**Chapter 96**

Blake had never been in a Human city under siege.

She… didn’t like it.

Not because of the Humans, she wasn’t *racist*, but because of how… finely *‘not fine’* everything was. From what they’d learned, the city had lost *three-fourths* of their Huntsmen and Huntresses, had *no* idea what was killing their people off in the woods and hills, and could be overwhelmed in *minutes,* but walking around town everything was just… *peachy.*

She was with her partner, because when Port went off to go talk to the Mayor, requesting that at *least* Jaune come with him, Pyrrha had volunteered to come along, and Blake was *about* to as well when Yang went, “Oh, *miss me* with that snoozefest!” and *left.* That’d meant the dark-haired Faunus was torn on what to do, but their leader had gestured to her to follow, which was *probably* what she was going to do anyways, but having the others be understanding *did* help.

Which meant the two of them were now walking the streets of Gabbro, which *seemed* fine, but there was very much a… *tension* in the air, and they were getting looks, as, as big as the city was, the pair of them *still* stood out, if only because *they* were armed, while almost *no one* else here was.

Like, if things were fine, sure, they probably wouldn’t need anything, just like the people back home didn’t, but what if the Grimm attacked?

But, but no one seemed to *care.*

They were going about, doing normal things, not just ignorant, but *willfully* ignorant to everything around them that they might not *like.*

It was, well, *it was in some ways just like Adam had said.*

That it wasn’t enough to *protest*, not enough to get their *attention*, because it wasn’t that they didn’t know, it was that they *didn’t want to know*, that, even if you *showed* them what was happening, they would just look away, so you had to *make them unable to do so*, to make the consequences of looking away ***so bad*** that they’d *have* to acknowledge what was *right in front of them.*

But, but people couldn’t learn if they were *dead*, and, and by being *everything* Humans accused them of being, they’d see them, yes, but they’d only see the Faunus because they were *being what they wanted the Faunus to be.*

And if people thought Faunus were *just* as scary as the Grimm the White Fang wore masks of, they could *never* get along.

Though, she’d always thought Adam had been *exaggerating*, as Patch was *nothing* like this, but, then again, maybe it *had* been, but, like Yang said, *nothing ever happened on Patch*, so they never *needed* to ignore their problems.

But… But even if these people *were* that bad, that didn’t mean that they should *die*, so it was up to her team to save them!

Still didn’t make their actions any less *unsettling*, though.

“Hey, Yang,” the secret Faunus questioned, her partner glancing over. “It *is* weird, how… *okay* everyone is, right?”

The blonde shrugged, “Eh, yeah, but who cares? Now tell me if you see a club. There’s gotta be one *somewhere*, and I *get* not goin’ to Vale, but I wanna get *down*, if you know what I mean!”

“But, aren’t you worried?” Blake tried again. “Maybe not about them, but, about the, uh, ‘big one’?”

Yang, however, just rolled her eyes. “Don’t worry, our ‘*Dear Leader’* can handle it. He did *before*, after all. He doesn’t need *our* help.”

And then there was the *other* reason that Blake had gone with her partner. Because this had been going on for *far* too long. She’d hoped, away from the others, her friend would open up. Instead, she’d just been walking in silence for half an hour.

“Okay,” the dark-haired girl sighed, “What *is* your problem with Jaune?”

“It’s nothing. He’s not important,” the other girl responded instantly.

Groaning at the doubletalk, Blake questioned, “Is he so great he’s ‘got this’, or is he so *not* important he isn’t worth talking about? Whatever happened between you two *clearly* isn’t ‘nothing’.”

The blonde stopped walking, turned, and fixed her partner with an annoyed glare. “I *said* it’s nothing.”

“Just ‘cause you *repeat it* doesn’t make it *true*, Yang!” the Faunus informed her.

For a second, the Huntresses’ eyes flashed red, before she turned away, striding back down the street, dismissively calling over her shoulder, “It’s not *your* problem.”

Following after, using her Semblance to get ahead of her partner, Blake wasn’t going to let it go, declaring, “It *becomes* my problem when you keep acting like Jaune, *our leader,* killed your dog or something!”

Yang frowned, shaking her head and pushing past the Faunus, “He, he didn’t do anything like *that.*”

Falling in step with the Human, Blake demanded, “Then what? Did he make Ruby cry? Cut your hair? Insult you when you… *you know?”* she questioned, aware the two of them were together, and while she’d never done *that* with Adam, *thank God,* but she could *smell* Pyrrha and Jaune all over each other sometimes. “What?” she pressed.

