shrugged it on, knowing that the temperature outside was likely to be low. That thought was vindicated as he stepped out of the hotel, his breath immediately turning to mist. There were several people hanging around, some with cameras, but Jaune paid them no mind. The skin of his face stung as he approached the vehicle, the familiar driver stepping out to open the door for him.

"Thanks," he said, slipping inside, and coming face-to-face with Pyrrha Nikos. Jaune heard a sudden clamoring behind him before the door slammed shut.

Jaune blinked, startled, Pyrrha smirking.

"Hello," she said cheerily.

"Pyrrha," he replied after a moment. "Good morning."

"Good morning," she returned.

Dressed in a crimson red long sleeved sweater dress with a dark belt around her waist, her long, toned legs were clad in black thermal tights, clinging to her like a second skin. Brown boots completed the simple yet alluring outfit, her long hair pulled up into a bun instead of her usual ponytail.

"I wasn't expecting you," he managed, meeting her eyes. "I mean – here, in the car. I knew Weiss had invited you."

Pyrrrha giggled. "We are staying at the same hotel, so it didn't make any sense to send two cars."

Those people with the cameras were snapping pictures furiously, crowding around the vehicle. The driver forced his way in and started the car, pulling out carefully so he didn't run anyone over.

"Uh..." he said dumbly, watching the paparazzi fade into the distance as he glanced out the back window. "Were they waiting for me?"

"Well – a little of both," she said, shaking her head. "I tried, but once they get an idea in their head, things rarely dissuade them."

She tossed something in his lap and he looked down.

The title read '*Secret New Boo? Pyrrha Nikos seen at charity event with unknown man!*'

There was a picture of them embracing outside of the opera house.

“Oh,” he said lightly.

A second tabloid was tossed in his lap, this one with a three way picture edited together for dramatic effect. On the left was Pyrrha, and on the right was Weiss on stage, the angel wings spreading out behind her. In the middle was Jaune, snapped at some point the previous night.

It read ‘*Potential Love Triangle? Mystery man seen with two of Remnant’s most eligible bachelorettes!*’

“...This isn’t good.”

He paged through both tabloids, cringing as he read the suggestive content. There were plenty more pictures of the three of them, taken at various times throughout the night. Particularly their time dancing together. Without context, Jaune couldn’t deny that they appeared as lovers.

“Again, I’m sorry,” Pyrrha sighed. “Anything to make a quick lien, they’ll do it.”

“This isn’t your fault,” he told her. “From the looks of this, they were already going to write something about me and Weiss, this just gave them a juicier story.”

He wondered if Weiss had seen these yet?

But perhaps worse; had her *father* seen it?

This could have consequences beyond Jaune being uncomfortable.

“Damn it,” he muttered.

They’d been doing so well. If he forbade Weiss from returning to Beacon over this, then Jaune would never forgive himself. He was here in Atlas to support her, and he might very well be the thing that brings her down instead.

His mood soured.

“Jaune?”

A soft hand touched his shoulder.

“Jaune, what’s wrong?”

He shook his head. “I’m just worried about Weiss. Her father is... well...”

Jaune wasn’t sure how much he should say. It wasn’t the type of thing you shared, even with friends. Not without permission. But Pyrrha seemed to understand well enough, her brow furrowing.

“Oh,” she said.

When they arrived at Schnee Manor, there were a few photographers hanging around outside but their security forces had them well under control. The tinted windows protected them, yet they still snapped shots of the car as they passed through.

Weiss was waiting for them as they pulled up, though her happy expression mellowed when she saw their expressions.

“What?” she asked. “What is it?”

Jaune showed her the tabloids. Weiss took one look at them, scoffed, rolled her eyes, and handed them to Klein who materialized beside her without them noticing.

“Don’t pay any attention to it,” she said, unconcerned. “It was bound to happen.”

“This won’t... make things difficult with your father?” he asked lightly, lowering his voice.

