

Hearing how other humans viewed them beyond the Arc family and even the townsfolk of Hamersley was a very sobering experience. Of course, she *knew* – but hearing it from their own mouths was something else. Blake withdrew and never spoke for the rest of the night unless addressed directly, her mind filled with the horrible words of those women.

In an attempt at cheering her up, Jaune ended up buying her an entire wardrobe of clothes but it did little to improve her mood.

As angry as she felt at times, Blake understood that she was lucky. She might have been property, and *that woman* scared the hell out of her, but growing up, she'd been treated – and it galled her to admit it – decently. As decently as a slave could be treated. She had food. She had shelter. And the Arc family never physically abused her. They never... *touched her* inappropriately.

She couldn't say the same for other faunus girls. There was no telling what sort of perverted, disgusting acts had been committed against girls her age, or younger, or women like her mother...

Blake got little sleep that night.

It left her feeling irritable.

"Blake?" her mother asked when she came down for breakfast, bags under her eyes.

"I'm fine," she replied automatically before she could even press further.

"You don't look fine," Kali said softly.

“Well, I *am*,” Blake snapped.

The small table in the kitchen was already set.

Though she was in a foul mood, seeing the traditional Mistral breakfast set of grilled fish, white rice, miso soup and rolled omelet did help to take a little of the edge off. Sitting down at the table, she muttered, “Thanks for the meal,” before grabbing the pair of chopsticks her mother had set out and digging in.

After a few mouthfuls, she realized that they were alone.

“Where’s Jaune?” she asked, looking around, as if expecting him to leap out of a corner.

“Jogging,” Kali answered, daintily nibbling at her fish. “He should be back any moment now.”

As if summoned by their conversation, Blake heard the front door open and close. A few seconds later, Jaune entered the kitchen, the loose tank top he was wearing plastered to his skin with sweat. Blake stared at him for a moment before looking away, glaring at the table.

“Morning,” he greeted, approaching the table. “Oh, this looks good.”

“Good morning, Jaune,” Kali said warmly. “Have a seat.”

Blake remained silent.

Jaune pulled out the chair beside her and sat down, and Blake was suddenly hit with a wave of pure musk. She almost choked on her rice, the scent of his sweat powerful but not unpleasant. When people spoke of body odor, they usually meant it as a bad thing. Something to be avoided. Something to cover up. And while Jaune desperately needed a shower, this was the scent of a man hard at work to improve himself.

It was a primal smell.

Before soap and deodorant, perfume and cologne, this was it.

It tickled something down deep inside her, and much to her mortification, she felt her cheeks flush lightly as her body responded to it.

Jaune started on his meal, collecting a nice portion of the fish and rice, shoveling it into his mouth. Kali giggled as he hummed in approval and went for more.

"I'm glad you enjoy it."

"It's amazing," he said around a mouthful, swallowing quickly. "It's always amazing. Thank you, Kali."

"You're welcome, Jaune."

It was distracting, having him sit so close to her when he smelt like *that*. Though he was covered in sweat, it was a clean smell. There was no dirt or grime, just pure, concentrated *Jaune*. Blake grit her teeth, hand tightening around her chopsticks before she calmed down, breathing through her mouth. If she breathed like that, she couldn't smell him.

"You must be thirsty," Kali said after a bout of silence. "Would you like a drink?"

Jaune nodded. "Yes, please. Thank you."

Kali hopped up and fetched a pitcher from the refrigerator, and three glasses. Setting everything down on the table, Jaune hurriedly poured himself a glass before knocking it back in a single gulp.

"That hit the spot," he sighed, pouring himself another glass.

"Where did you go this morning?" her mother asked, pouring a glass of her own.

"There is another park, a couple of miles down the road from here. I think some of the inner-city schools play their sports there, they have a really nice set up for a variety of different sports. Less trees than the one across the street. Once I found it, I just did laps around the oval. It beats running on the sidewalk or road."

"You'll have to show me sometime."

Jaune grinned. "I will. I think you'll like it."

He turned to her, then, “I see you’re wearing some of the new clothes.”

