

Chapter 1-Setting The Stage

Why are we doing this again?" Weiss asked, glancing around at the gloomy surroundings. Unfortunately, the full moon in the night sky did little to make the place look inviting or relaxing as great shadows of the branches were cast across the ground by the moonlight.

"Because we're a team, and as the esteemed leader, I decided we need a break away from the academy."

Weiss rolled her eyes, "Don't try and use big words; it doesn't suit you."

"I knew you'd be grumpy about coming out to the middle of nowhere, but you need to learn the art of relaxing, Ice Queen," Yang retorted, leaning against the trolley stacked with suitcases.

Weiss cocked her hip as she folded her arms, "Schnee's don't have time to relax, not when there's work to be done."

"Weiss ever heard of the girl who was all work, no play?" Blake asked, "She was always isolated and lonely."

"Is that an actual fairytale?" Ruby asked inquisitively.

Blake chuckled, eyeing Weiss cheekily, "Not real yet."

Weiss huffed under her breath as she walked down the path, her teammates following close behind. As the path sloped downwards, the trees parted outwards and encircled the vast space in which sat an ominous tall mansion that towered up into the sky.

"It looks ancient," Weiss observed.

Blake grunted in agreement, "It should be preserved, not facing the chance of being ruined by hyperactive, energetic sisters."

"Hey, I'm not hyperactive!" Yang exclaimed, "Just fiery-natured."

"Yeah!" Ruby said triumphantly before her eyes widened, "Wait, I'm the hyperactive one!"

"That you are so not acting hyper," Weiss ordered, "If we must stay here for the week, then we shall do it properly; we are Beacon Academy students."

"Yes, Queen!" Yang sarcastically replied with a salute.

The team made their way down the path, following up to the large stone bridge that crossed over a circular moat with a small stream stretching out towards the lake. Weiss gasped, resting

a hand against her chest as she watched the moonlight's reflection sparkling against the watery surface.

"It's beautiful," she muttered, unable to pull her eyes away.

"It's just a reflection," Yang stated, pushing the trolley past her.

"Come on, Weiss!" Ruby called, making Weiss jump in surprise.

Weiss glared, "Don't sneak up on me. You know I don't like your loud wake-up calls!"

Ruby chuckled to herself whilst hugging her friend from behind, "Just relax, will you. You're not in Atlas now."

Yang sighed, wiping her brow as she parked the trolley next to the large brown doors. She reached up, grabbing the curved black knocker, raising it and slamming it against the door several times. The dull banging echoed around the group as they stood before the door. Finally, the doors creaked open, revealing a stout man in a black three-piece suit with a distinct hunch in his back.

"What is it. I'm very busy," the man said in a low tone.

"We're.." Ruby began.

"Kids. I haven't got time for juvenile pranks. I have a lot of work to do," the man interrupted.

Weiss couldn't help but snicker under her breath as Ruby's face became riddled with confusion.

"Now go away, kid," the man finished, preparing to close the doors.

Yang shook her head, sharply stepping forwards, "Hey, watch who you're calling a kid! That's my sister!"

"Excuse me," Weiss called; the man stopped and stared at her.

He moved toward her, pulling out a monocle and holding it over his eye as she circled Weiss muttering to himself.

"By the gods. I'm so sorry, Miss Schnee. Regrettably, I did not recognise the esteemed heiress and member of Team RWBY," the man said with an apologetic look and tone as he bowed before Weiss, "Had I known you were amongst these individuals, I would have greeted you differently."

"It's okay," Weiss assured, smiling.

The man looked at Weiss's elegant dress and bolero, then over toward the others, "One mustn't forgive me. It shouldn't have been hard to spot you, my dear, given the *attire* of these three."

Yang and Blake huffed, folding their arms before glancing down at each other's attires, "There's nothing wrong with how we dress!" they retorted in unison.

"Forget about it," Weiss said, "What was your name, sir?"

"Sir? Sir?" the man stammered, "One such as myself is not worthy of being called sir, for I am Igor Peter at your service, my lady."

"Well, Igor, this is Ruby, Yang and Blake," Weiss introduced, gesturing to her friends.

Blake moved forwards, "We received invites to spend the week here by an associate of Professor Ozpin."

"Of course, of course. I've spent all day making the necessary preparations," Igor said, "Allow me to take your bags and show you to your rooms."