The brawler hesitated, grimacing, admitting, “No, none of *that.* It’s… He… It’s *stupid*. ***Leave it,***” she ordered, eyes flickering between their normal purple and the red of her Semblance, showing that there was *absolutely* something there.

“No, I *won’t!”* the dark-haired girl shot back, moving to step in front of her partner. “Whatever it is, it couldn’t’ve been *that* bad! You’re still on the team! He’s still nice, still cares, and the Yang Xiao-Long I *thought* I knew would either have punched his lights out, or, or *something!* I’ve always respected that about you, Yang, but now? Now you’re *running.”*

“Well, maybe *you* didn’t know me as much as *you* thought you did either!” the Huntress spat, hair smoldering, and, to the side, Blake could see a cop start to walk towards him, only to see their weapons, turn, and walk in the opposite direction. “It’s fucking *stupid*, okay? It’s stupid and it’s *my* fucking stupidity, and *no* one else’s, so *leave me alone!*”

Which, which is *what Blake had been doing*, but that *hadn’t helped.* “You’re *making* it everyone else’s problem when you keep avoiding him. For *weeks!”* the Faunus shot back, a thought occurring to her. “Heck, you’re avoiding him *now!* You only talk to him when you *have to*, but neither he nor Pyrrha think *they* did anything wrong, so, so if you’re, well, *scared* I need to know *why!”*

“I’m ***not*** scared,” Yang bit out.

“Of *what?*” Blake demanded, feeling frustrated, and helpless. “Unless he was someone like, I don’t know, *Cardin*, I can’t see him hurting you, even accidentally, and *not* trying to make it right, but *something clearly happened*, so *what was it!?”*

“He wouldn’t *Fucking* ***Rape*** *Me,* ***OKAY!?***”

*Everyone* on the street paused, turning to stare, before everyone very quickly *left,* a mother covering her kids ears while sending them both *very* dirty looks.

Blake’s brain, meanwhile, stumbled, tumbled, and fell flat, trying to process the sentence, which *was* a sentence, but it *couldn’t* be a sentence, and…

“I… what? No, I, let’s uh, let’s not do this here,” she commanded, grabbing Yang’s hand, and pulling her down an alley. “Come on.”

Her partner didn’t resist, grumbling, “I didn’t want to do this *at all*, but you just *had* to know!”

Blake almost expected a ‘Curiosity killed the cat’ joke, but, right, Yang was the only one on their team that *didn’t* know she was a Faunus, right. Either way, the next street over, there were a few people looking around, confused, but *not at them directly*, which, spotting a café, let the dark-haired Huntress drag her partner inside, and get a private booth in the back.

She *wanted* to interrogate her partner on *what the flipping hell she’d meant,* but waited, holding herself back, until she got a cup of tea, Yang a soda, paid for their drinks, and then asked the waitress not to bother them for a little bit.

Looking at the blonde, who was looking out the window and studiously *not at her,* Blake tried to restart the conversation from the train-crash it’d turned into. “So. Uh. The problem is that Jaune *wouldn’t…* wouldn’t *rape you?”* she questioned, whispering the last couple words.

Yang took a sip of her soda, muttering, “Said it was stupid.”

*That’s not stupid, that’s* ***insane***, the Faunus thought, but… but saying that wouldn’t help. “Why do you think he *would*… *you know?”* she tried instead.

With a half shrug, the Valian replied, still looking outside, “Well, he’s a *man*, isn’t he?”

*So is my father, but, no, not thinking of my parents having sex, only, only that he would* ***never*** *do that!* “So, my ex, Adam, *he* was a man. Are you saying that *he* should’ve, you know, done that to *me?”*

Yang flinched like she’d been slapped. “What? *No!* You *hated* that dick! And you *didn’t* want to fuck him!”

*But there were times I didn’t.* “Wait, so he only should’ve, should’ve *taken me*, if I’d *wanted* him to?” the Faunus checked, getting *more* confused, not less, as the conversation went on.

“Well, *yeah!*” the brawler responded. “If someone like, like *Cardin* had tried that, I’d’ve ripped his fuckin’ dick off!”