Her mom was still in the typical maid uniform but she’d picked something from the purchases Jaune had made. While the clothes didn’t make her feel any better about what she’d overheard, Blake did appreciate that she didn’t have to walk around, shrouded in the vestments of her captivity at all times.

“I am,” she replied shortly, sipping at her miso soup.

“They look good on you,” he said.

“I didn’t ask,” she snapped – or tried. Instead, it came out much weaker than intended. Probably because her stomach had flipped right after his words, performing a somersault that left her feeling a little queasy.

It was just a dress fashioned from denim. They looked a little like overalls but in dress form, for girls. Blake had thrown it over the top of a long sleeved black shirt. It left her legs bare so she’d covered up with a pair of dark thigh-highs, black fading into purple near the top.

It was cute – but she didn’t need him saying that.

She didn’t wear it for him! She wasn’t what those awful women accused her of being.

Blake wanted to slap that smile off his face, looking pleased with himself. As if he had accomplished something. She wanted to bring him back down to Remnant.

*"It isn't often we have someone bring their pets with them,"* she said, mimicking the voice of the woman from the store. *"Do you like to dress them up?"*

Jaune looked startled, staring at her. Even her mother was staring at her.

*"A lot of guys like to make them pretty,"* her voice rose angrily. *"Something to look at, I guess? Not that you have to try very hard. They're both very high quality, they must have cost a fortune."*

"Blake..."

"Is that what you are trying to do? Make us *pretty*?"

His lost expression only made her madder.

"You just want to look at us, at our bodies, don't you?" she asked scathingly. "We're nothing but *meat* to you. Just a pair of tits and ass!"

"Blake," Kali barked, slamming her hands on the table hard enough to rattle the dishes. Blake jumped, surprised by the sudden bang. "That's enough!"

Blake shot up, her chair skidding across the floor.

"I'm not hungry," she said before storming out of the room, feeling out of control. Rushing up the stairs, she slammed the door to her room and flung herself on the bed, burying her face against her pillows.

She wanted to scream and so she did. She flailed and hit the bed, again and again, kicking it, slamming her fists on the mattress, screaming until she had no breath left to give voice.

Blake hated feeling this way. Angry.

But she couldn't help it.

It wasn't just the words of those *bitches* – no, it was how he smelt, and what it did to her. It brought back long repressed memories, ones she would rather stay buried.

It was shortly after Jaune's fifteen birthday, the night he'd given her the cake. Blake couldn't remember exactly what she'd been doing but she'd been outside, and it had been a hot day. One of the hottest days she could remember ever experiencing. In the middle of her chores, she'd spotted Jaune in the midst of his own work, splitting dried firewood for the winter.

Even without the blazing sun, he'd have been drenched in sweat.

Blake hadn't meant to stare but she couldn't help it. Jaune was... *attractive*. As much as she wanted to deny it, it was the truth. His entire family were attractive. All of his sisters were great beauties, his father was handsome and even *that woman* was ridiculously good looking. So of course Jaune inherited those looks.

His body was lean and strong from working on the farm, muscles hard and compact. Every time he swung his axe, his shoulders and arms would flex, and Blake found herself entranced.

Puberty had hit her hard, and watching an attractive boy engage in physical work was more than enough to set her off.

She hated it – but it was a fact of life, and something she needed to live with.

What happened next was what she so desperately tried to forget.

It was wrong of her. Disgusting. Filthy.

After he finished his work, Jaune had returned to the house to shower. Without thinking, Blake had followed. Stripping off his tank top, Blake had caught sight of his muscled back as he disappeared into the bathroom. The scent of his sweat had filled the hallway, and it was intoxicating.

Just as it had been this morning.

Distracting.

It made her stomach flip, and *other things* burn, flood with heat. Jaune had showered and returned to his room afterwards, and Blake, in a bout of madness, slipped into the bathroom and found his sweaty tank top in the laundry hamper.

She shouldn't have taken it.