“Things are always difficult with him,” she sniffed. “This isn’t the first time they’ve run stories about my family, and it is hardly the worst they’ve come up with. It will be ignored.”

Weiss was remarkably calm which helped to settle his nerves.

“Pyrrha,” Weiss greeted warmly, opening her arms. The pair hugged, and Jaune took the moment to admire them both. Weiss was wearing a woollen turtle neck, colored powder blue,

and a pair of black riding pants, and matching boots. Her hair was no longer styled in those interlocking braids, restored to her usual sidetail. "Thank you for coming."

"Of course," Pyrrha said, giving Weiss one final squeeze before stepping back. She looked up at Weiss' home, whistling. "This place is massive."

"Come – my brother is pretending to not care, but he is... surprisingly excited to see you," Weiss aimed this at Jaune, frowning slightly. "It is most peculiar. I've never seen him like this. When I mentioned you were coming by to ride horses, he almost looked... happy."

The walk to the stables took them through the glasshouse where a sea of flowers awaited them. The air in there was humid, damp, the soil rich and black in color. The path was laid with stone, leading towards an antique iron wrought table and chairs, the metal painted white. They passed by it and exited the back, the cold air hitting them as they made their way down a slight slope.

Whitley was waiting for them by the stables, dressed in a warm jacket and suitable trousers, and he wasn't alone. Willow Schnee waved as they approached, her eyes fond.

"Mother," Weiss greeted in surprise. "What are you doing here?"

"I thought I'd watch my children make friends," she said happily. Whitley scoffed, crossing his arms.

"We are simply riding horses together, mother. That doesn't make us friends."

Willow smirked slyly. "Of course, Whitley. How silly of me."



He scowled, hearing the doubt in her voice. His eyes darted to Jaune, then landed on Pyrrha, widening slightly before he hastily looked away.

“Yes, well – through here,” he gestured, clearing his throat. “Will you also be riding with us, sister?”

“I think I shall,” Weiss replied snootily. “Pyrrha? We have more than enough horses, will you be joining us?”

“Um, uh – I, well – I think I’ll just watch?”

It wasn’t often that he saw panic cross Pyrrha’s face, but that was exactly what he was seeing now. Weiss shot her a look of confusion while Willow gave Pyrrha a knowing look.

“Have you never ridden before, dear?”

Pyrrha ducked her head, blushing cutely. “N-No, ma’am. I’ve never even seen a horse in person.”

What?

“I mean, I’ve seen them from afar,” she corrected quickly when she spotted his shocked look. “But I’ve never seen one up close before.”

"I... I can teach you, if you want!"

Weiss stared at her brother, mouth dropping open. He'd been the one to offer, his ears turning bright red, and Willow began snickering, covering her mouth with a hand.

"I – I wouldn't want to waste your time," Pyrrha attempted to turn down.

"Nonsense. It wouldn't be a waste of time at all!"

What was going on here?

Weiss looked like she was about to have a stroke, glancing between them rapidly, her head moving on a swivel.

Pyrrha floundered for an excuse.

"I might be too heavy!"

Jaune snorted, and then backed up as her emerald green eyes swung around to glare at him furiously. He held up his hands.

"Doubtful. There is no way you exceed their recommended limits!"

In the end, Pyrrha gave in. As they moved further into the stables, Jaune was hit with a familiar scent. Perhaps to most, it wouldn't be a pleasing smell. Most would find it off putting, in truth. It was the scent of horse and dung, damp hay, and mud. To Jaune, it was nostalgic, and his mind went back to the last time he rode.

The day before he'd left for Beacon.

He'd taken one of the horses out and rode with a couple of his sisters. They were all skilled riders, and they often raced their steeds, betting things like their chores. Jaune won more often than not, but not always. Aquamarine and Cyan – the twins – were typically the ones that beat him, when he did lose. Those girls were a natural in the saddle.