“That’s… That’s *not how rape works, Yang,*” Blake responded slowly. “You can’t *rape* the *willing.* That’s what *makes it rape.”*

But, instead of realizing what she said was *insane*, Yang just nodded. “Exactly! But *Jaune* had to get all up my ass about it! Stupid self-righteous *asshole!”*

The Faunus stared, took a sip of her tea, which was nice, but didn’t help, and tried again. “So, you *wanted* to do it with him?” she checked, the other girl nodding firmly. “Then how could you be mad that he, he ‘didn’t rape you’, if it *couldn’t* be rape?”

“It *wasn’t*, not really,” the brawler dismissed. “But *he* got all upset, when I just wanted him to *be a man!*”

“What does *being a man* have to do with *rape!?”* Blake finally questioned, *completely* lost.

“Well, if he was a guy, he should’ve gone for it!” her partner shot back, getting angrier again. “Who *cares* if I said no? I was *letting* him, wasn’t I?”

*“You said NO!?”* the dark-haired girl echoed, horrified, but she was starting to understand, which just made her *more horrified.* “Of *course* he’s not going to do anything, Yang, if you *told him not to!”*

Scowling, the brawler accused, “People say no in your books *all the time!”*

“They’re *fictional!”* Blake countered. “Those are *stories!* They aren’t *real!* Jaune, Jaune *wouldn’t actually do that!* Nor would I *want* him to! Not for *real!”*

A look of confusion passed across her partner’s features. “Oh, *that’s* why you want to know. *You* like him. Well, you’re welcome to him, if you don’t mind him being a *pussy.*”

“One, I do *not* like him like that,” the dark-haired girl replied. “Two, it’s not ‘being a pussy’ to *respect your partner’s wishes,* ***Yang.***”

“Well I *wished* that he’d throw me down, grab hold of me, and *fuck me*, but he didn’t respect *that* wish at all,” the blonde shot back smirking as Blake blushed a little at the imagery, *despite herself.*

“Did you *tell* him that’s what you wanted?” the Faunus demanded.

“Yeah,” the brawler replied, though not *nearly* as strongly as she should’ve, adding, “*eventually*. But you’re saying you *wouldn’t* want him to tie you up like, whatsherface, Yumiko?”

Blake stared, as well, *that* was an image, which led her to think of *other* scenes from *Ninjas of Love*, but that was also *not the point.* “That’s not an *eventually* thing, Yang! That’s a *‘set things up ahead of time’* thing!”

“Why should I have to? He’s a *man*, and I was giving him the go ahead! If he *actually* liked me, he should’ve known what I wanted!” the party-girl complained.

“Oh, I didn’t realize Jaune had a mind-reading Semblance,” Blake commented sardonically.

*Missing the point,* her partner frowned. “He doesn’t. Or, did he figure it out, and not tell-”

*“He didn’t figure it out, I was being sarcastic!”* the Faunus snapped. “Because the only way he could tell if you were *telling* him no was if he *read your mind!*”

“But it was *obvious,”* Yang argued.

Glad that her Semblance wasn’t like Ms. Goodwitch’s, so she didn’t *strangle her partner,* Blake said, “And it might’ve been. *Until you said no.*”

“And people say stuff they don’t mean *all the time!*” the blonde, Blake wanted to say *Bimbo* but that wasn’t *entirely* fair, shot back. “Besides, he’s a *Faunus!* He should’ve been even *better* at following his instincts!”

Whatever the dark-haired girl wanted to say, she lost it, as, “I’m sorry, *what* did you just say?”

“He’s a *Faunus*,” the Valian repeated. “Or ‘Dragon’ or whatever, but *everyone* knows how they are! But even after he *made* me come out and say it, *that* wasn’t good enough!”

“Yes, ***Yang***, everyone ‘knows how they are’,” *the Faunus* icily stated. “Which means that he has to worry about people *crying rape* even when it *isn’t*, so, maybe, *just maybe*, he’d want to be *careful* of that!”

Rolling her eyes, the blonde scoffed, “Right, your ‘Faunus’ thing. You do know no one believes you, right? We get it, you have a type, your ex, and now Jaune. You can stop pretending you *really* care *so much* about the Faunus!”

*“What!?*” the *Menagerien native* sputtered. “I, you, *what!?* I, how can you *say* that?”