Blake felt her body respond to the memory, squirming as her crotch heated up. Clamping her thighs together, she pressed her face into the pillows harder, trying to banish it from her mind. She was pissed off, damn it – *why* was she thinking about this now? But once it started, it wouldn't stop.

She'd returned to her room. Her mother was out, completing her daily chores – *exactly what she should have been doing* – but Blake had felt out of control, desperate. Hands shaking, she'd pressed his damp, sweaty tank top to her face and *inhaled*, and it had set her young body alight.

She'd masturbated before. It was difficult with so many people in the house, and getting caught by the Arc's would result in more than just embarrassment. *That woman* would make it as horrible as possible, so Blake only ever did it in the shower. Quick and brutal, and unsatisfying, but it was the only way.

This time was different. This time it was slow and sensual, and fulfilling in a way that she'd never experienced before. Heart pounding in her chest, she'd drowned herself in his scent and tormented her leaking pussy until she experienced the strongest orgasm of her life. Her body had been wracked with spasms, her fingers clapping wetly against her vulva as she finger fucked herself in a lustful frenzy.

It had felt so good she'd squirt all over their shared bed, and she'd been forced to change the blanket and sheets. Her broken moans had been muffled by his top, but she'd been extremely lucky she hadn't been caught.

Afterwards, she'd felt pathetic, disgusting, and angry. She'd let her body get the best of her, her primal desires, as if she were some type of *animal*. The very thing humans accused faunus of being. She had proven them *right*.

Blake had returned his top to the hamper and cleaned herself off, vowing never to repeat such a humiliating, disappointing scene. She would banish it from her mind forever, and never dwell on it – and she'd managed to do that, until now.

As if released from a cage, her lust was a wild beast. It ravaged her from within, her neglected pussy *clenching*, stealing her breath away. Blake grit her teeth, body tense, trying to will her desire down, force it back, but it was impossible.

Her tummy roiled with repressed want, begging for her to sate it.

She hated it. *She hated it.*

But she couldn't fight it.

She hadn't touched herself since that day. Scared that these memories would return in the heat of the moment, the pleasure sparking their return. Now that they were back, she was utterly open to them, a victim of her own mind. Rolling her waist, it made her tender insides quiver.

"*Fuck,*" she hissed.

Her body was driving her mad.

Blake gave in.

Carefully, she rolled up her dress until it was bunched around her waist, exposing her panties. They were a simple white cotton pair, nothing special, clinging to her dampening vulva as her arousal spiked. Reaching down between the bed and her body, her fingers curled up as she spread her knees, lifting her hips until her ass was pointed at the ceiling, her chest and face still against the bed.

Her body shivered as her fingers touched lightly upon her mons.

Blake rubbed her pussy gently through the material of her underwear, sighing as soft waves of pleasure rolled through her lower body. She felt so *hot*, her skin itching everywhere, her nipples tightening as they hardened, pinpricks of sensation. Cupping her hot core, she felt where she was hottest, her entrance blistering as it leaked, staining her panties, drenching them in her lust.

Damn him. Damn him to hell!

Why hadn't he *defended her* from those vile women? Why hadn't he told them to *shut the fuck up*, they didn't know what they were talking about, to take their bigoted, bullshit views elsewhere? He'd just let them talk about her that way, about her mother that way, and offered only weak excuses.

Wasn't he meant to *protect her*?

How could he protect her if he couldn't even protest their hurtful words better?

Blake bit her lip as she stroked her plump pussy, hips rolling as she humped her hand. Finding her clit, she framed it with two fingers, rubbing the tender skin around it, and cried out softly, the soft waves of pleasure turning into sparks, lancing up her spine.

*Fuck*, it had been so long since she'd felt this. Years. Her insides trembled, spasming, her pussy gushing, and Blake *smelt* her own musk fill the room.

*What was wrong with her?*

She should stop and forget about it, everything, but her hand had other ideas. Giving her sensitive clitoris one final swipe, she *peeled* the sodden material of her panties aside, exposing her pussy to the air.