"It's fine," Ruby stated, grabbing her suitcase from the trolley.

Yang and Blake followed suit, grabbing their suitcases as Igor looked at the ones left on the trolley, counting seven white ones.

"Those are mine," Weiss commented, "I always come prepared."

"Yeah, and I end up pushing them around," Yang added with a heavy sigh.

Blake looked from Igor to the cases, "Least you could do is carry some for him."

Weiss huffed, "His job is to serve and you," she pointed at Ruby, "Said I had to relax, so how can I do that hefting cases around."

"It's no problem, my lady. I'm delighted and honour to serve the heiress of the SDC," Igor stated, gripping the trolley.

With little effort, he pulled it into the mansion, gesturing for the girls to enter. Their jaws dropped as they entered the spacious foyer, lush red carpet spread outwards whilst dark varnished oak stairs curled upwards to the floors above. Blake eyed the various animal statues on the sides, positioned on floral decorated stands on either side of mixed paintings depicting the Valean countryside.

Igor pushed the trolley over to a lift, locking it into place.

“This will carry your cases up to the second floor whilst we take the stairs,” he explained, closing the lift’s gold caged doors. The lift dinged as he pressed a button, the mechanisms whirring into life as it rose slowly upwards.

“Follow me to floor two,” Igor called, walking toward the stairs.

As the girls followed Igor up the stairs, Weiss ran her dainty fingers along the bannister, feeling the silky smoothness of the wood, admiring the lack of dust.

“I think I’m going to like it here,” she said.

“Is the ice heart finally thawing!” Yang called out, jokingly receiving a huff from Weiss.

“I take to get care in my work. Whilst you are here, my job is to ensure you are well looked after in my master’s home. We have an indoor and outdoor garden, entertainment areas, a library and a gym,” Igor stated, “Most of these are on the first floor except the outdoor garden.”

He led the girls onto the second floor, eventually stopping outside a small door, the door quietly opening. As they peered in, they could see a sofa bed, a television attached to a games system and to top the decore off; there was a sizeable crimson fridge.

“This is your room, Miss Rose,” Igor stated, taking Ruby’s case from her hands and placing it inside.

He closed the door and guided the girls to the next room; this one lacked any carpet but had a large bed in the centre whilst a rack of punching bags lined the far wall.

“For you, Miss Xiao-Long,” he said, putting Yang’s case inside.

They moved onto the third room, with bookshelves lining the walls, the floor coated with fluffy purple carpet, and instead of electronic lighting, the room was illuminated by burning candles in purple holders fixed around the room.

Blake popped her case into the room, glancing back at Igor, who gave her an approving nod.

Finally, Igor led them to the last room, the one for Weiss. Igor paused, retrieving the trolley from the lift and then setting off on the corridor. Weiss found her room a little further away from her teammates’ rooms, but she didn’t mind that.

“And here is your room Lady Schnee,” Igor announced, opening the door.

Weiss stepped in, gasping in awe at the gleaming silver poles suspending a veil around a large round bed. The room was vast and spacious, suitable enough for one to practice fighting or

dancing. A chaise lounge sat on the far side next to a white table. Both were placed so that whoever sat there could see from the arched window the beautiful garden.

“Each room comes with wardrobes though Lady Schnee has a walk-in one. And there’s an en suite bathroom as well, so you’ll all have space and privacy,” Igor explained, “Well, with that,” he pushed the trolley close to the wardrobe, “I’ll leave you ladies to unpack. Dinner is in an hour.”

Ruby watched as Igor left the room, shutting the door behind him, “This is strange.”

“What is?” Yang asked.

“The rooms all cater to us,” Ruby observed, scratching her chin.

“Is that a bad thing?” Blake asked, “We have different tastes and hobbies.”

“Blake’s right,” Weiss chimed in, eyeing a portrait of a Solitas mountain, “There’s nothing strange here. So just relax, Ruby, and enjoy the week.”

“But...”

“Stop being a paranoid child,” Weiss demanded, “Now, if you’ll excuse me, I have cases to see to and a peaceful atmosphere to relax in.”

Weiss opened the door, gesturing for her teammates to leave, they did so, but Ruby couldn’t shake the feeling that something was off in the mansion. Weiss sighed, closing the door, deeply inhaling as she clutched gracefully at her chest.

“And here I thought this week would be bad,” she muttered.