Yang affixed her with a flat look. “Oh, you care so much, Blake? *Fine.* Then name another Faunus that you *regularly* talk to. Not the guy at the dance, who was *Sun,* not *Sam*. Not Velvet, unless you’ve talked to her *other* than the couple times we’ve *both* run into Coco’s team. Name *one,* who isn’t a guy you wanna ride like a pony.”

“I don’t want to-” *the Faunus* tried to argue, but was cut off by her partner.

“You can’t name *one*, can you?” the blonde smugly questioned.

“No, there’s…” Blake tried to argue, only… Well, she kept to *herself* mostly, worried that the others might connect her to the *White Fang*, and the few times she’d *tried* to talk, they already had friends, and she was finally in a place she could *read* without worrying, especially with the books that *Jaune* was giving her, *all* of which she’d never even *heard* of, and then there were *lessons,* both the regular training and the extra training Jaune was having them do, which, well, *they were going to be in the Vytal Festival*, so *those* were paying off, and-

“You haven’t even *talked* to a single other one, other than Taurus, and Jaune,” the brawler declared, happy to shift the topic on to her *partner’s* failings. “So being ‘so concerned’ about him? Puh*-leeze.* You don’t know the first *thing* about the Faunus, only what you’ve heard from your *asshole ex.*”

Gritting her teeth, *the Faunus* bit out, “Yes, I *know what it’s like to be a Faunus,* ***Yang.***”

Taking a long, loud sip of her soda, the Valian responded condescendingly, “*Suuuuure* ya do.”

Blake didn’t even realize she was moving until she’d already grabbed hold of her bow. “I *know* what it’s like to be a Faunus, *Yang,”* she stated resolutely, pulling it free, “because I ***am one!***”

…

“what.”

The Feline Faunus stared at the Human. “Oh, ‘what’, that’s all you have to say? So, *please*, tell me that I *don’t know what I’m talking about!”*

Yang stared, “You’re… A Faunus?”

Twitching her now freed ears, Blake replied, “Yes! Which is find your suggestion that Jaune would do those things *after you said no* to be *very* problematic!”

“You, you *lied* to me!” the brawler responded instead, ignoring what was *really* important. “Why? I wouldn’t’ve cared! Didn’t you *trust me?*”

“Your sister’s partner was a *fucking Schnee!”* the Faunus pointed out.

“But, Weiss isn’t that bad!” Yang argued. “She’s not like that!”

Wincing, Blake had to admit, “She isn’t *that* bad, but she *would* care!”

“But I wouldn’t!” the blonde argued. “Why didn’t you tell me! I thought we were partners!”

That… was a good question, as the Faunus *had* been meaning to, but no time ever seemed *right*, however, before she had to come up with a reason, the brawler continued.

“Do the *others* know?” the Human questioned, reading the dark-haired girl’s reaction, scowling, eyes flickering red. “They *did!”* she yelled, slamming a fist on the table. “What the *hell, Blake?* Why them and not *me?*”

*Wait, I can work with this!* “Jaune knew instantly, and Pyrrha figured it out in a few weeks by reading my body language. She’s *used* to fighting Faunus, and could tell. But wait, you said that *not* telling people things and wanting them to read body language was *good* when it came to Jaune. So which is it, Yang? Is *Jaune* in the wrong for getting mad at you, and now *you* are for getting mad at me? Or were *you* wrong for not telling him, like you think *I* am for not doing the *same. Exact. Thing*?”

Folding her arms, and leaning back, the Faunus, point made, gave the Human an expectant stare, as there was *no* way she could get out of this!

“That’s different!” the other Huntress argued, trying to anyways.

“You’re right,” Blake agreed, causing her partner to frown in confusion. “I never *said* I was a Human, while *you* said *No*, and if you’d misread *my* body language, you wouldn’t have *raped* anyone. You’re right, Yang. What you did was *much* worse.”

The blonde struggled with herself, before declaring, “You only care because you *like* him!”

“I care because it’s *wrong,*” she shot back. “Even if you were with someone *terrible*, like, like *Cardin*, then that still wouldn’t make what you did okay, even if *he’s* a racist piece of garbage. Then again, maybe you two *should* hook up, since you apparently have *similar opinions on the Faunus!”*

“I, shit, I was just…” Yang tried to respond. “I, I was just angry, okay? I *still* am.”

“At Jaune? For *doing what you asked?”* the Menagerien pressed.