That had been a good day – but also tinged with sadness because of his impending departure. They'd spent the whole afternoon together in the fields, racing and jumping, their long blonde hair streaming in the air behind them as they reached a full gallop.

He missed them. All of them. His mother and father, and all seven of his sisters, no matter how much they drove him insane.

The scent of horse reminded him of them especially. Even Saphron, who was the least skilled on horseback.

"This is Duchess," Whitley introduced them to a handsome Mistralian Draught. It was pitch black, its mane braided and coat brushed with a healthy shine. It watched them approach with curious eyes. "She's a mare – and my horse."

They had a number of different breeds, each of them well cared for and kept in stalls. Some were munching away, their heads buried in their feed bags, while the others watched them carefully, a few nickering playfully.

Pyrrha looked in awe, her eyes wide as she hesitated.

“Go on,” Jaune urged, nudging her. It was nice to see her out of her element.

“You must show confidence when dealing with horses,” Whitley lectured. “They are intelligent creatures, and know when you are scared. They won’t respect a scared rider, they’ll feel it in their body.”

Pyrrha reached out a hand to Duchess. The horse observed her quietly for a moment before lowering her head slightly, allowing Pyrrha to stroke the bridge of her nose. Pyrrha’s face lit up happily as she petted the horse, a girlish joy in her expression.

“I’ll have some of the stable hands get the horses ready,” Willow said, wandering away to find someone. When she returned, a group of boys carried four saddles and blankets, along with bridles.

“Do you have a horse, Weiss?” Jaune asked and she nodded, leading him over to a pure white mare. Where Duchess was night given flesh, this horse looked like freshly fallen snow.

“This is Snow Drift,” Weiss smiled, offering a hand. Snow Drift pressed her nose into Weiss’ palm, glad to see her. “Do you see a horse you’d like to ride?”

Jaune looked around, and quickly found one that reminded him of his filly from back home. Chestnut brown, this horse watched him carefully – not particularly friendly, but not hostile, either. It was sizing him up, and in turn, he returned the favor.

She was a Valean Warmblood, the same breed as his horse back on the farm, though a little smaller in size. He offered a hand, waiting – and seconds passed by until she shuffled forward, sniffing at his palm.

Jaune smiled.

“Her name is Autumn,” Weiss said, joining him. “She can be temperamental.”

“Then it looks like I’ve got my work cut out for me.”

The next half hour was spent helping Pyrrha grow comfortable enough astride her horse. She’d picked out a beautiful steed with a burnished copper coat, an adult gelding that Willow said had a gentle temperament, a good match for a novice. The horse was just as she said, patient as Pyrrha grew accustomed to sitting on its back, her body loosening as she was led around the stables slowly.

“Will you be coming with us, Mrs. Schnee?” Jaune asked.

“Heavens no,” she waved him off, her eyes watching Whitley and Weiss as they bickered, side by side on their own horses. “I’ve not ridden in over a decade. You children have your fun.”

Swinging up onto Autumn, Jaune immediately felt at home. He felt her powerful muscles roil beneath him, strung taut, as if wanting to bolt at a moment’s notice but he calmed her with a few

pats on the neck, speaking softly in a soothing tone, "There there, not yet. Soon. We'll run soon."

When Pyrrha was comfortable enough, they began their journey out into the frost laden fields behind Schnee Manor. Towering pines were colored white, snow clinging to branches, steam rising from the bodies of their mounts. The path was well graveled here, each step crunching against stone.

Jaune pulled up beside Pyrrha, grinning. "How does it feel?"

Though she was more confident after being led around the stables, he could see the barely restrained panic buried in her eyes. She was out of her comfort zone.

"You're enjoying this, aren't you?" she accused, her brow furrowing.

"Maybe just a little bit," he admitted, only grinning harder as she glared at him. "It isn't often I get to see you struggle. It's a novel experience."

"Har har, I'm glad I'm so entertaining."

His grin turned into a full blown laugh. "Now you're being sarcastic. We need to make you uncomfortable more often."