Weiss’s dainty fingers adjusted, fastening the thin straps of her white wedged heels. She stood up from the white armchair and strode up to a tall mirror, the glassy surface surrounded back swirls of silver and diamonds. She ran her hands over the ankle-length white dress with a sweetheart neckline.

“I feel like an angel, and I’m in heaven,” she thought loudly, checking her sapphire teardrop earrings and the silver encrusted sapphire clasp on her bolero with silver metal icicles hanging from the clasp.

She gracefully walked out of the walk-in wardrobe, her footsteps cushioned by the white carpet that transitioned to read as she stepped from her room and into the corridor. She could hear Yang and Ruby arguing as she went down the stairs. The closer so got to the voices, the easier the argument became to hear.

"I'm just saying Robbie Roo two was way better than Robbie Roo one!" Yang cried out.

Ruby grunted in frustration, "But Robbie Roo one had body-snatching spooky monsters and a mystery."

"Please, those monsters were just bad effects."

"At least Robbie Roo one never overdid it with the computer-generated effects. A Tar Grimm, a Ghost Grimm and badly animated pirate ship in a real-life city," Ruby retorted.

Weiss cleared her throat as she entered the dining room, halting the argument.

"Weiss, finally someone smart. Answer me this Robbie Roo one or two; which is better?" Ruby asked, looking hopefully at her friend.

"Kids movies, really? That's what you're arguing about something that mundane," Weiss said loftily, "Hardly a thing to get pent up over."

"Oh, come on!" Yang exclaimed, "Of course it is, as it's important for movie night tonight. Do you want to sit through bad effects?"

Weiss rolled her eyes, sitting at the oval table, "Who said I'd be joining for it?"

"I just figured we'd be doing something as a team," Ruby said.

"I, for one. Didn't agree to anything," Blake muttered, not taking her eyes off the book.

"I almost forgot you were here. Your so quiet," Yang whispered, nudging Blake's leg with her own.

"Books are interesting," Blake muttered, turning the page.

Weiss nodded in agreement, "what I can get pent up over is your attires. Didn't you think to change from you're combat attires?" She scanned over the attires of each one of her teammates.

"I changed my socks!" Ruby announced, "Does that count?"

"We're here to relax, not fight, so we don't need our Huntress attires," Weiss stated, "I, for one, feel more relaxed."

"I wasn't going to say it, but you may have overdone it with yours. That's not very relaxing," Yang commented, staring at the heiress' dress.

“Dresses may not seem relaxing to a tomboy like you, Yang, but to me, I feel relaxed when dressed properly,” Weiss retorted, crossing her legs.

“You mean like a snob!” Yang said sarcastically, “Maybe one day you’ll appreciate the simple things like shorts.”

“And pigs may fly,” Blake said under her breath.

Weiss huffed, “I’ll pretend I didn’t hear that.”

She focused on the silverware to distract herself as Ruby and Yang began to argue again. Weiss deeply inhaled, closing her eyes, focusing on zoning out their voices when something different, plates clattering. She opened her eyes whilst the scent of fresh steamed vegetables and salmon drifted into her nose.

“Wow,” she said, admiring the colourful display of green and orange vegetables placed around a group of potatoes while the salmon sat lightly coated in a creamy sauce.

She glanced up, raising an eyebrow at Blake’s dish of a tuna pasta bake but her nose wrinkled at the greasy towering burgers that sat on Yang’s and Ruby’s plates.

“Enjoy your meals,” Igor called, entering the kitchen.

Weiss watched on aghast at the mess of sauce and onions oozing out of the burger as Yang picked her one up. A tiny shriek escaped Weiss’s mouth as Ruby bit violently into her burgers, squirting grease and sauce onto the table.

“I never knew you two we’re this messy,” she commented.

“Beacon never had burgers,” Yang replied with a slight mouthful.

Weiss sighed; it was like watching animals eating, even Blake putting her off as the cat Faunus toyed with the tuna in her dish.

“I’ll take mine upstairs,” she stated, picking up her plate and cutlery.

Ruby looked up, “But don’t you want to stay with us?”

“I’d prefer not to have a greasy mess over my dress nor my food,” Weiss stated, carrying her food out of the dining room.

Tranquillity washed over her as she entered her room, making her way over to the chaise lounge and gently placing her plate on the coffee table. She let out a gentle sigh as she sat on

the cushioned velvet seat. Her eyes stared longingly at the garden's beauty whilst she slowly consumed her meal in small manageable portions.