“Yes! No! I don’t know!” the Huntress responded, before slumping, eyes turning their normal purple and staying that way. “I, *fuck,* like I said, Blake, it’s stupid. *I’m* stupid. And, and the asshole isn’t even being an *ass* about it!”

That caused the dark-haired girl to frown. “Wait, you *want* him to be a jerk?”

“No? Yes? It’d make it *easier,*” the brawler shrugged helplessly. “Make *me* feel like less of a *complete bitch*, at least.”

“Yang, have you tried *apologizing?”* the Faunus suggested.

“Why? *He’s* the one that-”

*“Did what you told him to do,”* Blake interrupted.

“I did apologize! He *still* walked out on me! And, and we were *dating!*” Yang tried to argue. “I shouldn’t have to tell him how to do *everything!* A good boyfriend’s supposed to do what his girlfriend *wants!”*

Cocking her head to her side, “And a good girlfriend’s supposed to do what her *boyfriend* wants?”

“Yeah? Fair’s fair,” the blonde shrugged. “What’s your point?”

“My *point* is what did *Jaune* want?” she questioned, having started talking to him more, as they’d traded books. While he could be a bit of an *ass,* one thing he *wasn’t* was quiet on his opinions.

“To have *sex*, duh!” Yang shot back. “But he *had* to have it *just* his way!”

Frowning, remembering this kind of argument from one of her stories, Blake repeated what she’d read. “So you *didn’t* want to do it?”

“Of *course* I wanted to do it!” the Huntress responded. “If he’d tried something and I didn’t I would’ve broken my foot off up his ass!”

“So by, by *doing it,*” the dark-haired started to say, but was cut off.

“You can say ‘Fuck’, Blake,” the other girl pointed out, still annoyed, but unable to resist the opportunity to tease, trying to lighten the mood, when that *really* wasn’t appropriate.

“So by *having sex*, he’d *also* be doing what *you* wanted,” the Menagerien pointed out. “Sounds like *you’re* the one who wanted everything *her* way. But that’s fine. People have been ignoring the wishes of Faunus for *centuries.*”

Yang frowned, repeating, “That’s not the same!”

“So *what did Jaune want?”* Blake pressed. “And this wasn’t even the first time you tried to make him do something he didn’t want, was it?” she demanded, *knowing* it wasn’t.

“Uh, you know that bar I talked about? Juniors? I kinda dragged him there, looking for a fight, and he was great!” the blonde offered. “He was worried, but, like, Jaune’s *always* worried. I didn’t mind!”

Blake connected the dots, and, “Oh god, when Jaune said you took him to a ‘Criminal Bar’, it wasn’t just any one, you took him *back to the place you trashed?* Yang, *you’re* the reason we can’t go to Vale anymore!”

“I, what?” the brawler replied. “No, that’s cause the cops tried to pin Jaune-”

“*Yang!* You don’t get it, you’re, you’re *Human!”* the Faunus argued.

“Yeah, and?” the blonde replied, *still not getting it.*

Trying to put it into words, the ex-White Fang member spoke slowly, “Vale is, well, out of the four Human Kingdoms, it’s the *best* for Faunus, but, well, *Cardin’s dad is on the ruling council.* If a *Human* goes and beats up some criminals, especially a girl, that’s one thing, but if an ‘Uppity Faunus’ does it, well, *‘everyone knows how Faunus are’,*” Blake said, mimicking Yang’s voice.

“I didn’t mean it like *that,”* the other girl complained. “And, so what if he’s Faunus? They’re still criminals!”

“*Human* criminals?” the dark-haired girl questioned, her partner, after a moment’s thought, slowly nodding. “Well, like you said, Bandits are the *worst,* so of *course* they’re sexists and racists too! So they don’t want to tell *anyone* they got their butts kicked by a *girl*, but by a *Faunus boy?* Oh, wow, Yang, did it ever occur to you that the corrupt cops trying to arrest the *Faunus* on *false charges* might’ve been paid off by the guy you *humiliated?* Hell, he’d even be getting back at you *without* admitting to anything by going after your *Faunus boyfriend!*”

“Wait!” Yang countered. “Those cops were working for *Cardin’s* dad, not Junior!”