She scowled. "Just you wait. When we're back at Beacon, I'll show you uncomfortable."

For some reason, teasing Pyrrha was incredibly fun. Probably because she always carried herself with such self assurance and calm. The only time she hadn't was when misunderstanding settled uneasily between them, yet she'd shielded herself in cold restraint. This was more natural.

In many ways, she reminded him of Weiss. They shared many similarities, and so perhaps that was why getting a rise out of both girls felt so good. Pyrrha was a harder nut to crack, though. Weiss could be poised, though it was easy enough to find her weak spot and gain a reaction. Pyrrha was often like a wall, no cracks to be found.

No weakness to exploit.

Her being willing to show this side of herself meant that she was beginning to open up to them, and considered them safe. Friends. Trustworthy.

He didn't ever want to betray that trust. Jaune remembered the story she told him, the entire reason she'd harbored doubts about him. He would never be like that person.

Whitley joined Pyrrha, his expression shifting between arrogant and shy as he struck up a conversation with her. Jaune trotted ahead to join Weiss.

"My brother has lost his mind," Weiss said in disbelief, glancing over her shoulder at him. Pyrrha said something that made Whitley laugh. An actual, real laugh, and Weiss shook her head, as if she couldn't believe it. "He is smitten."

Jaune blinked.

"You mean...?"

Weiss nodded. "As unfathomable as it seems, my little brother has a crush."

Jaune watched them, and he could see it. He couldn't blame him. Pyrrha was gorgeous and kind, exuding a warmth that was difficult to ignore when she viewed you as a potential friend. Whitley melted like a pile of snow beneath a spring day sun, and it was quite the sight to see.

"I never thought I'd see the day," Weiss looked away, troubled. "He has been so caught up in emulating father, I must confess that I began to associate one with the other."

"He is his own person," Jaune said, though he understood the sentiment. "But a son looks up to their father. I know that from experience."

Weiss turned to regard him. "Even when that father is like mine?"

Jaune shrugged. "Who else does he have as a role model?"

Her face grew pinched.

"Not all parents are good influences," Jaune said quietly. "But they remain influences nonetheless. Maybe Whitley just needs more good role models around."

Weiss was silent for some time, thinking over things. Then, "We've left him alone here. Winter and I..."



Jaune reached out and placed a hand on her shoulder, squeezing, offering comfort.

“You have your life to live, and it has taken you far away – but you’re right. He may feel abandoned. Though that doesn’t mean you can’t communicate,” he offered her a smile. “Modern technology is amazing, isn’t it?”

It gave Weiss something to think about.

Maybe he was being naive, but... Whitley didn’t appear to be a bad person. Not at heart. He carried with him that familiar snootiness that Weiss shrouded herself in, when she’d first arrived at Beacon, but it was only surface level. Once they’d gotten to know Weiss, it was clear that she was more than her icy facade. There was a warm, loving girl beneath – and with Whitley, there might be more of the same.

“Whitley,” he suddenly called out. Weiss’ brother perked up. “Do you wish to race?”

Whitley stared at him for a moment before an arrogant expression crossed his face. “A race? Awfully sure of yourself, aren’t you?”

Jaune shot him a cocky smirk in return, baiting him. “I won’t let some rich boy from Atlas beat me.”

That did the trick, Whitley quickly leading his horse over while Weiss dropped back to Pyrrha, her face torn between worry and amusement.

Whitley sniffed when they were side by side. "I'll show you what this *rich boy* can do."

"Weiss, count us down," Jaune called back.

"What am I? Your servant?" she clucked her tongue. "Fine. Three. Two. One. Go!"

They both exploded into a gallop, and he felt his filly loosen up as she was finally let loose. Cold air whipped at his face as he lowered his body, holding the reins steadily as they picked up speed. Whitley was right beside him, Duchess appearing like a streak of midnight against the snow laden ground.

For a moment, Jaune felt as if he were home.