It felt better, skin on skin contact. Her outer labia were swollen, fat with blood, and she squeezed them together, her pussy plump with arousal. Moving upwards – or downwards, from her position – her fingers found her raven carpet, the thick curls damp with her sweat and growing arousal.

Blake had barely started and she already felt like she was about to crack in half.

Gathering her arousal on her fingers, wetting them, she began circling her clit, her sighs and cries of pleasure growing, muffled by the pillows. Feeling short of breath, she had to turn her face to the side, but only so far.

Someone might hear her otherwise.

Her pussy felt so tender, from years of disuse. Deep in her tummy, something *pulsed* – dark and heady, it made her dizzy, her eyes rolling as she lightly pinched the hood of her clit, giving it a tug. Pleasure rushed through her, gathering in her belly, a knot of pressure building just below her belly button, tightening with every movement she made.

She was wet. Really wet. Her entrance was practically gushing, her velvety essence dripping down over her hand, over her mons and drenching her pubic mound. Try as she might, her mind always returned to *him*. His strong, lean body, built over years of hard work. Those beautiful blue eyes that even now, looked at her with warmth and once upon a time, she used to get lost in. When the world was still *good* and she felt safe, and loved. His flaxen blond hair, once so soft to the touch.

Was it still soft like a cloud?

Blake began panted erratically as her pussy contracted powerfully, signalling the coming end. She focused entirely on her clitoris, the burning pleasure, the rush that pounded in her belly. Rubbing it in tight circles, she sobbed in bliss, rapture approaching.

She was going to cum.

She was going to cum *hard*.

The memory of his musky scent hit her, and she tensed, ready to tip over the edge.

Until someone knocked on the door.

Blake froze, her pounding heart leaping into her throat. She jerked, wrenching her hand away from her throbbing clit and spun over, hastily pulling down her dress. Hands shaking, breathing uneven, she turned away from the door, pressing her feet against the floor in an attempt at grounding herself.

“Blake?”

It was her mother.

“W-What?” she yelled, annoyed that she’d stuttered, that her voice felt so brittle and breathless.

“Can I come in?”

Her fists curled up on her lap.

“Yeah,” she said, perhaps stupidly. Her mind wasn’t exactly working correctly right now. “Come in.”

The door opened slowly, and she heard her mom enter.

There was a long period of silence and Blake couldn’t take it, turning her head to see what she was doing. Kali stood by the bed, her expression thoughtful – and for a wild, horrifying second, Blake wondered if she could *smell* what she’d just been doing.

*No. no, no, no!*

“Are you feeling okay?” her mother asked, voice filled with concern. If she knew what Blake had been doing before she knocked, she didn’t show it.

“No,” Blake said, looking away, back at the wall.

She heard Kali sigh.

“We need to talk.”

“So talk,” Blake grunted.

She’d been so close to orgasm, and her body was letting her know how angry it was at being denied. Her tummy throbbed with desire, her pussy spasming with every breath she took. Quivering, Blake bit her lip.

“You need to stop lashing out at Jaune.”

Of course. *Of fucking course.*

“It isn’t his fault.”

“This time, it *is* his fault,” Blake snapped, her heightened emotions making her voice come out sharper, angrier. “Those horrible, vile women at the store were saying awful things about us and he did nothing!”

Kali sighed, and it carried with it her disappointment.

“Blake... what do you expect him to do?”

“He could at least stand up for us,” Blake said angrily. “I know he can’t do anything about the rest of it, *I know* – but he could have told them to – to *fuck off*.”

There was a beat of silence, and then Blake felt the bed shift as her mom sat down.

“And what would that have accomplished?”

Blake turned to face her, incredulous. “What?”

Kali was calm, an open expression on her face. “What would that have accomplished? If Jaune told them to – *fuck off*,” the words sounded so foreign on her mother’s lips, Blake’s eyes widening in surprise. “What then?”

“Does there have to be a what then?”

Kali smiled sadly. “I thought you were smarter than this, Blake.”

Why did it feel like *she* had done something wrong? She hadn’t! She wasn’t in the wrong! The world was wrong! Humans were wrong! Jaune was wrong for not defending them enough!