*What? Oh. Right. Wait.* “Which he might’ve only been able to do that in the *first place,* because Jaune was *already* on the hit-list of criminals with connections,” Blake responded, not letting go of her point. “And, again, the thing with Cardin’s dad only happened because Jaune *is a Faunus!”*

From her partner’s look, she didn’t *really* agree, but also didn’t argue, instead stating, frustrated, “Well, then why didn’t he *tell* me about that? How was I supposed to know that? If I’d known that I would’ve never-”

Blake gave the Human a flat look.

“Right, *right*,” the brawler nodded, not needing the dark-haired girl to say anything, before slumping in her seat, having, like her Semblance, exploded with anger, but, now that it was gone, she was just *drained*. “And now *I’m* mad at him for… God, I’m the *worst.*”

“No, *that’d be Cardin,”* the Faunus noted, glad her partner was *finally* understanding things..

“Oh, *thanks,”* Yang offered sarcastically. “So, yeah. I’m a fuck up. *Woo.* That’s why I’ve been avoiding our fearl- been avoiding *Jaune*. Happy?”

Blake blinked, having actually lost track of the start of the conversation, before she nodded. “Now that you’re not hiding things from me, *yes*.” The blonde glanced meaningfully at her ears. “That didn’t change what I could do on a mission, just meant I could see in the dark better, which Jaune *already* knew.”

Glancing at her soda, which she’d spilled a little of when she’d hit the table, Yang grabbed a napkin and started sopping it up. “So, what now?”

“Now we clean up your mess,” the Faunus declared.

The brawler lifted the dirty napkin. “Already doin’ that.”

“No, I mean as a *teammate,*” Blake specified. “Despite being mad at him, mad at him for *that,* which *is* stupid, Jaune didn’t ask Headmaster Ozpin to kick you from the team.”

Yang froze, “He could *do* that?”

“He’s the headmaster’s apprentice,” the Menagerien pointed out. “If anyone could, *he could,* even if it was just switching you and me out for Ren & Nora.”

“Wait, the same team as my *sister?”* the brawler frowned. “Like, I love her, but there’s such thing as *too much Rubes*.”

Nodding, the dark-haired girl offered, “And Weiss isn’t *that* bad, but being on the same *team* as a Schnee?” Shaking her head she added, “I’m glad he didn’t either, but he’s *trying* to be our team leader, so, maybe, *you* could try being his teammate?”

Yang considered that, then sighed. “You heard him, Blake. *He doesn’t forget.*”

“But he *does* forgive, remember?” the Faunus prodded, smiling at her partner’s confused look. “I was there for one of your fights, *remember?* You guys had a *whole* thing about that? Your problem is that you wouldn’t talk, his problem was that he wouldn’t *shut up* so you *didn’t listen.* Unless he said he’d never forgive you *as a teammate,* then he probably will. And if he had, well, we wouldn’t be on his team anymore. But he *isn’t* going to if you *keep avoiding him.*”

“But it’s so *awkward!”* the brawler complained. At Blake’s unsympathetic stare, she sighed, “I *know*, it’s, just, you *know* he’s gonna be smug about it!”

“Is he?” the catgirl questioned. “You know him that well?”

“It’s *obvious!”*

“You mean it’s what *you* would do,” Blake clarified.

The blonde started to respond, cut herself off, and just nodded.

“And *is Jaune you?”* the Faunus pressed.

Staring at the Menagerien for a moment, Yang sighed, slamming her face down onto the table. *“I’m an idiot.”*

“We all make mistakes,” Blake offered, sipping her tea.

Not sitting up, her partner added, “But you’re *totally* thirsty for the Dragon Dick, B.”

Accidentally breathing in a *bit* of tea, the black-haired girl coughed, Yang sitting up, lifting her fist in victory, *“Still got it!”*

“I, *that’s not important!”* Blake insisted.

“It’s a good dick too!” the blonde *harlot* continued. “Like a *baby’s arm!”*

Trying to envision that, the Faunus had to ask, “Wouldn’t that *hurt?”*

“Big Red’s not complaining,” Yang shrugged. “So, uh, right, sorry for being a shit teammate, Blake.”

“You weren’t the *worst*,” the black-haired girl, now trying not to think of Pyrrha and Jaune… *engaged.*

And *failing*.

With a laugh, Yang finished her soda and told her blushing teammate, “So, go back and see what the damage is from Port?”

Finishing her own drink, Blake nodded, both of them left the café, only to be stopped by three cops.