The minutes passed by until the plate was bare. Weiss stretched out her body as she lay on the chaise lounge, resting her head against the cushions just as a knock sounded behind her.

"Come in," she called out.

"Forgive the intrusion, my lady. I was wondering would you like a drink?" Igor asked, entering the room.

"Yes, please."

Igor approached Weiss, placing down a white tray with a golden jug and chalice resting on it."

"A glass would do me," Weiss commented.

Igor chuckled softly, "Only the finest for an heiress. This chalice once served Princess's tropical wines."

Weiss perked up, "*Am I a princess to him?*" she thought.

Igor poured a purple liquid into the chalice before handing it carefully to Weiss, "Blackcurrant Nights, a well-known drink in Atlas."

"I can't have alcohol; it's not proper to underage drink," Weiss said, eyeing the drink.

Igor chuckled heartily, "I won't tell if you don't; besides, Blackcurrant Nights is the weakest alcoholic beverage in Remnant but a fine Atlas creation better than any android."

Weiss pondered in her head about Ruby's paranoia, "*A drink from Atlas was certainly catering towards tastes that Weiss would be familiar and more comfortable around. The same could be said about filling shelves with books to cater to Blake.*"

"Did you go to all this trouble just to cater to us? You know Ruby's paranoid," she stated, taking the chalice.

"My master only wanted to make you feel comfortable whilst staying here. After all, you're the team that stopped Roman Torchwick and the White Fang from destroying Vale," Igor explained.

She gently tipped the chalice to her mouth, tasting the fizzy liquid running down her throat, the fruity blackcurrant exploding across her tastebuds. A slight hiccup escaped her mouth as she lowered the chalice away from her mouth, a hand raised to her mouth.

“Excuse me,” she politely said as Igor refilled the chalice.

“I shall leave this here for you. Hope you enjoy the rest of your night,” Igor said, bowing before he left.

“Hey, Igor,” Ruby called, passing the servant, “Hey Weiss? Safe to come in?”

Weiss sipped her drink, “Providing your clean and don’t disturb the peace.”

Ruby entered the room, toying with her hands nervously as she approached her teammate.

“I just wanted to apologise for upsetting you. Blake did say our tastes are different. You’re from Atlas, and me and Yang are from Patch, and just on appearances, we’re very different.”

“I wanted to relax and enjoy a proper meal, not risk getting covered in greasy slop,” Weiss stated, keeping her gaze on the garden.

“That technically is on Igor for giving us that food,” Ruby pointed out.

Weiss scoffed, “But you should know how to eat and not eat like a hyperactive pig.”

“I’ll try to do better in future then,” Ruby stated, bouncing slightly on the spot.

“Now, please. Let me enjoy the peace.”

Ruby nodded, heading for the door; she turned with a sweet smile, “Even though you are still icy, there’s a warm heart in there; you’ve protected and worked with a Faunus and accepted me as a leader. Maybe whilst you’re here, you’ll embrace a new change that unlocks a new side to you.”

Weiss lowered her head, “Can I change from what I’ve known. I guess Ruby is right though I keep falling back into the icy persona because it’s what I’ve spent my whole life as,” she muttered, tapping the chalice.

The grandfather ticked away in the dark chamber as Igor knelt before a crystal sphere, the smoke within twisted and contorted into the image of the shadowy-robed figure.

“My master. Team RWBY is here,” he said, “I have performed the preparations as requested, and I have found a suitable subject for phase one.”

“And who might that be?”

“The heiress, Weiss Schnee, she’s cold toward her teammates, so should have no problem performing your procedure on her though I sense her teammates may try and save her,” Igor explained.

“Need not worry. Drug the princess and bring her to the altar. We shall see what follows.”

“Already taken care of my master. Miss Schnee is drinking the nectar from the Iris Roses; once it takes hold, she’ll be out for a while.”

“You have initiative, my servant. Just be gentle with her; we don’t need a damaged princess yet.”

“Of course, my master.”

Weiss reached for her head in her room as an empty chalice clattered onto the ground. Her world began to spin, distorting into fragmented blurs whilst she got to her feet. A faint gasp left her mouth as she stumbled around, eventually collapsing next to the bed, her eyelids becoming heavier and harder to keep open.

“Help..me...please,” she weakly rasped as she succumbed to the darkness.