“It would have felt good, I’m sure,” Kali admitted. “To hear Jaune stand up for us. I know I would have felt good to hear it. But that’s all it would be good for. What do you think happens, if Jaune goes around, defending us, dying on every hill? At best, we get thrown out of the store. Maybe banned. At worst? Rumors start, about the faunus loving human. Maybe it comes to nothing – or maybe it begins to make his life more difficult, and by extension, ours.”

"But that's *wrong*, mother," Blake implored.

"It is," Kali nodded. "It *is* wrong. But that is the way the world is right now. How it has been since..."

She saw it then. The hidden pain that her mother kept so well buried, deep down inside. It was but a flash, anger and sadness in her eyes, in her expression before it was gone. If Blake hadn't seen it herself, she would have doubted it existed.

"We went to war... and we lost," Kali closed her eyes, shaking her head. "And this is what resulted from our defeat. You were only a baby at the time, Blake... but things in Mistral, they were almost as bad as they could get. Faunus were starving, unable to get work, unable to provide for themselves or their family. I had to sell everything I owned, and I barely lasted a year. I had a choice to make. Flee – and hope that I could cross the dangerous wilds, and then the sea, and somehow make it to Menagerie... on the off chance that the rumors were true... or sign away our freedom, for a *chance* at giving you a life."

Blake stared at her mother in surprise. "What...?"

"It was this... or *death*. I picked life – for you, my daughter, the last piece of Ghira that existed in this world," she hadn't heard her mother say her father's name in years. Not since she was little. It hit her like a physical blow. "I was lucky. Amethyst Arc was the one that purchased us, and brought us home with her... it could have been a lot worse, Blake. A lot worse."

She knew that. She *knew* that, damn it. Hadn't she just been thinking that earlier?

"Hurting Jaune isn't going to make anything better," Kali reached out, placing a hand on her shoulder. "All it will do is turn him against you. Is that what you want?"

...No, it wasn't. She didn't want that at all.

But it was *so hard*.

Society saw them as inferior. Jaune reaped the benefits, even though he wasn't the reason they existed, while they suffered the consequences. Jaune was in front of her, the easy target, and Blake... she couldn't keep it buried inside to fester and rot away at her soul.

She just couldn't.

She was a person. Not a thing.

Blake deserved to be heard.

But throwing it in Jaune's face every time was unfair. She understood that.

"I don't," she said softly, feeling like she wanted to cry. Any of the heat of her earlier masturbation had faded, replaced by raw emotion. "I don't want that."

"Then you need to understand that Jaune can't fix everything. He does his best... but he isn't in a position to change the world, Blake."

“He could let us go...”

Kali’s face tightened.

“And what would we do?” she asked. “We would never be welcomed anywhere. We have nothing, Blake. No money. The clothes we own were purchased for us. Where would we go?”

It really was hopeless.

“We would be back at square one, only you wouldn’t be a baby any more – but a young woman. Do you know how young women with nothing make their way in the world?”

Blake had a good idea.

“I met a girl younger than you are now,” Kali sighed, her voice filled with sadness. “Her parents were gone, she was only fourteen – she would have signed up for the... voluntary servitude sooner, but she had a friend that refused to do it. She didn’t want to leave her behind, and so there was only one course of action... fourteen, and she was prostituting herself to men that found her age a bonus,” Blake felt sick hearing it. “She did this for a year... and then her friend went missing. With nothing holding her back, she signed up. That’s where I met her. Fifteen years old, having sold her body for a year – that’s what you would have to do to survive out there, Blake. There is nothing else.”

What could she say to that?

They sat in silence, her mother’s hand on her shoulder. Blake felt numb.

“I hope you understand,” Kali finally said.

Blake nodded weakly. “I do.”

Kali moved closer, and she was pulled into a hug. Blake sagged, allowing Kali to embrace her, and let herself sink into the warmth of a mother’s love.

“My beautiful little girl,” Kali sighed, tightening her hold. Blake nuzzled her face against her mother’s chest, wrapping her arms around her waist.

They stayed like that for some time.