“We’ve been informed there’s been a disturbance,” the lead one said, glancing at the dark-haired girl’s now visible ears, and scowling. “I know *some* of you don’t matter for that kind of thing, but you’re upsetting the ones that *do.* And we can’t be having that. Especially now.”

Yang frowned, following the man’s eyes, then *scowled.* “Tell ya what,” she drawled, in the ‘I’m about to throw down’ way she sometimes talked, “How ‘bout *you* three mind your own fuckin’ business, and tell the people that are *eavesdropping* to *butt the fuck out?* Okay? *Okay.*”

One of the other cops, a female Human, scowled, “Who do you think you’re talking to? We could-”

With a single motion, Yang deployed her Ember Celica, “You could go *get fucked, hide in your little corner,* and *let us* ***Huntresses*** handle the Grimm that *you’ve* already attracted. Now, we’re gonna go meet our team lead, who was *meeting with your mayor*, and you can, again, *mind your own fuckin’ business.*” The brawler’s hair began to smolder. “Or are we gonna *have a fuckin’ problem?”*

An *ugly* look crossed the lead cop’s face, before he turned and strode away, the woman calling, “Watch yourself,” but as Yang started to lift a fist, she doubled timed it, the third cop, another Human man, looked like he was going to say something, then shook his head and followed after the other two.

“God, and I thought *I* was a dick,” Yang spat, turning to her teammate. “Shit, Blakey, if *that’s* what it’s like, I see why you keep your ears covered.”

“It’s not always like that,” the Faunus argued. “But if Humans are *already* looking for a reason, it doesn’t help.”

The blonde sighed, “*Shiiiit.* Okay. And my, uh, *yellin’*, probably didn’t help. Just battin’ a thousand today, aren’t you Yang?” Shaking her head, and clapping her hands together, ‘holstering’ her weapons, she declared, “Alright, let’s head back!”

They did, running into Port, Pyrrha, and Jaune as they were entering Gabbro’s Huntsman building, Jaune glancing at Blake’s uncovered ears, his only remark, “Huh, you finally told her? Good.”

“Did *everyone* know but me?” Yang questioned, a little annoyed, but in good humor about it.

Pyrrha smiled, “I believe Weiss and Ruby do not. Ren may, and Nora… *Is Nora*.”

“Oh,” Port questioned. “Ms. Belladonna, you were *hiding* your racial status? I hadn’t noticed.”

*“Ugh,”* the brawler sighed, turning towards their Leader. “Hey, Jaune?”

The ‘Dragon’ Faunus went completely still. “Yes, Yang?”

“Sorry, for, like, avoiding you,” she apologized. “So… teammates?”

“We never *stopped* being teammates,” he replied, confused. Pyrrha not-so-subtly elbowed him in the ribs. “Uh, sure? Come on, we need to go over some of the topographical information and records we got from the Mayor.”

Following them in, Blake, after sending a ‘told you so’ look to her partner, who gave her a rueful nod back, questioned, “Were there ruins nearby? Like the ones from our last field trip?”

“No, *that’s the thing*,” their leader said. “There’s *nothing* nearby, and, *before* all of this, other than a bit of unusually low Grimm activity, there was *nothing* notable about this place, other than the mineral deposits. And, *unless they’re lying*, they did a pretty comprehensive Alpha-Check.”

“Ms. Celadon would never leave a job unfinished,” Professor Port noted. “She’s *quite* thorough in *everything* she does, *ho ho ho!*”

*Everyone* paused at that, Jaune pushing forward first, “I, uh, *right.* That means whatever is doing this *isn’t native*, though, well, I don’t know enough to know if that *matters*.” He paused, looking to their Huntsman Guide, who shrugged.

“Depending on the Grimm, it might,” the larger man offered. “But without knowing what it is…”

“Fair enough,” the antlered Faunus replied. “Either way, we’ve also got defensive position data, guard force numbers, profiles on the surviving Huntsmen, and we *should* be able to bang out a defensive plan.” He glanced over to Yang. “If you want to.”

While she grimaced, the blonde nodded, trying her best to smile at her ex-boyfriend, and current leader, “I’m game!”

Hesitating, just for a moment, he nodded, looking Blake’s way, who *actually* smiled, and nodded.

“Good, good,” Jaune sighed. “With time to spare, and since we’re *already* gonna get a Tide, I have some… *ideas* for how we might be able to use my Flame.”